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BILAN

Toute
l'économie
un mercredi
sur deux

ARIANE DE ROTHSCHILD

**SWITZERLAND'S
TOP LADY BANKER**

A Gender Revolution

R Sweeps the Rothschilds

She is Switzerland's most powerful lady banker. Ariane de Rothschild now occupies the second-highest position in the Edmond de Rothschild Group after that of her husband, Benjamin. The Baroness, who trained as a trader and knows the ways of the world, agreed to meet the Swiss press for the first time.

BY STÉPHANE BENOIT-GODET AND MYRET ZAKI PHOTOS THIERRY PAREL



KEY DATES

NOVEMBER 1965

Born in San Salvador

1988-1990

BBA and MBA in finance and financial management at Pace University, New York

1988-1990

Securities analyst and then currency dealer at Société Générale in Australia and New York

1990-1995

Currency dealer at AIG, New York, then opened the AIG subsidiary in Paris and helped develop the European market

1993

Met Benjamin de Rothschild

2008

Elected to the boards of Banque Privée Edmond de Rothschild SA and Edmond de Rothschild Holding SA

NOVEMBRE 2009

Elected Vice-Chairwoman of Edmond de Rothschild Holding SA

ARIANE DE ROTHSCHILD

The Baron's wife has his full confidence.

The Rothschild dynasty has a new face and it belongs to a woman, Ariane de Rothschild, wife of Baron Benjamin de Rothschild. A seasoned financier, the «banker's wife» has become the lady banker of the Edmond de Rothschild Group since 2008, when she was elected to its main boards of directors. Ariane de Rothschild, a French and German dual national, embodies a new role model of female success. One thing is certain: the next head of the dynasty will be a woman as well, because Ariane and Benjamin have four daughters. At present the young Baroness is showing them the way through her active involvement in all the Group's entities.

Banque Privée Edmond de Rothschild SA, the Group headquarters in the heart of Geneva's banking district, features a plush atmosphere exuded by its rich tapestries, antique furniture and gourmet cooking. But it also sports ultra-modern works of art that were hand-picked by Baroness Benjamin de Rothschild. She is the epitome of modernness, as illustrated by her office in rue de Hollande. Lovely, at 45 she has been Vice-Chairwoman of the group's holding company since last November and has become her husband's indispensable «right-hand lady». This is her first interview with Swiss journalists.

They met in 1993 when she, still Ariane Langner, was 28 years old. Trained as a currency trader, she became a new breed of business leader. Reminiscing on her brilliant and atypical career, she notes, «It's unusual to see a husband and wife at the head of a company, but that's how we envisage family capitalism.»

SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES

The Baroness admires her husband for his trailblazing spirit and for his confidence in her. «I'm lucky to have a husband who wanted to share his responsibilities with me,» she observes. Baron Benjamin presides over the Group and helps devise its strategy. «He has an original approach to business,»

Ariane de Rothschild tells us. Interviewed by Bilan six years ago, the most powerful of the Rothschilds had shown the same straightforward rapport with people and things that his wife shows now. He is exceptionally gifted, intuitive and quick-minded.

We ask her if that means he is misunderstood by other bankers. «He should never be underestimated,» Ariane de Rothschild cautions. «When his father died, the financial group that he inherited employed 600 people as against 2700 today. Assets under management and administration rocketed from CHF 20 billion to CHF 143 billion at end-2009.» Gratiified by this phenomenal growth but reluctant to see his schedule tied up with overly frequent appointments,

Benjamin de Rothschild needed someone to act as his deputy at board meetings. His wife was the ideal candidate.

Ariane de Rothschild surprises us at every turn with her natural authority, her youthfulness and her technical knowledge. She has an accent that one cannot put a finger on but reflects a mix of her childhood in Latin America, her French-German origins, her teen years in Africa and her studies in the United States—a profile as global as today's Edmond de Rothschild Group.

A «NATURAL» NUMBER TWO

«I met Benjamin through work,» the Baroness confides, «but there was no telling at the outset that I would assume responsibilities within the Group.» She began by dealing with the group's non-banking activities (wine-making, hotels, art), developing them and thus demonstrating her acute business sense. But very soon she and her husband were thinking in dynastic terms. «What matters to us most,» she explains, «is that the Group survives and remains under family control.» And so it was that her skills and experience thrust her naturally into the number two spot. Besides, she points out, «it would have been silly for me to go and work for another bank.»

Their roles are clearly distinguished: Benjamin de Rothschild maps out overall strategy while Ariane de Rothschild sees it is implemented. «I'm much more available than Benjamin, so people see me more than they see him,» she says, adding that they discuss important matters together. She has his confidence, but he always has the last word. She has considerable latitude and the kind of global view that is needed so that all of the Group entities reinforce each other. That's what the family motto— «Concordia,

TIMELINE
THE ROTHSCHILD
DYNASTY

The family's Ashkenazi Jewish German roots go back seven generations to 18th-century Frankfurt.

Dynasty

It all began with Meyer Amschel. Born in 1744 in Frankfurt's Jewish ghetto, he made his fortune as a coin and currency dealer. The idea for «Rothschild», the new name he chose for himself, came from the red sign (rotes Schild in German) above his door.



Coat of arms The dynasty's founding legend stems from the decision by Meyer Amschel to send his five sons to Europe's five erstwhile economic capitals (Paris, London, Vienna, Naples, Frankfurt), thus creating one of the world's first international network of financial companies. This is symbolised by the five arrows fanning out from a compass on the Rothschild coat of arms.



PHOTOS: KEYSTONE, BEAUREGARD

Integritas, Industria»— means. She acknowledges being well aware of the privileged position and obligations attaching to the role of controlling shareholder.

FOUR DAUGHTERS, A BLESSING

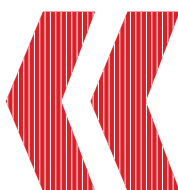
One thing is certain as far as the future is concerned: the family bank will one day be presided over by a woman, i.e. by one or more of the couple's four daughters, now aged 7 to 14. «I show them the way, and that's highly important,» says their mother in all modesty. The revolution is indeed under way. Four daughters are «a blessing», claims Ariane de Rothschild, adding, «we are parting with the tradition that insisted only males could perpetuate a dynasty.» The survival of the Rothschild name is not an issue either, since the daughters may very well decide to keep their maiden name. And Swiss law will allow future descendants to take their mother's name.

At home «we have discussions with our children», Ariane de Rothschild confides. «I tell them about my day at work. What I want to instil in them is a sense of responsibility.» For the Baroness nothing could come more naturally. «Like my daughters now,» she says, «I was steeped in business through my parents.» One day the girls will in any case have to keep an eye on the Group. «They will have to accept that an inheritance comes with its benefits and its drawbacks,» observes their mother, who is grooming them for the purpose. In addition to rearing them, she is handing down the Rothschilds' principles and values. These «may appear outmoded, but they are essential. They include the work ethic, respect and, above all, an understanding that being part of a dynasty also entails doing one's duty.»

PHOTO: THIERRY PAREL



UPBRINGING
She was steeped in business at a very young age.



Being rich means being responsible. You have to set an example and work even harder.»

ARIANE DE ROTHSCHILD

Ariane de Rothschild points out that it is easier for four children to shoulder an enormous legacy than it is for one. Summing up her view on money, which is the family's view as well, she asserts that «being rich means being responsible. You have to set an example and work even harder. And it takes a lot of work, not only to stay rich but also to make sure that the next

generation has the proper upbringing to perpetuate the family's success. Actually, this all goes far beyond money; it's heritage we're talking about.»

We ask Ariane de Rothschild what she, as a woman, contributes to the family business. «A different view of time,» she replies. «Sustainable development is a gathering force that will ultimately prevail.»

Ancestry

Adolphe, Benjamin's great-great-uncle, came to Switzerland in



the late 19th century. Later his great-great-grandfather, **Edmond**, of the family's French lineage, would become a founding father of Israel. Benjamin is the son of Edmond and Nadine. Now 47, he heads the most powerful branch of the Rothschild family.

PHOTOS: DR. ABENSUR/EOL

Estate

The Château de Pregny, in Geneva, was commissioned by the family in the late 19th century. The Austrian empress Sissi, one of many illustrious guests, dined here on the eve of her assassination..



These principles find expression in her day-to-day actions. The bank is currently drawing up a charter on sustainable development that will be anchored in good corporate governance, a broader offering of socially responsible financial products, integration of environmental awareness in working methods and information to staff on this subject so that the message can be conveyed to clients.

Ariane de Rothschild is critical of the practices observed in finance in recent years. «The industry promoted values that I didn't approve of,» she admonishes. «The idea of easy money had gained the upper hand.» She predicts that beyond the issue of bonuses, future generations will also show concern for money's social impact and for a more even balance between private and professional life. «I would like to believe that instead of profit people will think in terms of profitability, which takes the interest of others and the common good into account.»

SWITZERLAND IS BEHIND WHEN IT COMES TO FEMALE VALUES

The financial crisis has fostered the emergence of new management models that give pride of place to the feminine dimension. Ariane de Rothschild thinks this will lead to a more comprehensive, less black-and-white approach as well as to a longer time horizon. Translating words into deeds, she is equally attentive to finance, art, wine and property. To her mind, banking fits seamlessly into the broader universe. As she puts it, «I'd like the staff to realise that striving for excellence concerns all segments.» Such a view promotes greater participation and a less pyramid-style hierarchy within the Group companies. Ariane de Rothschild is moreover studying how participatory management can be used to bring out the best in the Group's teams. «I believe in the talent of the employees within our organisation,» she says.

The espousal of female values is painfully slow in Switzerland. «Women have a very hard time here,» she notes. In France, the idea of gender parity is gaining ground



ENDORSEMENTS
The family supports over 30 projects.

thanks to talk of a 40% female quota for boards of directors. «It's a good proposal,» contends Ariane de Rothschild. «At some point you have to force your way in. To some extent, my husband forced it for me.» She was lucky to grow up in a multicultural environment devoid of established role models. «My parents were very modern,» she proclaims. «They didn't entertain any set notions on social class, on religion, on race or gender. That enabled me to go a long way—for example, to work in trading rooms, a world heavily dominated by men.

That, no doubt, is what underlies the aura of freedom radiating from Ariane de Rothschild. There are no barriers. She laughs, enthuses and talks to us candidly. In short, she is a woman firmly ensconced in the 21st century.

FAITH IN EUROPE

The young Baroness has equal esteem for the values of the Rothschilds, which have stood

the test of time. «Our family has existed for seven generations, and has been able to weather all the intervening upheavals. Our Bank is holding up well in the one upon us now because it is focused on these values,» she maintains. In her view, even an end to banking secrecy will detract nothing from the competence of Swiss banks. «Managing the complexity of a family's assets, regardless of tax issues, demands finely honed skills. This mustn't be taken lightly and isn't an easy subject to deal with,» she points out. The stewardship of new fortunes will therefore remain a business where Swiss banks can shine, though Ariane de Rothschild admits that «going international is a must.»

Her faith in Europe is strong, despite the tremendous difficulties encountered by the euro area this year and the doubts they have given rise to. «I believe in Europe,» she asserts, «and I hope the euro will survive. It's all too important that the Union remain strong in the presence of power blocs like the United States and China.»

PHILANTHROPY

SPONSORING WITH A «RETURN ON COMMITMENT»

Ariane de Rothschild instils a line of thinking based on results

Charity The family runs more than a dozen foundations and supports over 30 projects on themes ranging from education to medical research, art, the environment and social entrepreneurship. In this last area the Edmond and Benjamin de Rothschild Foundations have developed a special dynamic, again under the leadership of Ariane de Rothschild. From mere sponsoring they moved to a more structured, entrepreneurial approach that demands a return on commitment rather than on investment.

PHOTO: SANDRINE ALOUF



View of the park of the Château de Pregny with hundred-year old trees and rare plants, patiently nurtured by the Rothschild family since the 19th century.

What does Wealth mean to you?

“

- I try to manage it wisely, so that one day my children will inherit it.

- Yes, of course, but wouldn't you also like to broaden your perspective and benefit from new insights?

”

Edmond de Rothschild Group will help you manage your wealth in a meaningful way.

www.edmond-de-rothschild.com



**EDMOND DE ROTHSCHILD
GROUP**

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