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# The Great Subaquatic Peak Recovery of Basel

In January of 2014, Klara and Clarissa sneaked into the port of Basel to explore secret passageways that would lead them into the Rhine. On their way, they got held up by the port's commando manager. He didn't intend to arrest them, but rather to warn them. They needed to know, he said, that the Rhine, as it flows through Basel, was of a peculiar nature. The riverbed had not been flattened or canalized, as one would expect of a city river, but left as it naturally was, with unpredictable elevations. It held a truly mountainous landscape within.

The next day, Klara said to Clarissa: "We have to dive down there. From the city centre of Basel we'll enter the river and take a subaquatic expedition to the Rhine's highest mountain peak. We'll chop off the top of that mountain and bring it to the surface."

The citizens of Basel are fond of their Rhine, which comes to them from the Swiss Alps in great rapids, continuing its way through France, Germany and the Netherlands, all the way to the North Sea. The Rhine has the reputation of being untameable, especially around Basel's old bridge, where it leans into a steep curve, the Rheinknie. Nobody dares dive down there, with one exception. A large, hairy, bearded man called Ruedi—Basel's own Neptune.

On April 25th, Ruedi, Klara and Clarissa set out on their subaquatic expedition. They had determined certain points with precision, but the river couldn't have cared less about their navigational plans, pulling the divers away at its own will. On their second dive, they decided to let the river set their course. At less than 100 meters, Klara discovered an unassuming peak, lower than the others, but promising in its Toblerone-like shape. The divers climbed up the mountain, found a gun on their way, and managed to hold on to the rocks, while starting to chisel at the mountain peak. Fighting the Rhine's current while chiselling was ridiculously futile, but suddenly the very top slice of the peak loosened itself against the wild rapid.

What it revealed turned Neptune ecstatic: This stone was a truly special stone, one that could only be bred in that particular location of the Rhine, in its very own particular currents. The locals refer to that type of stone as Gottesbeton, the "concrete of the Gods". During the ice ages, pieces of the surrounding Alpine mountains were claimed by the Rhine, and pulled away on its long course down the mountains. The rapids ground the debris down to smaller pieces, later shaped them into pebbles, and then pushed them against the sand and rocks of the steep curve of the Rheinknie in the centre of Basel. There, over the centuries, the river kept pushing sand and other sediments onto those pebbles, until the amalgam started turning into a compound rock. This treasure now revealed itself to the astonished divers. It took the strength of a Neptune to pull the mountain peak onto the shore, where the Basel police eagerly anticipated the divers and confiscated the gun.



The Great Subaquatic Peak Recovery of Basel is a project by **KLARA HOBZA**, produced by **deuxpiece**. Courtesy: **deuxpiece**, Basel. Photo: **Lena Huber**