

A R S E N A L E

PRESS COVERAGE

January – December 2024

SAR teams up with Italian firm to launch SAR 200M luxury train

LINK: <https://www.argaam.com/en/article/articledetail/id/1700440>

Saudi Arabia Railways (SAR) announced signing an agreement with Italy's **Arsenale** Group to launch the "Dream of the Desert" luxury train, with an investment of SAR 200 million. The agreement is valid for 25 years, said the company on social messaging platform X, noting that the train trips will start in the fourth quarter of 2025. SAR stated that the first stage of the route will be from the Al-Shamal train station in Riyadh, passing through Hail and ending at Al-Qurayyat train station. The company added that the duration of the trip of the 40-cabin train will be between one and two nights.

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Saudi Arabia to launch ME's first luxurious 'Dream of the Desert' train

LINK: <https://www.htsyndication.com/siasat-daily/article/saudi-arabia-to-launch-me-s-first-luxurious--dream-of-the-desert--train/78774492>

Riyadh, Jan. 25 -- In a groundbreaking move, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has signed an agreement to launch the luxurious 'Dream of the Desert' train service for the first time in the Kingdom and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. To introduce this innovative service, Saudi Railways (SAR) and the Italian **Arsenale** Group on Thursday, January 25, entered into a 200 million Saudi Riyals (Rs 4,43,22,32,742) agreement with the Italian **Arsenale** Group in Riyadh. The train will consist of 40 luxury cabins, and the route of the first trips will start from the Al-Shamal train station in Riyadh, passing through Hail and ending at the passenger train station in Qurayyat. Reservations for the 'Dream of the Desert' train are scheduled to ...
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'Dream of the Desert': Saudi Arabia set to roll out Middle East's first luxury train service; See pics

LINK: <https://me.mashable.com/culture/37430/dream-of-the-desert-saudi-arabia-set-to-roll-out-middle-east-s-first-luxury-train-service-see-pics>

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has embarked on a transformative journey with the signing of a groundbreaking agreement to unveil the opulent 'Dream of the Desert' train service. This monumental initiative not only marks a first for the Kingdom but also establishes a new benchmark for luxury train travel in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. On Thursday, January 25, Saudi Railways (SAR) and the esteemed Italian **Arsenale** Group sealed a remarkable 200 million Saudi Riyals agreement in Riyadh, signaling a collaborative effort to bring a touch of lavish elegance to the heart of the Arabian desert. Also read: Saudi Arabia set to launch first diplomatic alcohol store; Everything you need to know The 'Dream of the Desert' train is poised to redefine luxury, featuring a total of 40 luxurious cabins. The inaugural journeys are set to commence from the Al-Shamal train station in Riyadh, traversing through the enchanting landscapes of Hail, and culminating at the passenger train station in Qurayyat. Here's a glimpse of the project:

Image Credits: SPA Anticipation is already building as reservations for this exclusive train experience are scheduled to open towards the end of the year, with actual operations slated to commence in the fourth quarter of 2025. This visionary venture aligns seamlessly with the National Strategy for Transport and Logistics, as highlighted by Engineer Saleh Al-Jasser, the Minister of Transport and Logistics. He emphasized that the introduction of luxury train services is a strategic move aimed at enhancing the quality of life while providing robust support to national strategies. Dr Bashar Al-Malik, CEO of SAR, underscored the company's commitment to pioneering initiatives, noting that the 'Dream of the Desert' train is a significant addition to SAR's services. With a focus on tourism and entertainment, the train promises a regal transportation experience for both visitors and residents alike. **Paolo Barletta**, Chairman of the Italian **Arsenale** Group's Board of Directors, revealed that the production stages of the Desert Dream train

have already commenced in Italy, aligning with the announced plan for its grand entry into service. Also read: Saudi Arabia to host a special World Economic Forum meeting soon; Here's everything to know Cover Image Source: SPA

?Dream of the Desert? to elevate Saudi train travel

LINK: <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2448046/business-economy>

?Dream of the Desert? to elevate Saudi train travel ?Dream of the Desert? to elevate Saudi train travel /node/2448046/business-economy ?Dream of the Desert? to elevate Saudi train travel The agreement was signed in Riyadh on Jan. 25. SPA. Short Url ?Dream of the Desert? to elevate Saudi train travel Updated 25 January 2024 Follow RIYADH: Saudi train passengers are in for a luxurious experience as the Italian-made ?Dream of the Desert? debuts on the Kingdom?s railroads. A pioneering service in the Middle East and North Africa, Saudi Arabia Railways has collaborated with the Italian **Arsenale** Group in a SR200 million (\$53 million) deal to introduce this service. The agreement was signed in Riyadh on Jan. 25 between SAR?s CEO, Bashar bin Khalid Al-Malik, and Chairman of the Italian group, **Paolo Barletta**. Also present was Minister of Transport and Logistics Services Saleh bin Nasser Al-Jasser, who also serves as SAR chairman. This formalization follows the initial memorandum of understanding inked by the two parties on Mar. 15, 2023, as reported by the

Saudi Press Agency. Commenting on the agreement, Al-Jasser said that introducing luxury train amenities will elevate the quality of services and increase mobility options within the Kingdom. He noted that this agreement aligns with the National Strategy for Transport and Logistics initiatives, aiming to enhance the quality of life and support critical strategies. Highlighting the transport and logistics sector?s continuous progress, he emphasized the boundless backing from leadership, propelling the industry to successfully implement its service-oriented development projects and initiatives. He also lauded the effective cooperation and cohesive integration among the system and diverse stakeholders in advancing transport patterns, ultimately enhancing the overall experience for beneficiaries. Al-Malik emphasized SAR?s dedication to its national role, which is in harmony with the broader countrywide strategy for transport and logistics. He highlighted that introducing the ?Dream of the Desert? signifies a significant enhancement to the

company?s services, introducing a crucial tourist and entertainment option for its customers. Additionally, he noted that the train allows both visitors and residents of the Kingdom to explore various regions through integrated luxury transport services. Barletta highlighted that the initial production stages of the train have recently begun in Italy in preparation for entering service according to the announced plan. ?The booking process for the train, which features 40 sophisticated cabins, is scheduled to commence by the end of 2024. The train is expected to be operational in the fourth quarter of 2025, initiating its inaugural journey from north Riyadh train station, traversing through Hail, and concluding at the passenger train station in Qurayyat,? he announced. Customer satisfaction must for sustainable growth, says expert Updated 25 January 2024 Hebshi Alshammari January 25, 2024 16:50 RIYADH: The customer experience, an ever-evolving topic among the public and private sectors, took center stage at a specialized forum in Riyadh. Under the

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patronage of Saudi Commerce Minister Majid Al-Qasabi, the "Customer Experience World Forum" concluded on Jan. 25 under the theme "We Are Here." The two-day forum was organized by the Customer Experience Association as part of its initiatives to enhance service efficiency in both the public and private sectors. The event included various sessions and panel discussions covering strategies for enhancing client exchange. It focused on measuring experiences and exploring opportunities for improvement by applying artificial intelligence in managing interactions. Awad Al-Qahtani, founder and CEO of Steady Pace, told Arab News that the customer experience has become a "necessary requirement" at the present time. "There is significant maturity among customers across various segments in seeking services, and customers now have numerous options. Their focus has shifted from merely considering price or quality to placing importance on the "experience," he said. Future trends in the client experience sector, especially in the region, revolve around several key aspects. The primary focus is pursuing sustainable improvement in interactions

by retaining customers for as long as possible." He emphasized the importance of "focusing on building emotional connections with customers" and investing in augmented reality, AI, and smart experiences. In today's landscape, clients seek the optimal experience, particularly given the array of choices. Al-Qahtani underscored that the decisive factor has shifted to the customer's interaction with the brand compared to other options. The CEO affirmed that the sector is currently experiencing a mature stage, and the previously increasing demand that lacked attention has now become essential. "Market research, in general, and customer experience, in particular, have become some of the most important requirements for customers, as they are now essential for maintaining competitive standards in the market," he said. There has been recent high interest and demand for market research solutions, and as the specialist observed, there is significant maturity today regarding "customer focus and behaviors." The market research sector has recently witnessed a growing and significant demand, attributed to the quality outputs introduced by professional companies in

this field. Al-Qahtani concluded that service seekers have become highly aware of the market research services in enhancing the customer experience. They remain conscious of the benefits and impact on the long-term trajectory of initiatives and strategies, making the success of any undertaking almost guaranteed. Abdulaziz Al-Shamsan, CEO of the forum, affirmed that establishments are striving to enhance client exchanges. Consequently, customer experience has become the key to attracting consumers and distinguishing them from competitors. "I believe that the customer experience in the region is still in its early stages and requires further development and greater attention," according to Al-Shamsan. He further highlighted that the increasing presence of AI, the growth of consumer and beneficiary needs, and the heightened awareness of product demand and competition have made customer experience a decisive factor in the consumer market. "Our goal in the association is for this event to be a meeting point for a group of customer experience professionals at the local and international levels," he clarified. Al-Shamsan added: "Through the forum,

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we aim to create and enhance the industry, raising the level of participation from various entities in the sector. This will be achieved through training workshops, working papers, panel discussions, and the participation of companies providing various services in the sector. He concluded: "These events aim to increase awareness further about customer experience and the importance of focusing on customers." Saudi Arabia launches National Biotechnology Strategy to lead global innovation Updated 25 January 2024 Arab News January 25, 2024 15:51 RIYADH: Localizing vaccine manufacturing and improving the health of Saudi citizens are among the key goals of a new National Biotechnology Strategy, launched by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on Thursday. The new initiative also aims to safeguard the environment, achieve food and water security, and solidify the Kingdom's position as a global leader in the sector, according to the Saudi Press Agency. One of the major focuses of the initiative is localizing vaccine manufacturing to increase the Kingdom's self-sufficiency and ensure timely access to these medicines for its citizens.

Furthermore, the program targets a 3 percent contribution of the biotechnology sector to the non-oil gross domestic product by 2040, with a cumulative impact of SR130 billion (\$34.66 billion), in addition to providing thousands of high-quality opportunities and jobs. These initiatives are aligned with the Kingdom's Vision 2030 objectives. "Localization and biomanufacturing play a vital role in driving the strategy forward, as Saudi Arabia aims to establish itself as the primary biotechnology hub in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region," said the SPA report, adding: "Developing advanced biopharma manufacturing capabilities and establishing a cutting-edge local end-to-end bio-manufacturing platform are crucial steps." The program focuses on four strategic directions, including vaccines, with an emphasis on localizing vaccine production, exporting, and leading innovation in the field. Additionally, it prioritizes biomanufacturing, aiming to increase the consumption and localization of biopharmaceuticals. The strategy also highlights genomics, with a focus on pioneering research and gene therapy. Lastly, plant enhancement is a key

aspect, involving efforts to improve cultivation for enhanced self-sufficiency and to lead innovation in enhanced seeds. The Kingdom, being the largest regional market for pharmaceuticals and vaccines, has strategically invested in biotechnology-related sectors. It is committed to developing and training national talent in research, development, and innovation while enabling a competitive and digital infrastructure. The country's genetic diversity and geographical climate provide ideal conditions for conducting complex studies and research. The strategy aims to empower the local biotechnology industry by streamlining regulatory requirements, providing suitable infrastructure, and offering financing. Through its various programs and initiatives, it seeks to stimulate efforts by private sector investors in this field. The launch of this national scheme aims to provide a flexible regulatory environment and advanced infrastructure, fostering integration between the public and private sectors. US carmaker Lucid Group to boost manufacturing capabilities Updated 25 January 2024 Arab News January 25, 2024 15:57 RIYADH: Saudi-backed carmaker Lucid Group is on track to bolster its

manufacturing capabilities thanks to a new expansion of its US Advanced Manufacturing Plant, known as AMP-1. This development will help propel the building capacity ahead of production of the company's new fully electric sports utility vehicle, the Lucid Gravity, and to support future growth, according to a statement. The firm, which is 60 percent owned by the Kingdom's Public Investment Fund, is ramping up its production capabilities, and opened its first international manufacturing facility, AMP-2, in Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah Economic City in September 2023. "The expansion of our manufacturing footprint in Arizona is a significant milestone for the company, as we prepare for the next phase of Lucid's growth," said Peter Rawlinson, CEO and chief technology officer at Lucid. He added: "Our expanded state-of-the-art factory will allow us to continue to deliver our great cars to our customers around the world, including the Lucid Gravity in the near future." The AMP-1 expansion includes a new 3 million sq. ft. manufacturing facility as well as a warehouse. Once complete, it will bring about a new general assembly line, a new quality and

semi-knock down centers, and expanded body and paint shops. In addition to this, it will also include a relocated logistics center and a relocated and expanded powertrain facility. In December 2023, Lucid's Global Vice President Faisal Sultan revealed the firm had assembled almost 800 cars in its Saudi factory to date. The facility has an initial capacity to produce 5,000 electric vehicles a year, after the Kingdom's government pledged to buy up to 100,000 units from it over 10 years. Visa joins KAFD in digital payment access boost Updated 25 January 2024 ARAB NEWS January 25, 2024 15:24 RIYADH: Businesses in King Abdullah Financial District are poised for advanced digital payment access with card service provider Visa joining the Riyadh economic hub, reinforcing global economic connections. Visa is an internationally recognized company in the sector, facilitating transactions between consumers, merchants, financial institutions and government entities across numerous countries and territories. KAFD announced the news in a post on X saying: "We're happy to welcome Visa to our financial district as part of the KAFD business community, as it

helps power the global economy by connecting businesses, banks and governments in more than 200 countries and territories worldwide." Following its acquisition by Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund, the district has evolved to become a prime business and lifestyle destination capturing the core values of Vision 2030. KAFD provides businesses access to advanced office infrastructure and sustainable smart city solutions, while simultaneously offering leisure and retail facilities. We're happy to welcome @VisaCEMEA to our financial district as part of the #KAFD business community, as it helps power the global economy by connecting businesses, banks and governments in more than 200 countries and territories worldwide pic.twitter.com/UL2pyEq6JU ? KAFD | ???? (@Kafd) January 25, 2024 The deal with Visa is the latest collaboration between Saudi Arabia and the company, with past agreements including the establishment a first-of-its-kind tourism data lab in May 2023 to provide travel trends insights. The Saudi Tourism Authority inked a memorandum of understanding with the financial services company

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to explore innovative ways to enhance the visitor experience and advance the Kingdom's hospitality industry. The partnership was supported by the payment database VisaNet, which delivers a variety of data on incoming tourists and substantial information on how governments can maximize their cashless approach, a press release noted at that time. The collaboration is in line with Saudi Arabia's National Tourism Strategy, which seeks to attract 150 million visitors by 2030. Closing bell: Saudi main index steady as trading turnover hits \$1.93bn Updated 25 January 2024 Arab News January 25, 2024 15:41 RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's Tadawul All Share Index was steady on Thursday, as it shed just 12.62 points or 0.1 percent to close at 12,161.56. The index posted a trading value of SR7.22 billion (\$1.93 billion) with 121 stocks advancing and 95 declining. The Kingdom's parallel market, Nomu, surged by 1.15 percent to 25,248.70. However, the MSCI Tadawul Index slipped by 0.15 percent to close at 1,583.18. The best-performing stock of the day on the main index was Arabian Pipes Co. The company's share price surged by 5.75 percent to SR132.40. Al Mawarid

Manpower Co. and Gulf Insurance Group, also emerged as top performers as their share prices soared by 3.72 percent and 3.65 percent respectively. The worst performer of the day was media giant MBC Group, as its share price dipped by 9.88 percent to SR58.40. On the announcements front, Almunajem Foods Co. revealed that its net profit for the fourth quarter of 2023 surged to SR81.6 million, up 382.84 percent compared to the same period in 2022. However, the company's overall net profit for 2023 dipped slightly by 3.02 percent to SR282.2 million, compared to the previous year. Meanwhile, Saudi Electricity Co. announced that it has fully redeemed its international sukuk listed on the Irish Stock Exchange, issued on Sept. 27, 2018. In another statement to Tadawul, SEC said that it has also completed the redemption of its local sukuk listed on the Saudi bourse. The company added that its 4,000 international sukuk are due on Jan. 27. The nominal value of each sukuk upon redemption is SR750,000, while the total value is SR3 billion. On the other hand, the company's 4,500 local sukuk are due on Jan. 30. The nominal value per sukuk upon redemption is

SR1 million, while the total value stands at SR4.5 billion. Avalon Pharma, a Saudi-based pharmaceutical company, which is gearing up for its initial public offering announced the completion of the book-building process for participating parties and the final offer price for the IPO, the firm's financial adviser and book-runner Aldukheil Financial Group said. The final offer price for the offering has been set at SR82 per share, implying a market capitalization of SR1.64 billion. The retail subscription period will last for three days, which will commence on Jan.30 and will end on Feb.1. Albilad Capital announced that the IPO of Albilad MSCI Saudi Growth exchange-traded funds closed on Jan. 24. In a Tadawul statement, it noted that the fund raised SR19 million and will start operations on Jan. 31.

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Saudi Arabia Unveils Luxurious 'Dream Of The Desert' Train Service - ARAB TIMES - KUWAIT NEWS

LINK: <https://www.arabtimesonline.com/news/saudi-arabia-unveils-luxurious-dream-of-the-desert-train-service/>

This news has been read 454 times! Italian-made 'Dream of the Desert' Train unveiled for Saudi Rail passengers. RIYADH, Saudi Arabia, Jan 25: Passengers on Saudi Arabia's railways are set to experience a new level of luxury with the debut of the Italian-made 'Dream of the Desert' train. In a groundbreaking move for the Middle East and North Africa region, Saudi Arabia Railways (SAR) has entered into a SR200 million (\$53 million) deal with the Italian **Arsenale** Group to introduce this innovative service. The formal agreement was signed in Riyadh on January 25, with SAR's CEO, Bashar bin Khalid Al-Malik, and Chairman of the Italian group, **Paolo Barletta**, putting pen to paper. Minister of Transport and Logistics Services Saleh bin Nasser Al-Jasser, who also serves as SAR chairman, was also present during the signing ceremony. This significant development follows the initial memorandum of understanding signed by the two parties on March 15, 2023, as reported by the Saudi Press Agency. The collaboration aims to elevate the train travel

experience in the kingdom, bringing a touch of Italian luxury to Saudi railways. This news has been read 454 times! 25/01/2024

Unveiling The Opulent Dream Of The Desert Luxury Train In Saudi Arabia By 2025

LINK: <https://arablocal.com/news/unveiling-the-opulent-dream-of-the-desert-luxury-train-in-saudi-arabia-by-2025>

In a historic collaboration between Saudi Arabia Railways (SAR) and the prestigious Italian **Arsenale** Group, the opulent Dream of the Desert luxury train service is set to grace the landscapes of Saudi Arabia in 2025. Featuring 40 lavish cabins capable of accommodating up to 80 discerning passengers, this exquisite train is scheduled to arrive in Saudi Arabia during the summer of 2025, with its inaugural journey commencing in November of the same year. The formal agreement between Dr. Bashar Al-Malik, SAR's CEO, and **Paolo Barletta**, CEO of the **Arsenale** Group, was solidified at a recent signing ceremony, attended by Eng. Saleh Al-Jasser, Minister of Transport and Logistics, and SAR's Board of Directors Chairman. This collaboration stems from a memorandum of understanding signed on March 15, 2023, aiming to introduce the first-ever "rail cruising" experience across Saudi Arabia. The 770-mile route from Riyadh, through Hail, to Al-Qurayat in the north, near the Jordanian border, promises a unique and luxurious travel adventure. Speaking at the event, Minister Al-Jasser

expressed excitement about the introduction of luxury train services, marking a groundbreaking development in the Middle East and North Africa region. He emphasized how this initiative aligns with the National Strategy for Transport and Logistics Services, contributing to enhanced quality of life and supporting key national strategies. Highlighting the tremendous support from visionary leaders, Minister Al-Jasser applauded the collaboration's role in enhancing transportation routes and elevating the overall passenger experience. CEO of SAR, Dr. Al-Malik, reaffirmed SAR's commitment to spearheading quality initiatives in line with the National Strategy for Transport and Logistics Services. He underlined the Dream of the Desert luxury train as a significant addition to SAR's service portfolio, providing travelers with an unparalleled mode of transportation and entertainment. **Paolo Barletta**, CEO of **Arsenale** Group, shared insights into the ongoing preparations for the Dream of the Desert train, drawing parallels with

the iconic Orient Express in terms of comfort and luxury. With an investment exceeding 200 million riyals, **Arsenale** Group specializes in high-end travel, international hotel and resort management, and luxury hospitality. The company envisions long-term plans for similar luxury services, boasting a fleet of six tourist trains in Italy. As anticipation builds, the Dream of the Desert luxury train promises not only a remarkable journey but also an opportunity for locals and tourists alike to explore the beauty of Saudi Arabia in unparalleled style and comfort.

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Saudi Arabia announces luxury train service 'Dream of the Desert' - News

LINK: <https://dailyguardian.ae/saudi-arabia-announces-luxury-train-service-dream-of-the-desert-news/>

Facebook Twitter LinkedIn Pinterest Email Saudi Arabia on Saturday (Jan 27) announced the plan to launch the 'Dream of the Desert' train service. A first-of-its-kind in the Middle East and North Africa region, the 40-cabin luxury train will add extra quality services and options to the kingdom's means of transportation, reported SPA. Saudi Arabia Railways (SAR) partnered with the Italian **Arsenale** Group, a specialist in administering luxurious train trips, to launch the 'Dream of the Desert' service. The 40 luxury-cabin 'Dream of the Desert' train will be open for bookings at the end of 2024, and actual operation will begin in the fourth quarter of 2025. The first trips will start from the North Train Station in Riyadh, run through Hail and end at Al Qurayyat train station. 'This is one of the initiatives the National Strategy for Transport and Logistics has taken to improve the quality of life and support leading national strategies,' said Saudi Minister of Transport and Logistic Services and Chairman of the Saudi Arabia Railways (SAR) Engineer Saleh bin Nasser

Al Jasser at the signing ceremony held in Riyadh. Stay up to date with the latest news. Follow KT on WhatsApp Channels. He underlined the considerable support received by the transport and logistics sector from the wise leadership, which enables it to carry out its projects, services and development initiatives, and praised the cooperation between the transport sector and various stakeholders in the field, which helps develop it and improve the experience of beneficiaries. SAR CEO Dr Bashar Al Malik and Chairman of the **Arsenale** Group **Paolo Barletta** signed the agreement, which is part of a memorandum of understanding the two sides signed on March 15, 2023. Al Malik underscored SAR's commitment to implementing quality initiatives emanating from the company's strategy associated with the National Transport and Logistics Strategy, noting that the 'Dream of the Desert' train will be a great addition to the services of the company as it adds an important tourist and entertainment option to the list of services to its customers, and enables visitors and

residents to discover more areas of the Kingdom while enjoying luxurious transport services. **Paolo Barletta** said that the initial production stages of the train have recently begun in Italy, in preparation for having it enter into service according to the announced plan. Inputs from SPA

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The 'Dream of the Desert' Luxury Train Service has been Announced by Saudi Arabia.

LINK: <https://theemiratestimes.com/the-dream-of-the-desert-luxury-train-service/>

The Emirates Times 0 The inauguration of the 'Dream of the Desert' train service was announced by Saudi Arabia on January 27. The 40-cabin luxury train, a first for the Middle East and North Africa, will enhance the kingdom's transportation options and services with more high-quality services, according to SPA. Launching the 'Dream of the Desert' service, Saudi Arabia Railways (SAR) teamed up with the Italian **Arsenale** Group, an expert in managing opulent train excursions. Reservations for the 40-cabin 'Dream of the Desert' train will open at the end of 2024, and service is scheduled to start in the fourth quarter of 2025. The initial journeys will begin at Riyadh's North rail Station, travel through Hail, and conclude at the Al Qurayyat rail station. At the signing ceremony in Riyadh, Saudi Minister of Transport and Logistic Services and Chairman of the Saudi Arabia Railways (SAR), Engineer Saleh bin Nasser Al Jasser, said, 'This is one of the initiatives the National Strategy for Transport and Logistics has taken to improve the quality of life and support

leading national strategies.'

Also Read:

Dream of the Desert: Saudi Arabia is launching its own luxury train

LINK: <https://edition.cnn.com/travel/dreams-of-the-desert-saudi-arabia-luxury-train>

Dream of the Desert: Saudi Arabia is launching its own luxury train By Tamara Hardingham-Gill, CNN Updated 10:21 AM EST, Mon January 29, 2024 Link Copied! A rendering of luxury train Dream of the Desert, which is due to launch in Saudi Arabia in 2025. **Arsenale** S.P.A./Saudi Arabia Railways Editor's Note: This CNN Travel series is, or was, sponsored by the country it highlights. CNN retains full editorial control over subject matter, reporting and frequency of the articles and videos within the sponsorship, in compliance with our policy . CNN ? Crossing the desert could be about to get much more glamorous. State-owned railway company Saudi Arabia Railways (SAR) recently struck a 200 million Saudi riyals (\$53.33 million) deal with Italian hospitality company **Arsenale** Group to launch the first luxury train in the Middle Eastern kingdom. Saudi Arabia officially opened its doors to international tourists in a ?historic moment? back in 2019 and the Middle Eastern kingdom has been pulling out all the stops to lure visitors over ever since. The destination has made a

number of high-profile tourism investments in recent years ? a \$500 billion model city in the desert of northwest Saudi Arabia among them. Now Saudi Arabia is getting on board with the slow travel movement in a big way by moving into the luxury train market. ?Luxury train cruise? According to Saudi-Arabia's State run media, the new train is due to begin operations in late 2025, Dream of the Desert will offer ?luxury train cruise? journeys from the capital city of Riyadh to Qurayyat, which is situated close to the northern border with Jordan, according to a press release issued by SAR last week. The 1,300-kilometer route is to stretch across Saudi Arabia's stunning desert landscapes, along with the city of Hail. With a design inspired by ?Saudi style and tradition,? the ?fully-customized? trains, made up of 40 luxury cabins, are already under construction, with reservations scheduled to open at the end of the year. One or two-night trips will be available to book, with a maximum capacity of 82 passengers, according to **Paolo Barletta**, CEO of **Arsenale**. ?The initial

production phases of the Dream of the Desert carriages in Italy have recently commenced, and we can't wait for the debut of our first train in the kingdom in the coming years,? Barletta said in an official statement. ?Greener choice? The ?fully-customized? trains, made up of 40 luxury cabins, are already under construction. **Arsenale** S.P.A./Saudi Arabia Railways Saudi Arabia's decision to enter the luxury train market comes as demand for high-speed trains and luxury ?rail cruises? continues to increase around the world. Many countries have been investing millions, or billions in some cases, into new infrastructure as customers seek out more sustainable alternatives to short haul travel and/or gridlocked highways. US President Joe Biden has pledged \$30 billion for rail projects and upgrades across the country, while, according to Reuters, France plans to strengthen its rail network by investing around ?100 billion (\$106 billion) into train travel by 2040. The Saudi service is scheduled to launch a year or so after ? Orient Express ? La Dolce Vita, ? a

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collaboration between **Arsenale** Group and the Accor Group. Related article The best things to experience in Saudi Arabia according to the people who know it Renderings of the 11-carriage train, which takes inspiration from the 'La Dolce Vita' period of the 1960s, were unveiled back in 2021, revealing an incredibly opulent interior, with 12 'deluxe cabins,' 18 suites, an 'Honour Suite' and a restaurant carriage. 'Train travel represents the greener choice of transportation, enhancing trips to great cities as well as small-medium sized locations with appealing cultural sites and scenery,' Luigi Corradi, CEO and General Manager of Trenitalia, part of Italy's state railway company Ferrovie dello Stato, said in a statement at the time. News of the upcoming arrival of Dream of the Desert comes nearly six years after the launch of Saudi Arabia's Haramain High Speed Railway , connecting the holy cities of Mecca and Medina with King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah, in 2018. Infrastructure investment A rendering of Dream of the Desert, which will be the first luxury train in the Middle Eastern kingdom. **Arsenale** S.P.A./Saudi Arabia Railways Carrying trains at speeds of up to

300 kph (186 mph,) the rail network is expected to eventually stretch all the way across the Middle Eastern kingdom. Enhancements are also being made into existing lines in the country's northwest, with more high-speed services to come. Back in January 2022, Saudi Arabia's Investment Minister Khalid al-Falih announced plans to build 8,000 kilometers (4,970 miles) of rail across the whole country. And more developments are likely to be announced in the coming months as the Middle Eastern kingdom moves full steam ahead with its bid to invigorate its tourism sector, diversify its economy, and reduce its reliance on oil revenue. Saudi Arabia plans to invest over \$800 billion into tourism over the next 10 years, aiming to attract 70 million international tourists a year by 2030. Projects currently underway include a brand-new luxury regenerative tourism destination along the Red Sea coast and futuristic city NEOM, which is being built from scratch in the desert of northwest Saudi Arabia. The kilometer route will extend across Saudi Arabia's stunning desert landscapes, along with the city of Hail. **Arsenale** S.P.A./Saudi Arabia Railways Recent figures

suggest that these efforts have been paying off. According to the UNWTO , the country reported a 56% growth in international arrivals in 2023 from 2019 pre-pandemic levels. The Saudi Railway Company has pledged its commitment to a government program known as Saudi Vision 2030 aimed at diversifying the country's economy over the next decade, stressing that the development of the tourism and culture sector 'is one of its most important objectives.' SAR's CEO, Bashar bin Khaled Al Malik, says he believes that Dream of the Desert will prove to be a significant addition to the company, offering both visitors and residents the chance to discover more of the kingdom's regions 'within an integrated framework of luxurious transportation services.' So will Dream of the Desert be impressive enough to compete with the likes of Orient Express 'La Dolce Vita, Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, which runs from London to Venice, or even Seven Stars in Kyushu, one of Japan's most luxurious trains. We'll have to wait and see. But it's clear that SAR has high hopes for the ambitious concept. 'The signing of this MoU [memorandum of understanding] between SAR and **Arsenale** is to be

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considered a first step towards the introduction of a new offer within the tourism market with an experience of luxury travel by train,? says Al Malik. CNN?s Lilit Marcus and Ben Jones contributed to this article. Related

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Saudi Arabia's First Luxury Train Service Is Coming in 2025

LINK: <https://www.cntraveler.com/story/saudi-arabia-luxury-train-service>

Ream of the Desert will run 800 miles from Riyadh to Al Qurayyat. BY CLARE DIGHT January 30, 2024 Rendering of Dream of the Desert a luxury train set to launch in KSA in 2025 Supplied Production has started on Dream of the Desert, the first luxury train service in Saudi Arabia, scheduled to cut a swathe across the kingdom's spectacular desert interior by the end of 2025. Made in Italy, by hospitality company **Arsenale** Group, and commissioned by Saudi Arabia Railways (SAR), the 40-cabin train will run on 800 miles of existing railway lines from the capital Riyadh to Al Qurayyat in the northern province of Al Jawf, making stops along the way. The planned one- to two-day route takes in Al Qassim, Hail and Al Jouf, on the edge of King Salman bin Abdulaziz Nature Reserve, before it terminates some 20 miles from the border with Jordan. ADVERTISEMENT SAR chief executive Bashar bin Khalid Al-Malik said the train service would enable Saudis and tourists to explore more of the Kingdom when he signed an agreement with **Arsenale** CEO, **Paolo**

Barletta, on Tuesday. The railway carriages will be built in Italy, Barletta said, but would be "fully customized and inspired by Saudi style and tradition." The Italian company is already working in collaboration with Orient Express on La Dolce Vita, a new luxury rail service with six itineraries criss-crossing Italy, set to launch this year. **Arsenale** has also signed an agreement with the UAE's national railway company, Etihad Railway, to develop a luxury train that will travel across the Middle Eastern peninsula. The ventures come as luxury train cruising is set to become a popular post-Covid travel trend. ADVERTISEMENT The update on Dream of the Desert is one of many as Saudi Arabia fast-tracks its ambitions to become a leading tourist destination, with plans to attract 150m visitors by the end of the decade. Last year was marked by news of hotel and resort developments across the Kingdom, from AlUla, the ancient oasis city near the sandstone monuments of Hegra; to the Red Sea coast and its islands; Sindalah Island, part of the Neom

gigaproject; and the historic settlement of Diriyah. A version of this story originally appeared on Condé Nast Traveller Middle East.

Arábia Saudita irá lançar primeiro trem de luxo do Oriente Médio

LINK: <https://www.cnnbrasil.com.br/economia/negocios/arabia-saudita-ira-lancar-primeiro-trem-de-luxo-do-oriente-medio/>

Arábia Saudita irá lançar primeiro trem de luxo do Oriente Médio Switch A seguir Arábia Saudita irá lançar primeiro trem de luxo do Oriente Médio Estatal saudita e grupo italiano fecham contrato de US\$ 53 milhões para projeto inédito no reino Novo trem deve começar a operar no final de 2025

D i v u l g a ç ã o / S A R
04/02/2024 às 04:00 |
Atualizado 04/02/2024 às 20:43
Compartilhe: A empresa ferroviária estatal da Arábia Saudita (SAR, na sigla em inglês) fechou um acordo de 200 milhões de reais sauditas (US\$ 53,33 milhões) com a italiana **Arsenale** Group para lançar o primeiro trem de luxo do Oriente Médio. A Arábia Saudita abriu oficialmente as suas portas aos turistas internacionais em momento histórico em 2019, e o reino do Médio Oriente tem feito todos os esforços para atrair visitantes desde então. O país fez vários investimentos turísticos de alto nível nos últimos anos entre eles, uma cidade modelo de US\$ 500 bilhões no deserto do noroeste da Arábia Saudita. Agora, o reino está aderindo ao movimento slow travel em

grande estilo, entrando no mercado de trens de luxo. ?Cruzeiro de trem de luxo? De acordo com a mídia estatal da Arábia Saudita, o novo trem deve começar a operar no final de 2025. O Dream of the Desert oferecerá viagens de ?cruzeiro de trem de luxo? da capital, Riad, para Qurayyat, que fica perto da fronteira norte com a Jordânia, de acordo com um comunicado à imprensa emitido pela SAR. A rota de 1.300 quilômetros se estenderá pelas paisagens desérticas da Arábia Saudita, juntamente com a cidade de Hail. Com um design inspirado no ?estilo e tradição sauditas?, os trens ?totalmente personalizados?, compostos por 40 cabines de luxo, já estão em produção, com reservas programadas para serem abertas no final do ano. Viagens de uma ou duas noites estarão disponíveis para reserva, com capacidade máxima de 82 passageiros, de acordo com **Paolo Barletta**, CEO da **Arsenale**. ?As fases iniciais de produção dos vagões do Dream of the Desert na Itália começaram recentemente, e mal podemos esperar pela estreia do nosso primeiro

trem no reino nos próximos anos?, disse Barletta em um comunicado oficial. Leia Mais Petrobras evita rota no Mar Vermelho em meio a ataques, mas sem custos adicionais, diz empresa Escolha mais ecológica A decisão da Arábia Saudita de entrar no mercado de trens de luxo ocorre no momento em que a demanda por trens de alta velocidade e ?cruzeiros ferroviários? de luxo continua a aumentar em todo o mundo. Muitos países têm investido milhões, ou bilhões em alguns casos, em novas infraestruturas à medida que os clientes buscam alternativas mais sustentáveis para viagens de curta distância ou escapar de rodovias congestionadas. O presidente dos EUA, Joe Biden, prometeu US\$ 30 bilhões para projetos e melhorias ferroviárias em todo o país, enquanto, de acordo com a Reuters, a França planeja fortalecer sua rede ferroviária investindo cerca de 100 bilhões de euros (US\$ 106 bilhões) em viagens de trem até 2040. O serviço saudita está programado para ser lançado cerca de um ano depois do ?Orient

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Express ? La Dolce Vita?, uma colaboração entre o **Arsenale** Group e o Accor Group. As projeções do trem de 11 vagões, que se inspira no período ?La Dolce Vita? da década de 1960, foram reveladas em 2021, revelando um interior com 12 ?cabines de luxo?, 18 suítes, uma ?Suíte de Honra? e um vagão-restaurante. ?As viagens de trem representam a opção mais ecológica de transporte, aprimorando as viagens a grandes cidades, bem como a locais de pequeno e médio porte com locais culturais e paisagens atraentes?, disse Luigi Corradi, CEO e gerente geral da Trenitalia, parte da empresa ferroviária estatal italiana Ferrovie dello Stato, em um comunicado na época. A notícia da chegada do Dream of the Desert ocorre quase seis anos após o lançamento da Ferrovia de Alta Velocidade Haramain da Arábia Saudita, que conecta as cidades sagradas de Meca e Medina ao Aeroporto Internacional Rei Abdulaziz em Jeddah, em 2018. Investimento em infraestrutura Transportando trens a velocidades de até 300 km/h, espera-se que a rede ferroviária se estenda por todo o reino do Oriente Médio. Também estão sendo feitos aprimoramentos nas linhas

existentes no noroeste do país, com mais serviços de alta velocidade por vir. Em janeiro de 2022, o Ministro de Investimentos da Arábia Saudita, Khalid al-Falih, anunciou planos para construir 8.000 quilômetros de ferrovias em todo o país. E é provável que mais desenvolvimentos sejam anunciados nos próximos meses, à medida que o reino do Oriente Médio avança a todo vapor em sua tentativa de revigorar seu setor de turismo, diversificar sua economia e reduzir sua dependência da receita do petróleo. A Arábia Saudita planeja investir mais de US\$ 800 bilhões em turismo nos próximos 10 anos, com o objetivo de atrair 70 milhões de turistas internacionais por ano até 2030. Os projetos atualmente em andamento incluem um novo destino turístico de luxo ao longo da costa do Mar Vermelho e a cidade futurista NEOM, que está sendo construída do zero no deserto do noroeste da Arábia Saudita. Números recentes sugerem que esses esforços estão valendo a pena. De acordo com a Organização Mundial de Turismo (OMT), o país relatou um crescimento de 56% nas chegadas internacionais em 2023 em relação aos níveis pré-pandêmicos de 2019. A Saudi Railway Company

prometeu seu compromisso com um programa governamental conhecido como ?Visão 2030?, que visa diversificar a economia do país na próxima década, enfatizando que o desenvolvimento do setor de turismo e cultura ?é um de seus objetivos mais importantes?. O CEO da SAR, Bashar bin Khaled Al Malik, diz acreditar que o Dream of the Desert será um acréscimo significativo à empresa, oferecendo aos visitantes e residentes a chance de descobrir mais regiões do reino ?dentro de uma estrutura integrada de serviços de transporte de luxo?. Então, será que o Dream of the Desert será impressionante o suficiente para competir com trens como o Orient Express ? La Dolce Vita, o Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, que vai de Londres a Veneza, ou mesmo o Seven Stars in Kyushu, um dos trens mais luxuosos do Japão? É esperar para ver, mesmo que esteja evidente que a SAR tem grandes esperanças em relação a esse ambicioso conceito. ?A assinatura desse MoU [memorando de entendimento] entre a SAR e o **Arsenale** deve ser considerada um primeiro passo para a introdução de uma nova oferta no mercado de turismo com uma experiência de viagem de luxo por trem?, diz Al

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Malik. Matéria traduzida do
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The incredible 59-day train journey that crosses 12 countries and costs a whopping £96k

Story by John Varga • 5d • 🕒 2 min read



📍 India

[Phileas Fogg](#) famously travelled around the world in 80 days, as apart of a wager he made with members at his [London Reform Club](#).

In the film adaption of the Jules Verne novel, Fogg uses a hot air balloon for large parts of his epic journey.

However, in the book, the intrepid adventurer relied on more prosaic forms of transport - such as elephants, sailboats, steamboats, sledges and, of course, [trains](#).

Now a luxury travel company is offering people the chance to follow in his footsteps and to travel around the world by train - this time in just 59 days.



└ Venice
© Venice Simplon-Orient-Express

Due to popular demand, Railbookers has announced the return of its "Around the World By Luxury Train" for 2025.

Passengers will travel on some of the world's most prestigious trains, as they cross through four continents, 12 countries and visit over 20 cities.

These include in the European section the Belmond Royal Scotsman in Scotland, La Dolce Vita Orient Express in Italy and the [Venice Simplon-Orient-Express](#).

Those wishing to sign up for the trip will have to have deep pockets, with a single ticket costing an eye-watering £96,535.

And the price does not include several flights that will need to be taken in order to complete the trip.



Canada
© The Rocky Mountaineer

Starting in Vancouver, passengers will travel through the beautiful [Rocky Mountains](#) before flying to Scotland and then continuing on to Rome, Verona and Venice.

From Venice, they will travel to Paris and then head east to Budapest, Bucharest and Istanbul.

A plane will take them to Delhi, India - the start of the next leg of the journey.

In Delhi, they will board the Maharajas Express and visit Agra and Jaipur before flying to Johannesburg, South Africa.

Once there, passengers will travel on the Rovos Rail train to the Hwange National Park and Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe.

Returning to Cape Town in South Africa by plane, passengers will get the chance to explore Table Mountain and sample local wines, before flying once again to Singapore.

A round trip on the Eastern and Oriental Express will take guests from Singapore through Malaysia and back to Singapore, where they'll fly home.



Home > Travel

La Dolce Vita Orient Express Is Coming To Italy In 2025

By Rebecca Cox
18 Hours Ago

Just one more reason to add Italy to your wanderlust list.



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La Dolce Vita Orient Express Suite

We'd love to stop banging on about 'the great rail renaissance', but frankly, we can't. Travel has shifted completely over the last few years from 'get there, now' to 'get there, well'. The journey is becoming as important as the destination, which means that spending less time on an airport coach and taking our shoes off at security, and more time staring out a train window at rolling hills and jagged cliffs while sipping from a glass of something cold and crisp is increasingly appealing. The latest rail journey to pique our interest? The upcoming 2025 launch of La Dolce Vita Orient Express, Italy's first ultra-luxurious train.

Reservations are now open for the inaugural season, set to begin in Spring 2025, offering eight one-and-two-night itineraries traversing the Italian peninsula. The new voyages promise to revive the glamour of the 1960s and 70s La Dolce Vita era through immersive journeys celebrating Italian culture, cuisine, wine, and design, so dust off that copy of *Murder On The Orient Express*, slip into your most fabulous cocktail attire and book yourself a ticket.

'La Dolce Vita Orient Express is set to offer an inimitable take on luxury rail travel, reigniting a bygone era through a contemporary lens, Italian style,' says General Manager Samy Ghachem.



La Dolce Vita Orient Express Suite

Vintage Italian Design, Modern Italian Cuisine

The train's interior was designed by [Dimorestudio](#) and pays homage to iconic Italian designers like Carlo Scarpa and Gio Ponti, marrying vintage aesthetics with modern comfort. Passengers will be able to choose one of 12 deluxe cabins and 18 suites for their voyage.

Guests will also have access to the new La Dolce Vita Orient Express Executive Lounge in Rome before boarding and once on board, will be able to indulge in the cuisine of three-Michelin-starred chef Heinz Beck, who will curate regionally-inspired menus celebrating Italy's culinary heritage. A partnership with Vinalty will showcase wines from across Italy's wine regions on each journey.

Immersive Train Journeys Across Italy

The planned routes will span 14 regions and 131 cities, from the Alps to Sicily. Highlights include the mediaeval village of Palena, the ancient city of Matera, and a rail ferry experience to Sicily.

"The itineraries offer access to once difficult to reach destinations and an immersion into the heart of cities that are international hubs of art and culture," says Ghachem.

HOW?

Journeys promise to be an intimate luxury experience with 62 passengers per 12-carriage train. Pricing starts at €3,500 per person for a one-night deluxe cabin journey. orient-express.com

How You Could Own Five Holiday Homes For The Price Of One

Thinking of purchasing a holiday home but can't settle on a location? We know the feeling. But what if you didn't have to choose? This is the concept underpinning August, a global homeowner network celebrating unique real estate in Europe's most beautiful destinations. Elevating second-home ownership to a seamless and hassle-free experience, here's exactly how it works, plus how you can join Europe's pioneering luxury co-ownership community.

Want to discover more? Request a Brochure from August today

Introducing August, The Better Way To Own Holiday Homes



Cotswolds, Premium Home

How Does It Work?

August facilitates effortless holiday home ownership; with fractional ownership, multiple people can own and enjoy up to five residences across Europe. August finds, buys, designs and renovates all five homes to an exceptional standard across five sought-after European destinations, taking care of all admin and maintenance – and you get to call all of them home for less than the price of one.

It's the next level in effortless travelling and home-ownership, and members of August's exclusive community holiday an average of 12 weeks per year. There are five collections to choose from, spanning Europe's most iconic destinations, including the French Riviera, Tuscany, Mallorca, the Alps and the Cotswolds – all highly-sought regions you'll want to visit year-round, with easy flight connections. Each home is welcoming, family friendly and features stylish yet timeless interiors curated by experts, charmingly matched to the destination.



Provence, South of France, Signature Collection

Why It Makes Sense

Full Ownership

Not only will you get to holiday in these five gorgeous houses, but every family or individual has collective ownership. This is an equity purchase, with real ownership, transparency and control.

More For Your Money

With shares starting from €365,000, you can part-own over €7,500,000 of prime real estate for a fraction of the cost. Plus, with five destinations at your disposal, you're not restricted to just one property to call your second home.

Hassle-Free

August takes all of the hassle out of holiday home ownership, managing the purchase, maintenance and management of every home, including everything from housekeeping to gardening, cleaning the pool filter to paying the bills. If you've been put off holiday home ownership due to language barriers, unfamiliar legal and administrative processes, a lack of market expertise or simply not being in the area for viewings, August is the perfect antidote, allowing you to simply show up after all the hard work has been done, lie back and enjoy your dream property.

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With a wealth of experienced interior designers underpinning the collection, your five properties are carefully renovated and designed to expertly blend home comforts with modern technology. Welcome home.

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La Dolce Vita Orient Express Is Coming To Italy In 2025

Story by Country and Town House • 1w • 2 min read

We'd love to stop banging on about 'the great rail renaissance', but frankly, we can't. Travel has shifted completely over the last few years from 'get there, now' to 'get there, well'. The journey is becoming as important as the destination, which means that spending less time on an airport coach and taking our shoes off at security, and more time staring out a train window at rolling hills and jagged cliffs while sipping from a glass of something cold and crisp is increasingly appealing. The latest rail journey to pique our interest? The upcoming 2025 launch of La Dolce Vita Orient Express, Italy's first ultra-luxurious train.

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La Dolce Vita Orient Express is set to offer an inimitable take on luxury rail travel, reigniting a bygone era



La Dolce Vita Orient Express
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La Dolce Vita Orient Express Suite

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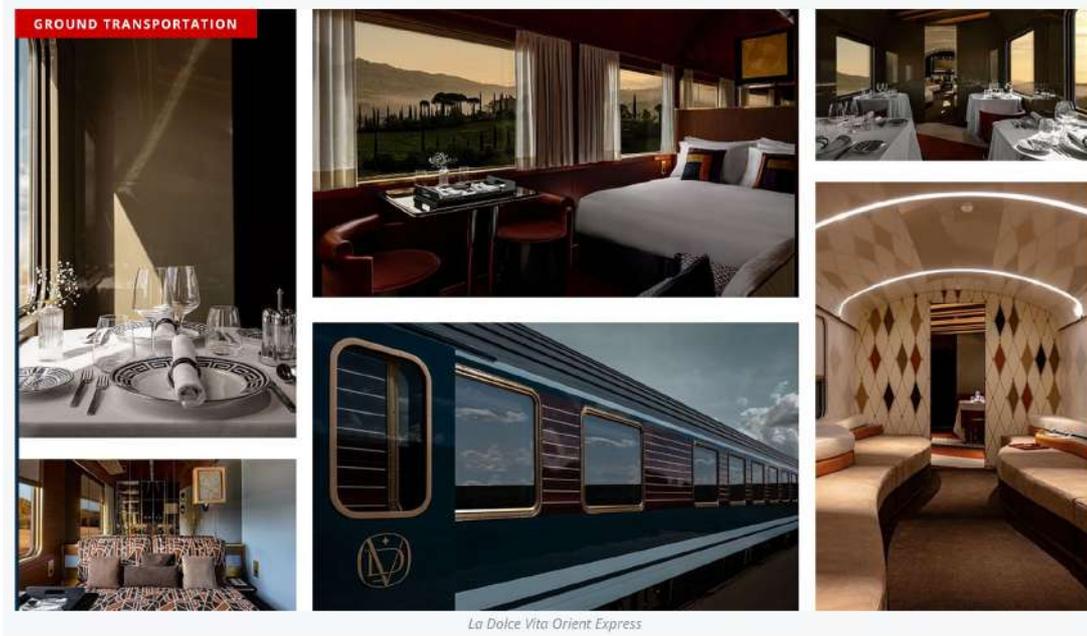
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RAIL

Reservations now open for Italy's first luxury train, La Dolce Vita Orient Express

Theodore Koumelis
19.06.2024 1241



La Dolce Vita Orient Express

Italy's first luxury train, La Dolce Vita Orient Express, launches in Spring 2025, offering eight itineraries across Italy, bookings open now.

Italy's first luxury train, *La Dolce Vita Orient Express*, will commence its journeys in Spring of 2025, with bookings now open at orient-express.com. Taking luxury rail travel to unparalleled heights, with a 'Made in Italy' experience, this exquisite new travel offering will feature eight one-to-two-night itineraries with immersive explorations from the north to the south of the country.

This venture, expertly guided by new General Manager **Samy Ghachem** (formerly Managing Director at **Sereno Hotels** and **Frosch**) marks a partnership between Italian luxury hospitality group **Arsenale S.p.A.**, Orient Express, and **Trenitalia-Gruppo Ferrovie dello Stato**, **Fondazione FS** and **Treni Turistici Italiani TTI**. The arrival of *La Dolce Vita Orient Express* comes close to the arrival of the first two Orient Express hotels: *Orient Express La Minerva* in Rome, followed by *Orient Express Palazzo Donà Giovannelli* in Venice.

The journeys will include access to the newly established *La Dolce Vita Orient Express Executive Lounge* at Roma Ostiense. The train's design and décor conceived by Italian Dimorestudio have been masterfully curated to communicate the art of Italian living, with the sumptuous interior celebrating the design and craftsmanship of 1960's and 1970's *La Dolce Vita* period in Italy.

The project takes inspiration from masters of Italian design, including **Carlo Scarpa**, **Gio Ponti** and **Ignazio Gardella** through to the great artists of the Spatialism movement that put space and time at the centre of its compositions, such as **Lucio Fontana**, **Agostino Bonalumi** and **Enrico Castellani**. *La Dolce Vita Orient Express* train marries the golden age of Italian design with a more contemporary spirit of travel. The design project was conceived to embody a flawless and understated balance between the historic and contemporary, while still maintaining its authenticity. The spaces are thoughtfully designed and always well-curated and subtle details complement each other graciously.

Beck & Maltese Consulting, alongside *La Dolce Vita Orient Express*, confirmed that renowned three Michelin-starred chef **Heinz Beck** will oversee the cuisine onboard the rail cruises. Guests will have the pleasure of experiencing the curated menu by this world-renowned chef with a deep connection to Italy. With the ambition of its cuisine to become a recognised part of **UNESCO** heritage, the train will offer regional and thematic routes, celebrating the culinary diversity of each region traversed during every journey.

Wines onboard will showcase everything from the biggest labels through to lesser-known wineries, always synonymous with quality and the uniqueness typical of Italy. To curate the wine list, *La Dolce Vita Orient Express* has partnered with **Vinitaly**, one of the world's largest and most significant international wine and spirits exhibitions, committing to selecting six outstanding wine companies annually presented at the exhibition that represent north, south and central Italy. This ties into the wider brand goal of fostering associations with local Italian life and celebrating authentic symbols of Italian excellence. This is just one of many exciting brand collaborations to be announced with the purpose of highlighting the very best from each region that the 'Made in Italy' itineraries visit.

La Dolce Vita Orient Express with 12 carriages per train (only 62 passengers per train), 12 deluxe cabins, 18 suites and one *La Dolce Vita Suite* combines romance, style, the art of encounters and relaxation, with a cruising model for round-trip experiences.

The trips cover 16,000km of track, including 7,000km of non-electrified railway, spread over 14 regions and 131 cities across Italy. Central to the experience will be exclusive, thoughtfully curated and memorable excursions, included in the cost, along with full-board accommodation. The eight itineraries are designed to provide a highly emotional travel experience, appealing to all five senses. Taking in the breadth of the country, it is a journey into the heart of nature, through its lakes, forests, sumptuous coasts and Alpine mountains, and an immersion into the centre of cities that are international hubs of art and culture, from Milan to Florence, Venice and Rome.

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GROUND TRANSPORTATION



Trenitalia Summer Experience – 1.8 billion euros invested, mainly in fleet renewal

The itineraries also offer access to once difficult to reach destinations, such as Matera in Basilicata, the third oldest city in the world, with its ancient architecture, caves and stunning natural beauty, and Palena, a beautiful mountainous village in Abruzzo with medieval architecture, scenic views and rich cultural heritage. A remarkable itinerary also includes the world's first passenger rail ferry, accessing the island of Sicily, where the train will decouple at Calabria and load onto a ferry, for the experience to resume on water, before being reassembled and continuing the tracks in Messina.

Samy Ghachem comments: *"it is a privilege to join La Dolce Vita Orient Express at this key period in the revival of the iconic Orient Express brand and the launch of Italy's first foray into luxury rail hospitality. La Dolce Vita Orient Express is set to offer an inimitable take on luxury rail travel, reigniting a bygone era through a contemporary lens, Italian style."*

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Theodore is the Co-Founder and Managing Editor of TravelDailyNews Media Network; his responsibilities include business development and planning for TravelDailyNews long-term opportunities.

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SUNNY ANTALYA AT THE SUNNIEST TIME OF THE YEAR

THE SPECIALIST HELPING AGENTS CAPITALISE ON THE BOOM IN RAIL HOLIDAYS

26 JUN 2024 BY KATHERINE MASTERS

We connect the dots for travel agents booking rail, says Frank Marini, chief executive of Railbookers, which has seen FIT business triple in size since Covid



KATHERINE MASTERS
Features editor



Switzerland is enduringly popular says Railbookers

There are many reasons driving the trend for rail holidays, says Frank Marini, president and chief executive of Railbookers Group, noting that their customers are choosing rail for sustainability reasons, because they don't want to drive, or they simply want an adventure. "We call rail the sleeping giant," he says.

Railbookers Group has seen spectacular growth in recent years, partly helped by the Covid years, which presented an opportunity because rail networks did not shut down in the same way that the aviation industry did.

"Before the pandemic we had double-digit growth every year for 10 years. Today we are three times the size we were pre-Covid," Marini adds.

Railbookers Group includes Amtrak Vacations in the US and Railbookers outside the US. The main source markets are the US, Canada, the UK, Australia and New Zealand, and the business has staff in six countries and 34 US states. The rail product ranges from luxury tourist trains to intercity services, and the key differentiator for the company is offering flexible independent travel (FIT) holidays, which include hotel bookings, transfers and sightseeing tours alongside train tickets.

"We connect the dots for the travel agent," says Marini. "We can provide instant quotes and a flexible booking window."

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railbookers

Railbookers

There are multiple benefits for agents in focusing on rail. It's not a seasonal product and there are no peak booking times so money can be made year-round. "You can book for tomorrow, or you can book for a year ahead," explains Marini, adding that the FIT nature of the product means there are no fixed departure dates and last-minute bookings can generally be accommodated.

Railbookers can also step in whenever there's disruption: "When there's a domino effect with missed connections, that's where we come in for the travel agent and rearrange everything. We take the anxiety away from travel advisors and customers."

He says it's hard to define a typical rail customer. Although the bulk of Railbookers' clients are fifty-plus, they can be travelling by train for many reasons. They might be opting for a river cruise and rail package; they might want to recreate the interrail experiences of their youth on a different level; or take a "bleisure" trip involving rail, which is becoming more common.

"Rail means something different to every person," says Marini. "We don't get a lot of train buffs, but we do get a lot of travellers."



Frank Marini is president and chief executive of Railbookers Group

Anna Davies, partnership marketing director for Railbookers in the UK, agrees: "Rail can be anything anybody wants it to be. There's so much flexibility in the product, it lends itself naturally to different parts of the market."

Not sure where to start if your client is open to rail but doesn't have a fixed route in mind and the possibilities feel endless? "Maps are great collateral," advises Davies. "Show the customer the European rail network as a starting point."

When customers are keen to experience rail further afield, Marini suggests agents kickstart a consultation with Railbookers' lighthouse product, an 80-day Round the World by Luxury Train itinerary, featuring four continents and 10 countries. "It's a bucket list trip and we do make bookings for it," he explains. "But it also helps draw attention to everything we else sell."





Railbookers can incorporate the Andean Explorer into Peru itineraries

Railbookers has a steady stream of new product launches, and these are often inspired by real-time booking trends. Recent long-haul expansion has included tours in Argentina, South Africa and New Zealand, and south-east Asia is the next area of focus. Closer to home, there's a new selection of Italian itineraries incorporating the La Dolce Vita Orient Express train launching in April 2025.

While the FIT nature of the product makes it difficult to showcase in a fam trip, Railbookers is keen for agents to experience the allure of a rail holiday, and offers a 20% discount for personalised fam trips. "We'll offer 20% for the agent and three additional passengers travelling with them, anywhere you choose," says Davies.

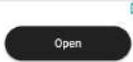
Above all, the company is keen to cement its reputation as the rail holiday experts. "Ticketing agents won't tell you how to get to the station, where to stay, what to see," says Marini. "Call us to ask where to sit on the train for the best views. Our staff are trained on it. We can take the pressure off agents, because we speak train."

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Experience La Dolce Vita Orient Express in Italy

June 27, 2024



Embark on an unforgettable journey inspired by the glamour of the 1960s and 1970s, featuring eight exclusive itineraries to remarkable destinations, launching in the Spring of 2025.

Italy's first luxury train, *La Dolce Vita Orient Express*, will commence its journeys in Spring of 2025, with bookings now open at orient-express.com

			
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Taking luxury rail travel to unparalleled heights, with a 'Made in Italy' experience, this exquisite new travel offering will feature eight one-to-two-night itineraries with immersive explorations from the north to the south of the country.

This venture, expertly guided by new General Manager Samy Ghachem (formerly Managing Director at Sereno Hotels and Frosch) marks a partnership between Italian luxury hospitality group Arsenale S.p.A., Orient Express, and Trenitalia-Gruppo Ferrovie dello Stato, Fondazione FS and Treni Turistici Italiani TTI. The arrival of *La Dolce Vita Orient Express* comes close to the arrival of the first two Orient Express hotels: Orient Express La Minerva in Rome, followed by Orient Express Palazzo



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Donà Giovannelli in Venice.

The journeys will include access to the newly established La Dolce Vita Orient Express Executive Lounge at Roma Ostiense. The train's design and décor conceived by Italian Dimorestudio have been masterfully curated to communicate the art of Italian living, with the sumptuous interior celebrating the design and craftsmanship of 1960's and 1970's La Dolce Vita period in Italy.

The project takes inspiration from masters of Italian design, including Carlo Scarpa, Gio Ponti and Ignazio Gardella through to the great artists of the Spatialism movement that put space and time at the centre of its compositions, such as Lucio Fontana, Agostino Bonalumi and Enrico Castellani. La Dolce Vita Orient Express train marries the golden age of Italian design with a more contemporary spirit of travel. The design project was conceived to embody a flawless and understated balance between the historic and contemporary, while still maintaining its authenticity. The spaces are thoughtfully designed and always well-curated and subtle details complement each other graciously.

Beck & Maltese Consulting, alongside La Dolce Vita Orient Express, confirmed that renowned three Michelin-starred chef Heinz Beck will oversee the cuisine onboard the rail cruises. Guests will have the pleasure of experiencing the curated menu by this world-renowned chef with a deep connection to Italy. With the ambition of its cuisine to become a recognised part of UNESCO heritage, the train will offer regional and thematic routes, celebrating the culinary diversity of each region traversed during every journey.



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La Dolce Vita Orient Express with 12 carriages per train (only 62 passengers per train), 12 deluxe cabins, 18 suites and one La Dolce Vita Suite combines romance, style, the art of encounters and relaxation, with a cruising model for round-trip experiences.

The trips cover 16,000km of track, including 7,000km of non-electrified railway, spread over 14 regions and 131 cities across Italy. Central to the experience will be exclusive, thoughtfully curated and memorable excursions, included in the cost, along with full-board accommodation. The eight itineraries are designed to provide a highly emotional travel experience, appealing to all five senses. Taking in the breadth of the country, it is a journey into the heart of nature, through its lakes, forests, sumptuous coasts and Alpine mountains, and an immersion into the centre of cities that are international hubs of art and culture, from Milan to Florence, Venice and Rome.

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ITALY'S FIRST LUXURY TRAIN – LA DOLCE VITA ORIENT EXPRESS



POSTED IN [NEWS](#), [STICKY-NEWS](#) ON 4 JULY, 2024

Italy's first luxury train, La Dolce Vita Orient Express, will commence its journeys in Spring of 2025, with bookings now open at [orient-express.com](https://www.orient-express.com)

Taking luxury rail travel to unparalleled heights, with a 'Made in Italy' experience, this exquisite new travel offering will feature eight one-to-two-night itineraries with immersive explorations from the north to the south of the country.

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The project takes inspiration from masters of Italian design, including Carlo Scarpa, Gio Ponti and Ignazio Gardella through to the great artists of the Spatialism movement that put space and time at the centre of its compositions, such as Lucio Fontana, Agostino Bonalumi and Enrico Castellani. La Dolce Vita Orient Express train marries the golden age of Italian design with a more contemporary spirit of travel. The design project was conceived to embody a flawless and understated balance between the historic and contemporary, while still maintaining its authenticity. The spaces are thoughtfully designed and always well-curated and subtle details complement each other graciously.

La Dolce Vita Orient Express with 12 carriages per train (only 62 passengers per train). 12 deluxe cabins, 18 suites and one La Dolce Vita Suite combines romance, style, the art of encounters and relaxation, with a cruising model for round-trip experiences.

Samy Ghachem comments: *"It is a privilege to join La Dolce Vita Orient Express at this key period in the revival of the iconic Orient Express brand and the launch of Italy's first foray into luxury rail hospitality. La Dolce Vita Orient Express is set to offer an inimitable take on luxury rail travel, reigniting a bygone era through a contemporary lens, Italian style."*

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Experience La Dolce Vita Orient Express: Reservations Now Open For Italy's First Luxury Train With Unique Round-Trip Itineraries

Embark on an unforgettable journey inspired by the glamour of the 1960s and 1970s, featuring eight exclusive itineraries to remarkable destinations, launching in the spring of 2025.

By [LLM Reporters](#) | July 11, 2024



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La Dolce Vita Orient Express with 12 carriages per train (only 62 passengers per train), 12 deluxe cabins, 18 suites and one La Dolce Vita Suite combines romance, style, the art of encounters and relaxation

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Experience La Dolce Vita Orient Express: Reservations Now Open For Italy's First Luxury Train With Unique Round-Trip Itineraries



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I'm a Luxury Train Travel Expert — and These Are the 5 European Journeys I Always Recommend

Why your next trip to Europe should be on a luxury train, according to one A-List advisor.

By **Eleanor Hardy** | Published on September 13, 2024



View from a cabin on the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express. PHOTO: COURTESY OF BELMOND

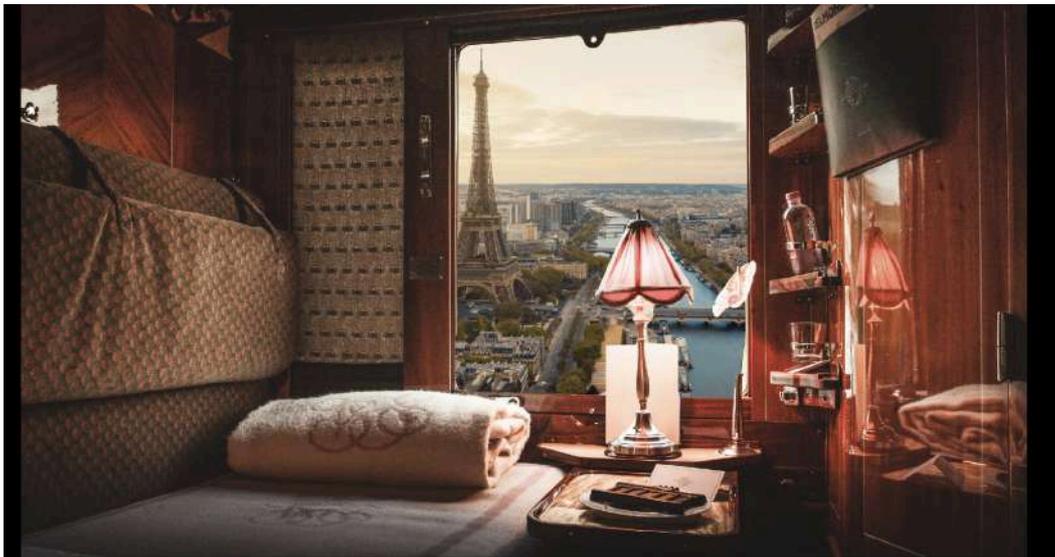
Traveling by train is one of the best ways to cover a lot of ground in a single journey. Not only does [train travel](#) provide a sense of ease and reduce the stress of planning, but it also adds an element of whimsy that can't be replicated. Plus, it's like being a member of an elite club; fellow passengers come from all over the world and friendships can be forged easily.

For your next European adventure, sip Champagne, savor some caviar, and let someone else do the driving with these luxury train journeys.

La Dolce Vita Orient Express

Italy's new [La Dolce Vita Orient Express](#) is scheduled to leave Roma Ostiense station for the first time in spring 2025, and bookings are now available. The company has already announced its incredible new executive chef: German-born Heinz Beck, from the only three-starred Michelin restaurant in Rome, La Pergola. The train will pay tribute to "La Dolce Vita" in the 1960s, and elegance is key. It's evident in the 31 cabins and suites, all with cozy bedding, chocolate wood accents, and massive picture windows.

Condé Nast Traveler



Photos: Martin Scott Powell/Belmond, Getty
Animation: Andrea Edelman Kay

FUTURE OF TRAVEL

Luxury Train Travel Is Entering Another Golden Age

As the demand for 'slow travel' grows, train journeys are bringing travelers to less-trodden places, often in grand style.

BY JD SHADEL

October 16, 2024

On August 26, an unusual rail journey set out from Vancouver, British Columbia, with an itinerary stringing together seven pre-existing luxury train lines across four continents, starting in [North America](#), zigzagging through [Europe](#) and [Africa](#), before concluding in [Asia](#) (with a few international flights in between). The trip, packaged by specialist travel agency Railbookers, started from \$113,599 per person. And its popularity resulted in a waitlist of more than 500 people before the expanded 2025 offerings went on sale this month.

The “[Around the World By Luxury Train](#)” travel packages are, even by price-point alone, niche. The average traveler merely needs to get from point A to B efficiently and affordably, and most of the tourism industry still caters to those needs. But the growing demand for luxury rail speaks to a larger shift happening in the upper reaches of the travel market.

On one hand, this mode of travel seems to be meeting the moment, as preferences for “[slow travel](#)” persist. “Ever since Covid, there has been a boom in this desire to slow down and do something a bit different and in a different way,” says Samy Ghachem, general manager of the forthcoming [La Dolce Vita Orient Express](#), promoted as Italy’s first luxury train. It’s one of several developments under the expanding Orient Express brand from Accor Group, and it offers [eight distinct roundtrip itineraries](#) setting out from [Rome](#) in 2025.

Nostalgia is certainly a factor in the appeal. It might be tempting to view these plush train carriages as a kind of Gilded Age cosplay—as if meticulously designed Wes Anderson sets have come to life (the [director actually did design a car on the British Pullman](#), a luxury train under the [Belmond portfolio](#)). In an era of booming luxury travel, where major openings routinely promote “immersive experiences” and “narrative” concepts, it’s not surprising to see Accor’s Orient Express trading in the legendary status of its name. In fact, another beloved train also, confusingly, operates under the iconic moniker: the [Venice Simplon-Orient-Express](#) belongs to Belmond and travels occasionally through Italy. (When Accor’s trains hit the tracks, be ready for train travel pedants to remind you of the differences.)

But rail travel’s glamorous moment in the sun, one might argue, isn’t wholly about reliving the past so much as finding novel ways to be present. And it’s pushing the market far beyond [the most storied routes](#), with soon-to-launch lines veering off to lesser-visited destinations and stopping frequently for tailored off-train excursions.

This has been a “record-breaking” year for rail bookings

One day in early September, Andrew Channell had his coffee watching the sunrise as he cruised through the Peruvian Andes at about 14,000 feet above sea level. He was aboard the exclusive [Andean Explorer](#), which carries a maximum of 70 guests in 32 cabins. It was a trip that confirmed many of the reasons he believes travel by train is having a moment: “With rail, the journey *is* the journey,” Channell tells me. “It’s not just about recreating some historic epic. It’s about slowing down and enjoying every moment.”

A lot of people seem to be getting on board, too. Railbookers, where Channell is senior vice president of product, describes 2024 as “record-breaking” for sales, which are up 30% year over year. Luxury journeys, in particular, have seen a 43% increase compared to 2023. “That massive increase isn’t just in one place, either. It’s not driven by any one destination or any one campaign,” he observes. “It’s driven by demand for these types of experiences all over the place.”

In the post-pandemic era, Railbookers attribute the uptick to a desire for connecting with destinations in ways only trains can do. “That sense of specialness, exclusivity, rarity, and [of something] once-in-a-lifetime—that’s what’s driving it,” Channell says. This generation of sleeper trains take the typical displeasure of getting from one place to another—and, clearly, flying is often the more stressful part of any trip—and makes it pleasurable. “It comes down to enjoying the entirety of your journey from end to end.”

That growth extends beyond the typically affluent demographics to a group dubbed by Matt Foy, Railbookers’ senior director of rail and transportation, as “the little-bit-of-luxury traveler.” These travelers are tacking luxury rail segments onto an otherwise moderately priced vacation, he explains: “Post-pandemic, the demand for ‘the little bit of luxury’ has increased and is on an ever-upward curve.”

The demand isn’t new, but these kinds of journeys are on more and more people’s bucket lists. This certainly includes [iconic journeys](#) such as South Africa’s [Rovos Rail](#), Canada’s [Rocky Mountaineer](#), and India’s [Maharajas’ Express](#). Increasingly, the focus is also on newer lines that take travelers to destinations previously unvisited by luxury trains, from South America and rural Japan to new roundtrip itineraries slowly weaving around Italy.



In 2025, La Dolce Vita Orient Express, promoted as Italy’s first luxury train, will offer eight Italian roundtrip itineraries setting out from Rome.

Patrick Locqueneux/La Dolce Vita Orient Express

The future of luxury rail is, well, off the beaten track

The much delayed La Dolce Vita train exemplifies several overlapping trends. One is slow: rather than high-speed rail, which prioritizes efficiently connecting destinations, this new wave of excursion trains travel at around 80 kilometers an hour—or roughly 50 miles per hour. Another is the focus on localization. “It’s the first luxury train slow cruise concept of its kind in Italy,” asserts Ghachem, underscoring that all of La Dolce Vita’s journeys begin and end in Rome. This is one point of differentiation with the continent’s existing Venice Simplon-Orient-Express from Belmond, which connects many different points throughout Europe.

For more on train journeys that you can experience (at various price points), head over to [The World’s Most Iconic Train Journeys](#), a spotlight on the world’s most legendary railway adventures, from luxury trains that evoke old-world glamour to historic routes that have rebuilt nations.

The excursion concept reflects the popularity of several luxury trains that launched throughout the 2010s in Japan. Though the country is famous among train buffs for its speedy bullet trains, it’s also got the luxuriously slow Seven Stars by JR Kyushu, which [gained a global fanbase after its launch in 2013](#). It’s known for spacious carriages, filled with handcrafted Japanese furnishings, and its circular itinerary. Seven Stars circuits the island of Kyushu over four days and three

nights, with stops at onsens, shrines, and more cultural sites.

La Dolce Vita echoes many of the same ideas that made Seven Stars famous. An all-things-Italian angle comes through in the design heritage that Milan’s interior architecture firm [Dimorestudio](#) embedded in each carriage, upcycled from vintage 1970s trains. The attention to elevated design and more spacious quarters are key to the experience, too—yes, that means en suite bathrooms and showers for every cabin. It also means from grand architectural gestures down to even cutlery selections that every detail pays homage to Italy’s 20th-century “La Dolce Vita” era, with interiors evoking the works of design icons of the period.

Another similar key element to La Dolce Vita is its focus on going to regions in Italy where high-end train services haven’t really gone before. The itineraries total more than 9,941 miles of track, touching more remote destinations such as the ancient stone-carved architecture in the [cliffy city of Matera in Basilicata](#) as well as Palena, a village in Abruzzo. And for a [truly unprecedented journey to the island of Sicily](#), passengers watch as the train is decoupled and loaded on a ferry to cross the Strait of Messina before being reassembled to continue the journey on the other side. [There’s even an itinerary dedicated to truffles.](#)

The slow travel trend keeps picking up speed

In a [country overwhelmed with overtourism](#), the exclusive nature of La Dolce Vita means another draw for passengers is that it’s an escape from crowds, “a chance to double down on the Italian experience and access parts of Italy that they might not normally consider,” Ghachem says. Accor’s expanding Orient Express will bet on demand for that experience far beyond Italy in 2025, with perhaps the most anticipated of all upcoming launches: [Accor’s “the Orient Express” line](#). Architect Maxime d’Angeac resurrects a few old-school Nostalgie Istanbul Orient Express carriages from the 1920s and ‘30s, which will soon trace a similar route to the historic original from [Paris to Istanbul](#).

In other words, the major players in the sector are betting that this particular breed of slow travel is doing anything but slowing down. Accor's new Orient Express lines will compete with Belmond's *Venice Simplon-Orient-Express*, which continues to diversify its European itineraries. Meanwhile, other regional players such as East Japan Railway Company have helped propel the slow-cruising rail experience to new heights with the *Train Suite Shiki-Shima*, launched in 2017, which guests can apply to book and may get a ticket to ride via a lottery for one of its 34 spots.

In a world where even luxury travel can feel homogenized, there's a certain poetry to the growth in high-end rail journeys that are idiosyncratic—and intentionally not high-speed. "The growing trend for luxury is slowing down, is taking a deeper breath, is seeing more and enjoying the journey," concludes La Dolce Vita's Ghachem. And while the so-called "golden age" of train travel may be overly romanticized in the marketing, the rail revival seems like it might, in fact, rival the myth.

RETAIL

The Orient Express is plotting a comeback as the ultra-rich ditch luxury brands for travel

Maria Noyen Nov 5, 2024, 12:55 PM EET

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Orient Express's La Dolce Vita trains will start operating in Spring 2025. Courtesy of Orient Express Italy

- **The Orient Express is preparing for its first launch in decades — a luxury sleeper train in Italy.**
- **Dubbed La Dolce Vita, the new Orient Express trains will start operating in Spring 2025.**
- **The revival comes as rich and aspirational consumers prioritize luxury travel over goods.**

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There's an old saying that goes, one person's loss is another's gain — and the same can be said for industries.

As luxury brands struggle due to economic instability, declining consumer confidence, and a slowdown in key markets such as China, another luxury sector is thriving: travel.

Brought to a standstill during the COVID-19 pandemic, as demand for luxury brands was nearing an all-time high, luxury travel is on the up and up as wealthy and aspirational consumers prioritize experiences over goods.

"People are going overseas, and much more experiences are open to them," Amrita Banta, managing director of luxury insights firm Agility Research & Strategy, told Business Insider. Ultra-high-net-worth Chinese consumers have also caught the travel bug, she said, and are increasingly spending in other countries like Singapore, Thailand, and Japan.

The good times are expected to continue as McKinsey & Company analysis estimates that global spending on luxury leisure hospitality will grow to \$391 billion in 2028, a 10% jump from 2023.

Travel agent Julia Carter, founder of the luxury travel agency Craft Travel, said unique experiences are higher on the priority list of wealthy vacationers than ever.

"People want things that are curated to them," Carter said. "They don't want cookie-cutter experiences, they don't want to go somewhere where everything feels like it could be AI-generated."

This shift in consumer spending habits may be hurting luxury brands, but it's a means for the Orient Express, a once-defunct train service, to stage a comeback.

Back from the dead

Launched 140 years ago by Belgian engineer Georges Nagelmackers, the Orient Express was a luxury sleeper that, at its peak, had trains running from Paris to Istanbul.

The brand became so embedded in popular culture that it inspired Agatha Christie novels and, in recent years, Hollywood movies starring Dame Judi Dench and Kenneth Branagh.

As the draw of slow train travel gave way to speedier options like planes and high-speed railways, Orient Express's golden era ended. It made its last direct trip between Paris and Istanbul in 1977 before a brief revival with pared-back service in the early 1980s.



The Orient Express first ran in 1883. Buyenlarge/Getty Images

That was pretty much the end of the line for the Orient Express – until now.

In partnership with Italian luxury hospitality group Arsenale, the Orient Express is poised for a comeback, opening two new hotels in Italy and six brand-new luxury sleeper trains dubbed La Dolce Vita.

From spring 2025, La Dolce Vita trains, which accommodate up to 62 passengers in deluxe and suite cabins, will run across 10,000 miles of track around 14 regions of Italy, including Sicily.

Related stories



Japanese shoppers are entering their spending era. Not all luxury brands stand to benefit.



Jane Lauder is departing Estée Lauder, taking her out of the race to lead the company her grandmother founded

Ticket prices start at 3,500 euros (\$3,800) for a one-night itinerary in a deluxe cabin.

The luxury of exclusivity

The timing couldn't be more aligned with consumers prioritizing travel experiences over luxury goods and with the rise of what Samy Ghachem, general manager of La Dolce Vita, calls the "slow cruising" experiential travel trend.

"You saw a big uptick as soon as COVID was over, Japan exploded, and people were like, 'OK, now let's step out of our comfort zone. Let's go to Asia, let's go to Africa, let's start to do things,'" Ghachem said, adding that tapping into that curiosity and desire to slow down is what La Dolce Vita encapsulates.



Itineraries on La Dolce Vita Orient Express start at \$3,800 for a one-night stay. Courtesy of Orient Express Italy

Unlike cruise travel, luxury train travel is also more exclusive, another top priority among wealthy travelers.

"People want the luxury of space and privacy," Craft, the luxury travel agent, said. "They don't want to be forced into lines and queues and having to take pictures with thousands of people around."

"When you talk about luxury cruising, you're talking about 12,000 passengers," Ghachem said. "On our trains," he added, "it's much more intimate."

While the company's short-term focus is primarily on Italy, it's also preparing to launch its first sailing superyacht in 2026 and luxury sleeper trains in other regions, including the Middle East.

If anything, the Orient Express's revival supports what Ghachem says is one of the biggest trends in luxury travel: "People want to come back from vacation with a story."

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The Daily Traveler



Luxury Train Travel Is Entering Another Golden Age

On August 26, an unusual rail journey set out from Vancouver, British Columbia, with an itinerary stringing together seven pre-existing luxury train lines across four continents, starting in [North America](#), zigzagging through [Europe](#) and [Africa](#), before concluding in Asia (with a few international flights in between). The trip, packaged by specialist travel agency Railbookers, started from \$113,599 per person. And its popularity resulted in a waitlist of more than 500 people before the expanded 2025 offerings went on sale this month.

The “Around the World By Luxury Train” travel packages are, even by price-point alone, niche. The average traveler merely needs to get from point A to B efficiently and affordably, and most of the tourism industry still caters to those needs. But the growing demand for luxury rail speaks to a larger shift happening in the upper reaches of the travel market...

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This Lavish European Train Journey Just Became Even More Luxurious

The iconic train trip has added another taste of luxury with the appointment of three-Michelin-starred Chef Heinz Beck to lead the culinary programme on board.

Rebecca Ann Hughes Contributor @

Rebecca Ann Hughes covers travel, culture and food in Europe.

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Oct 31, 2024, 11:48am EDT



The iconic train trip has added another taste of luxury with the appointment of three-Michelin-starred Chef Heinz Beck to lead the culinary programme on board. [LA DOLCE VITA ORIENT EXPRESS](#)

The Orient Express has been a byword for opulent travel since the 19th century. There are now multiple services around Europe which take passengers on spectacular journeys in the height of style.

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The advertisement features the Hôtel l'Elysée Val d'Europe logo on the left, a central image of a modern architectural interior with a glass and metal structure, and a dark blue button with the text 'Book now →'. On the right, the dates 'Nov 12 - 13, 2024' and the price '€179 per night' are displayed in white. A small disclaimer at the bottom right reads '*On selected rates. Prices subject to change'.

Now, the iconic train trip has added another taste of luxury with the appointment of three-Michelin-starred Chef Heinz Beck to lead the culinary programme on board of [La Dolce Vita Orient Express](#), launching in Spring 2025.

Chef Beck, with Beck and Maltese Consulting, will craft distinct dining journeys that highlight Italy's landscapes, culture and flavors through thoughtfully curated menus.

Italy's Orient Express Will Have A 3 Michelin-Starred Chef

Chef Beck is globally renowned for his culinary mastery and deep affinity with Italy. He is the founder of the restaurant La Pergola in Rome, which earned a Michelin star in 2005 and continues to hold it today.

Beck's refined interpretation of Italian cuisine balances indulgence with wellness and epitomizes excellence through his innovative transformation of ingredients into exquisite flavors.

Aboard the Orient Express, his meticulously crafted menus will connect travelers to Italy's beauty, history and culture at every destination featuring a carefully curated selection of traditional Italian dishes, elevated with modern techniques and seasonal ingredients.

ADVERTISEMENT



The advertisement features the Hôtel l'Elysée Val d'Europe logo on the left, a central image of the hotel's exterior facade, and a dark blue button with the text 'Book now →'. On the right, the dates 'Nov 12 - 13, 2024' and the price '€179 per night' are displayed in white. A small disclaimer at the bottom right reads '*On selected rates. Prices subject to change'.

"La Dolce Vita Orient Express project represents for me and the Beck and Maltese Consulting team a wonderful opportunity to create a new path to disclose the Italian gastronomy culture," Beck says.



Aboard La Dolce Vita Orient Express, each day unfolds as a culinary and cultural odyssey. PATRICK_LOCQUENEUX

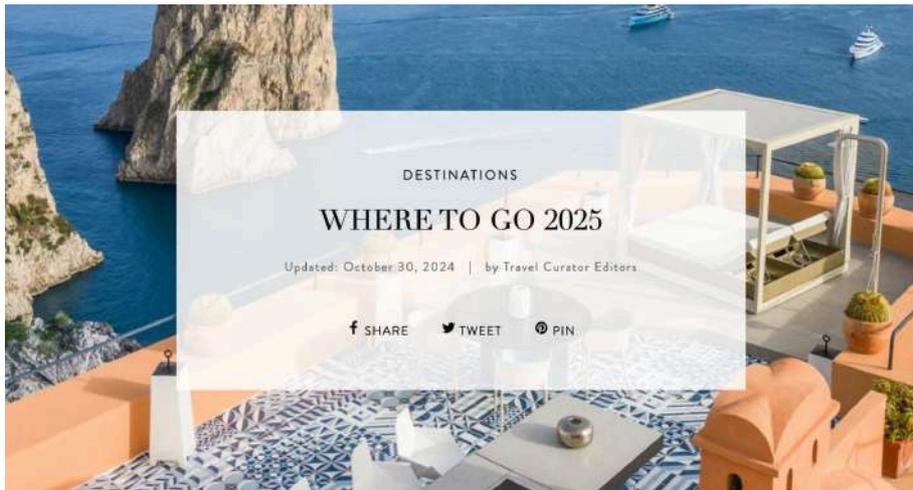
"The guests will have the chance to discover our beautiful country not only through its landscapes but also through our menus: from the early morning until the midnight snacks.

We want to spread the Made in Italy knowledge in a new way, showcasing the different traditions of each region so the passengers will be able to create a stronger and deeper connection with the territory."

Aboard La Dolce Vita Orient Express, each day unfolds as a culinary and cultural odyssey. Every itinerary is complemented by a personalized menu, celebrating regional specialities, from Sicilian arancini to Venetian tiramisu.

You can reserve directly online by visiting www.orient-express.com/la-dolce-vita. Pricing is tailored to travel preferences and departure date. Starting prices referring to a one-night itinerary are €3,500 (\$3,785) per person in a deluxe cabin and €4,700 (\$5,080) per person in a suite.

TRAVEL CURATOR



If you are anything like our team of intrepid *Travel Curator* writers and editors, you are already thinking about your 2025 travel plans. Where to go? What to see, do? Where to stay, dine, spa? Certainly we have been living and breathing next-year's adventures – for months now – spending time on the ground and in the air (also on the rails and at sea), exploring, discerning, and, of course, curating. Unearthing the next-best places, while still holding space for the hotels and destinations we've long known and loved is what we do best. Following, we unveil our top travel destinations for 2025. Some of the reveals you may already know and cherish (did someone say *Italy*?). While some are perhaps lesser traveled (i.e. *Cartagena* and *Bolivia*); and still others offer a slightly different take on a classic (i.e. immersing with rescue elephants in *Thailand*; taking a walk on the spiritual side in *Portugal*).

Where will you jet off to in 2025? Consider one of the incredible destinations on our curated list or even some of the very special places (i.e. *North Carolina*) hit hard by natural disasters this year, but already making their recovery and welcoming guests back. Wherever your travels take you, be sure to tag us in your photos. Happy traveling.

ITALY

LA DOLCE VITA ORIENT EXPRESS



Photo courtesy of La Dolce Vita Orient Express

Better than a murder mystery party a la Agatha Christie, you can now board the bonafide, utterly reimagined La Dolce Vita Orient Express, a stunning new locomotive launching in spring 2025. A collaboration of various entities including Trenitalia, Arsenale, and Accor, the luxurious train conjures Federico Fellini glam and sybaritic bygone opulence in its 31 silver screen-worthy cabins and suites. The long-awaited railroad adventure will choo choo through eight unique itineraries in Italy, embracing less explored locations including Palena in Abruzzo (known for its medieval architecture) and Matera in Basilicata, the third oldest city in the world. – Becca Hensley

Chef Heinz Beck brings Michelin-starred dining to La Dolce Vita Orient Express



FOOD DESK

30th October 2024

La Dolce Vita Orient Express has recently announced the appointment of Heinz Beck of three-Michelin-starred La Pergola in Rome to oversee its onboard culinary programme, set to launch in Spring 2025. The multi-awarded chef, in collaboration with Beck and Maltese Consulting, will design dining experiences that celebrate Italian regional specialities and traditional flavours, as the train traverses Italy's picturesque landscapes.

Chef Heinz Beck will incorporate his philosophy of blending indulgence with wellness into the food offerings served on the train. His menus are expected to reflect a deep appreciation for Italy's culinary heritage, enhanced by modern techniques and seasonal ingredients. From Sicilian arancini to Venetian tiramisù, each dish will aim to connect passengers with the local culture, while paying homage to the country's diverse food gastronomic traditions.

Samy Ghachem, general manager of La Dolce Vita Orient Express, expressed his enthusiasm for Beck's involvement, saying, "The appointment of chef Heinz Beck represents a remarkable alignment of vision and excellence. His unparalleled culinary mastery, innovative blend of tradition and modernity, and ability to craft unforgettable dining experiences perfectly embody the essence of la dolce vita."

Chef Beck himself is excited about the project, as he comments: "La Dolce Vita Orient Express project represents for me and the Beck and Maltese Consulting team a wonderful opportunity to create a new path to disclose the Italian gastronomy culture. The guests will have the chance to discover our beautiful country not only through its landscapes but also through our menus: from the early morning until the midnight snacks. We want to spread the Made in Italy knowledge in a new way, showcasing the different traditions of each region so the passengers will be able to create a stronger and deeper connection with the territory."

The train will depart from the Ostiense station in Rome, the Eternal City. This luxury travel option proposes eight itineraries to various Italian destinations, inspired by the glamour of the 1960s and 1970s. The train's design and services aim to recreate the sophistication of that era, turning travel into a comprehensive sensory experience.

The launch of La Dolce Vita Orient Express is part of a larger expansion by Orient Express, which includes the opening of its first hotels, Orient Express La Minerva in Rome and Orient Express Palazzo Donà Giovannelli in Venice, scheduled for late 2024 and 2025 respectively. Further plans include the introduction of Orient Express Silenseas ships and the return of the legendary Orient Express train in 2027.

Food Desk

For further information and reservations, visit [La Dolce Vita Orient Express's website here](#).

The luxury train La Dolce Vita Orient Express names chef Heinz Beck to curate culinary experience

Vicky Karantzavelou
31.10.2024 73



Three-Michelin-starred Chef Heinz Beck leads La Dolce Vita Orient Express culinary program, crafting exquisite menus inspired by Italian landscapes and culture for 2025.

LONDON – **La Dolce Vita Orient Express** announces the official appointment of three-Michelin-starred Chef **Heinz Beck** to lead the culinary programme on board of La Dolce Vita Orient Express, launching in Spring 2025. Chef Beck, with **Beck and Maitese Consulting**, will craft distinct dining journeys that highlight Italy's landscapes, culture, and flavours through thoughtfully curated menus.

Chef Beck is globally renowned for his culinary mastery and deep affinity with Italy. His refined interpretation of Italian cuisine skilfully balances indulgence with wellness and epitomises excellence through his innovative transformation of ingredients into exquisite flavours.

Beck's unique culinary philosophy is rooted in a profound appreciation for Italy's heritage, which he combines with an innovative approach to flavours and nutrition. His meticulously crafted menus connect travellers to Italy's beauty, history, and culture at every destination featuring a carefully curated selection of traditional Italian dishes, elevated with modern techniques and seasonal ingredients. Each meal will be a work of art, reflecting the essence of Italian cuisine while promising to delight the senses of every passenger

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La Dolce Vita Orient Express stops at Vinitaly with its dedicated "Vinitaly Lounge"



aboard of La Dolce Vita Orient Express.

Samy Ghachem, General Manager of La Dolce Vita Orient Express, remarked, *"The appointment of Chef Heinz Beck represents a remarkable alignment of vision and excellence. His unparalleled culinary mastery, innovative blend of tradition and modernity, and ability to craft unforgettable dining experiences perfectly embody the essence of la dolce vita. Under his expert guidance, dining aboard La Dolce Vita Orient Express will be a grand celebration of Italy's gastronomic diversity, and we have the utmost confidence that he will create something truly exceptional for our guests."*

Commenting on his appointment, Chef Heinz Beck said, *"La Dolce Vita Orient Express project represents for me and the Beck and Maltese Consulting team a wonderful opportunity to create a new path to disclose the Italian gastronomy culture. The guests will have the chance to discover our beautiful country not only through its landscapes but also through our menus: from the early morning until the midnight snacks. We want to spread the Made in Italy knowledge in a new way, showcasing the different traditions of each region so the passengers will be able to create a stronger and deeper connection with the territory."*

Aboard La Dolce Vita Orient Express, each day unfolds as a culinary and cultural odyssey, where the essence of Italian refinement is intricately woven into every moment of an extraordinary journey. Departing from Ostiense station in Rome, an evocative symbol of Italy's timeless heritage, guests embark on an experience that blends history, elegance, and indulgence.

Each dish, artfully crafted by Chef Beck, will honour Italy's diverse culinary heritage.

His thoughtful curation ensures that every itinerary is complemented by a personalised menu, celebrating regional specialities, from Sicilian arancini to Venetian tiramisu, while seamlessly integrating the refined sophistication of la dolce vita. Behind each culinary creation lies the masterful craftsmanship of Rome's ghost kitchen artisans, who guarantee utmost precision and freshness, curating an exquisite dining experience.

This extraordinary journey on Italy's first luxury train transforms travel into an immersive sensory experience. Inspired by the glamour of the 1960s and 1970s, the train offers eight exclusive itineraries to captivating destinations, celebrating Italy's rich cultural tapestry with a focus on its exceptional cuisine.

The launch of La Dolce Vita Orient Express precedes the anticipated openings of the first two Orient Express hotels: **Orient Express La Minerva** in Rome; followed by **Orient Express Palazzo Donà Giovannelli** in Venice. More information to be announced later in 2024.

Reservations
opening this April
for La Dolce Vita
Orient Express

A FAR

TRAVEL INSPIRATION > HOTELS

By Laura Itzkowitz • November 01, 2024

The 4 Most Exciting New Hotels in Rome

Headed to Rome? These are the four new (and newly renovated) hotels to book for your next trip to the Eternal City.



Palazzo Talia in Rome Courtesy of Palazzo Talia

Rome's hotel scene is having a renaissance, and as a hotel-obsessed travel writer living in Rome, I've been keeping tabs on them all. At [Anantara Palazzo Naiadi](#), I've sipped on a spritz while watching the sun set over the Fountain of the Naiads in Piazza della Repubblica. During my staycation at the [Bulgari Hotel Roma](#), my bathroom featured bespoke mosaics and a marble bathtub. On one occasion at the [Rome Edition](#), I dined on tagliolini with Mazara red shrimp and a bisque by Paola Colucci, the chef behind cult favorite restaurant Pianostrada, in a green courtyard garden. Hotels are now where I go for wellness: I particularly like the [Six Senses Rome](#)'s spa, inspired by ancient Roman baths.

High-profile openings and renovations are set to continue in the Eternal City over the next couple of years, with Rosewood, Corinthia, Nobu, and Baccarat hotels coming to Via Veneto, Thompson's first Italian outpost set to debut near Piazza Venezia, and not one but two properties by Four Seasons, one of which will be [near the Vatican](#)—an area lacking in five-star stays. In early 2025, the historic Grand Hotel Minerva behind the Pantheon will be reborn as the Orient Express La Minerva, the first hotel in the new Orient Express brand by Accor, which will also launch the Orient Express Dolce Vita train.

Rome's luxury hotel scene has never been this exciting, according to Zoe Shapiro, founder and CEO of [Stellavision Travel](#), a boutique feminist travel company that organizes [size-inclusive trips to Italy](#) and helps private clients plan their dream trips. "Take last year's Bulgari opening; the jaw-dropping spa atmosphere and the quality of services have led several of my clients to remark it was the best treatment of their lives."

While global hospitality brands are investing big time in Rome's luxury hotel scene, I'm glad to see smaller independent and boutique hotels opening around the city, too. There's Romeo Rome, for one—a futuristic fantasy designed by the late Zaha Hadid's studio, slated to open by the end of 2024—and Brach Roma by the French hospitality group Evok. In the meantime, if you're headed to Rome soon, these four independent hotels should be on your radar. All offer a unique angle, be it design, history, or a less-visited neighborhood.

Three-Michelin-starred Chef Heinz Beck to lead culinary programme on board La Dolce Vita Orient Express

November 1, 2024



La Dolce Vita Orient Express

La Dolce Vita Orient Express, one of the world's most luxury rail experiences, has announced the official appointment of three-Michelin-starred **Chef Heinz Beck** to lead its new culinary programme from Spring 2025.

Chef Beck, with **Beck and Maltese Consulting**, will craft distinct dining journeys that highlight Italy's landscapes, culture, and flavours through thoughtfully curated menus.

Beck's unique culinary philosophy is rooted in a profound appreciation for Italy's heritage, which he combines with an innovative approach to flavours and nutrition. His meticulously crafted menus connect travellers to Italy's beauty, history, and culture at every destination featuring a carefully curated selection of traditional Italian dishes, elevated with modern techniques and seasonal ingredients.

Each meal will be a work of art, reflecting the essence of Italian cuisine while promising to delight the senses of every passenger aboard of **La Dolce Vita Orient Express**.





Ritratto Chef Heinz Beck © ADRIANO TRUSCELLO

Commenting on his appointment, Chef Heinz Beck said:

"La Dolce Vita Orient Express project represents for me and the Beck and Maltese Consulting team a wonderful opportunity to create a new path to disclose the Italian gastronomy culture. The guests will have the chance to discover our beautiful country not only through its landscapes but also through our menus: from the early morning until the midnight snacks. We want to spread the Made in Italy knowledge in a new way, showcasing the different traditions of each region so the passengers will be able to create a stronger and deeper connection with the territory."



La Dolce Vita Orient Express

Aboard **La Dolce Vita Orient Express**, each day unfolds as a culinary and cultural odyssey, where the essence of Italian refinement is intricately woven into every moment of an extraordinary journey. Departing from Ostiense station in Rome, an evocative symbol of Italy's timeless heritage, guests embark on an experience that blends history, elegance, and indulgence.

Each dish, artfully crafted by Chef Beck, will honour Italy's diverse culinary heritage. His thoughtful curation ensures that every itinerary is complemented by a personalised menu, celebrating regional specialities, from Sicilian arancini to Venetian tiramisu, while seamlessly integrating the refined sophistication of *la dolce vita*. Behind each culinary creation lies the masterful craftsmanship of Rome's ghost kitchen artisans, who guarantee utmost precision and freshness, curating an exquisite dining experience.

This extraordinary journey on Italy's first luxury train transforms travel into an immersive sensory experience. Inspired by the glamour of the 1960s and 1970s, the train offers eight exclusive itineraries to captivating destinations, celebrating Italy's rich cultural tapestry with a focus on its exceptional cuisine.

La Dolce Vita Orient Express: Eat your way around Italy in style



By Maureen O'Hare, CNN

3 minute read · Published 4:00 AM EDT, Sat November 2, 2024



La Dolce Vita Orient Express will provide a distinct, luxurious and pricey journey. Courtesy Orient Express Italy

Editor's Note: Sign up for [Unlocking the World](#), CNN Travel's weekly newsletter. Get the latest news in aviation, food and drink, where to stay and other travel developments.

(CNN) — In our [travel](#) roundup this week: the burning mountain whose flames never go out, how Antarctica became a hot vacation spot and what to expect from Italy's first luxury sleeper train.

La Dolce Vita Orient Express

New details have been teased about the hotly anticipated [La Dolce Vita Orient Express](#) train and the upcoming Orient Express hotels in Rome and Venice, the first for the relaunched brand.

Three-Michelin-starred chef Heinz Beck will be creating distinct dining journeys inspired by the 14 Italian regions explored on the new train's eight routes, including a truffle route between Rome and Nizza Monferrato and a Tuscan vineyards tour that visits Montalcino.

Launching in spring 2025, prices start at 3,500 euros a person (\$3,794) for the luxury train which, in contrast to the 1920s elegance of the original, is inspired by the glamorous sophistication of 1960s and 1970s Italy.

The brand's first Orient Express hotel will be the Orient Express La Minerva in Rome, followed by Orient Express Palazzo Donà Giovannelli in Venice. More details on those are set to be revealed this year.

Vietnam's Revolution Express is another upcoming train journey to get locomotive fans excited. Two revamped 1960s steam trains are expected to return to the rails by 2025, traveling between the beach resorts of Da Nang and the former royal capital Hue.

Finally, the Trans-Mongolian Railway is one of the world's most epic and scenic journeys. Here's what it's like on board and how to plan the adventure for yourself.

Food, drink and the law

Fraudsters stole more than 24 tons of artisanal cheese from one of the United Kingdom's most famous dairy companies. An arrest is now reported to have been made related to this unusual heist.

That follows the international gang-bust in France and Italy last month over counterfeit French wine being sold for \$16,000 per bottle. So if some shady character approaches you offering a discount deal on a wine-and-cheese party, think twice before reaching for your wallet.

In Japan, the alcoholic drink doburoku was once illegal "moonshine," but this once controversial drink is now making a comeback. Likewise in Ireland, poitin was once the country's most notorious liquid bar none, but is now a protected product with an outlaw reputation.

Finally, in Germany, something that sounds criminal but isn't. A butcher has found what he believes is an innovative solution for Germany's growing raccoon problem: sausages and other processed delights. Raccoon balls, anyone?

Lands of fire and ice

In southwestern Turkey, just above the pretty coastline near the city of Antalya, there is a mountain where flames have burned since ancient times. There's now a scientific explanation for the burning rocks of Yanartaş, although the mythic tales of three-headed beasts are also pretty cool.

For spectacular phenomena at the other end of the temperature scale, majestic icebergs, many of them formed by glaciers some tens of million of years ago, are one of Antarctica's biggest attractions. Here's how the coldest place on Earth became a hot vacation spot.

If you have any chilly adventures planned, you might want to prepare yourself with a toasty hand warmer. Our partners at CNN Underscored, a product reviews and recommendations guide owned by CNN, have tested the best for 2024.

Is This Italy's Most Luxurious Train Journey?

By Olivia Emily
38 Seconds Ago

La Dolce Vita Orient Express will launch in 2025



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The [rail renaissance](#) is moving from strength to strength, and a brand new sleeper train launching in Italy next year will underscore the whimsical luxury that can be found on board. From Belmond, the team behind some of the world's most luxurious journeys, here's what to expect from La Dolce Vita Orient Express.



Sneak Peek: La Dolce Vita Orient Express, Italy

Italy's first luxury train will embark in spring 2025, with 12 carriages carrying just 62 passengers through Italy's most beautiful natural scenery, including lakes, forests, sumptuous coasts and Alpine mountains – as well as the nation's magnificent cities. With eight breathtaking itineraries to choose from, each spanning two to three nights, guests can cherry pick from 131 Italian cities to explore, all while enjoying the best of la dolce vita on board.

It's all thanks to a trailblazing new partnership between Italian luxury hospitality group Arsenale S.p.A., Orient Express, train company Trenitalia-Gruppo Ferrovie dello Stato, Fondazione FS and Treni Turistici Italiani TTI while, at Roma Ostiense, a brand new La Dolce Vita Orient Express Executive Lounge will welcome guests to await their departure in style. Meanwhile, La Dolce Vita Orient Express heralds the arrival of the first two Orient Express hotels: Orient Express La Minerva in Rome, followed by Orient Express Palazzo Donà Giovannelli in Venice.

La Dolce Vita Orient Express joins Belmond's unparalleled roster of luxurious train journeys – six and counting. The Andean Explorer carves a path through Peru's ancient wonders, while Hiram Bingham connects Cusco and Machu Picchu nearby. On the other side of the world, the Eastern & Oriental Express invites guests to discover the wonders from Singapore to Malaysia, while the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express is perhaps Belmond's most iconic journey, connecting Europe's major cities with the most luxurious of carriages. On home shores, the Royal Scotsman rekindles the romance of Scottish rail travel, absorbing a selection of the nation's most spectacular sights, while the British Pullman offers unforgettable day trips immersed in vintage charm.



La Dolce Vita Orient Express Suite

The Interior Design

Championing the best of Italy across the board, La Dolce Vita Orient Express' design and décor has been conceived by Italian Dimorestudio, masterfully communicating the art of Italian living through sumptuous 1960s and '70s interiors which celebrate the design and craftsmanship of the original 'La Dolce Vita' period in Italy. With just 12 carriages on board, an intimate 62 passengers will sleep across 12 deluxe cabins, 18 suites and one La Dolce Vita Suite

Taking cues from Italian design masters (Carlo Scarpa, Gio Ponti and Ignazio Gardella) to the great artists of the Spatialism (Lucio Fontana, Agostino Bonalumi and Enrico Castellani), expect golden age interiors married with the contemporary luxury spirit of travel, seamlessly blending the historic and the contemporary.



The Food

Renowned three Michelin-starred chef Heinz Beck will oversee all of the cuisine onboard La Dolce Vita Orient Express, providing guests with a sense of place as they zoom across Italian tracks through curated regional and thematic menus and local, seasonal ingredients.

Curated by Vinitaly, the wines, meanwhile, will showcase everything from big-name labels to smaller, lesser known wineries, again drawing on the train journey and its surroundings – though all will, of course, showcase the quality and uniqueness typical of Italy.



The Journeys

With more than 16,000 km of train track at its disposal, La Dolce Vita Orient Express will whizz through 14 regions and 131 cities across Italy. While the train champions the art of a luxurious voyage, it's not all about the journey: central to the experience are exclusive, thoughtfully curated, memorable excursions, all included in the cost of travel along with full-board accommodation.

Journeys will absorb natural scenery through broad windows, while stops will immerse guests right in the centre of Italy's international hubs of art and culture – from Milan to Florence, Venice and Rome – as well as harder-to-reach destinations. These include Matera in Basilicata, the third oldest city in the world with its ancient architecture, caves and stunning natural beauty, and the beautiful mountainous village of Palena in Abruzzo with its medieval architecture, scenic views and rich cultural heritage.

The Rome to Sicily itinerary (and vice versa) takes guests all the way to the tip of the Italian peninsula – and across the Strait of Messina to the ancient isle of Sicily. Here, the train will decouple and load onto a ferry before being reassembled and continuing on the tracks in Messina.

The eight itineraries include:

La Dolce Vita Venice and Portofino: Three days and two nights, starting and ending in Rome and passing through Venice and Portofino.

Venice and Tuscany: Three days and two nights, starting and ending in Rome and passing through Venice and Siena.

Eternal Stones of Matera: Three days and two nights, starting and ending in Rome and passing through Matera and Pescocostanzo.

Tastes of Tuscan Vineyards: Two days and one night, starting and ending in Rome and passing through Montalcino.

The Truffle Route: Three days and two nights, starting and ending in Rome and passing through Nizza Monferrato.

From Rome to Sicily: Three days and two nights, starting in Rome and ending in Palermo, passing through Maratea and Taormina.

From Sicily to Rome: Three days and two nights, starting in Palermo and ending in Rome, passing through Taormina and Maratea.

Shores of Sicily: Two days and one night, starting and ending in Catania and passing through Palermo and Taormina.



La Dolce Vita Orient Express Deluxe Room

BOOK IT

Prices start from €3,500 per person in a deluxe cabin and €4,700 per person in a suite, based on a one-night itinerary. Exact pricing is tailored to travel preferences and departure date. Explore more and book your adventure at orient-express.com/la-dolce-vita

This New Luxury Train Will Transport You To The Ancient Silk Road

Coming in 2025, the Golden Eagle Silk Road Express offers all new adventures along the storied Silk Road trading route.

Nicole Trilivas Contributor @

Nicole Trilivas is a luxury travel writer and hotel expert.

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Nov 3, 2024, 03:20am EST

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in



The lounge car on the upcoming Golden Eagle Silk Road Express train. GOLDEN EAGLE SILK ROAD EXPRESS

Luxury trains seem to be having a moment. Leaders in the space, Belmond, are always revealing new routes, rooms and advancements on their global luxury trains, while Orient Express, recently acquired by Accor, is developing a whole new train offering, with La Dolce Vita Orient Express launching in 2025 to traverse Italy.

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Golden Eagle Luxury Trains are also advancing with the new **Golden Eagle Silk Road Express**, slated to debut in 2025. The new train will travel along one of the world's most legendary paths, the Silk Road, a network of trading routes connecting the East with the West, dating back to the second century BCE and remaining active through the middle of the fifteenth century. While Golden Eagle has ventured on the Silk Road before via itineraries like Republics of the Silk Road, which visits the seven so-called "Stans," and the Jewels of the Silk Road, which includes key Silk Road outposts like Bukhara, Samarkand and Khiva, the new Golden Eagle Silk Road Express will offer whole new itineraries, to be revealed soon.



Golden Eagle Silk Road Express's exterior GOLDEN EAGLE SILK ROAD EXPRESS

The train itself will be highly opulent with a pale blue, crimson and gold exterior, and interiors decked out with Eastern art pieces. Cabins (including twin rooms, king rooms, family rooms and grand suites) are dressed in sand tones with rich wood accents. Grand suites have separate in-room dining tables and some even have bathtubs and dual-sink stone vanities. Twin rooms have mini-bars and plenty of storage.



Grand Suite aboard the new Golden Eagle Silk Road Express GOLDEN EAGLE SILK ROAD EXPRESS





Grand Suite bathroom aboard the new Golden Eagle Silk Road Express · GOLDEN EAGLE SILK ROAD EXPRESS ·

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Grand Suite on the new Golden Eagle Silk Road Express · GOLDEN EAGLE SILK ROAD EXPRESS ·



King Room GOLDEN EAGLE SILK ROAD EXPRESS



Twin Room GOLDEN EAGLE SILK ROAD EXPRESS



Twin Room GOLDEN EAGLE SILK ROAD EXPRESS

Communal spaces will include the Star Palace Lounge Car, a jewel-toned retreat of lush fabrics, dim lighting, an upright piano and a mirrored bar. There are two dining cars, one Western-style restaurant car for banquet dining and silver service and a more intimate Chinese-style restaurant car with booth seating. There will also be an observation car.

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There's no official launch date yet, but stay up to date with the new train by registering [here](#).



Western Dining Car GOLDEN EAGLE SILK ROAD EXPRESS

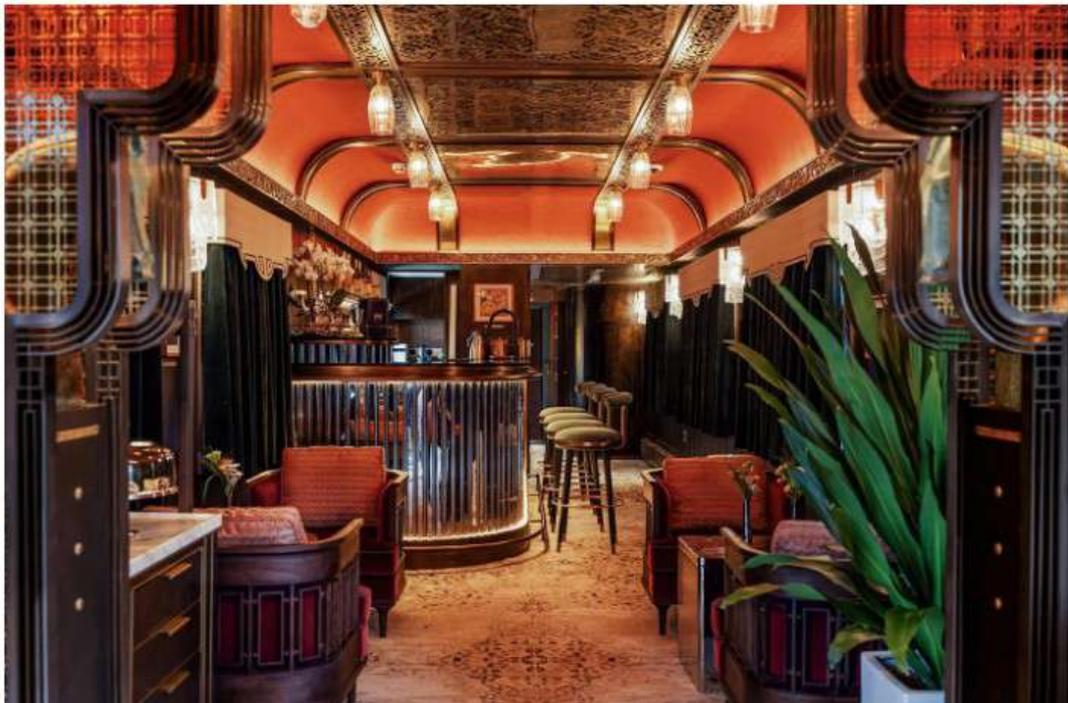




Eastern Dining Car GOLDEN EAGLE SILK ROAD EXPRESS

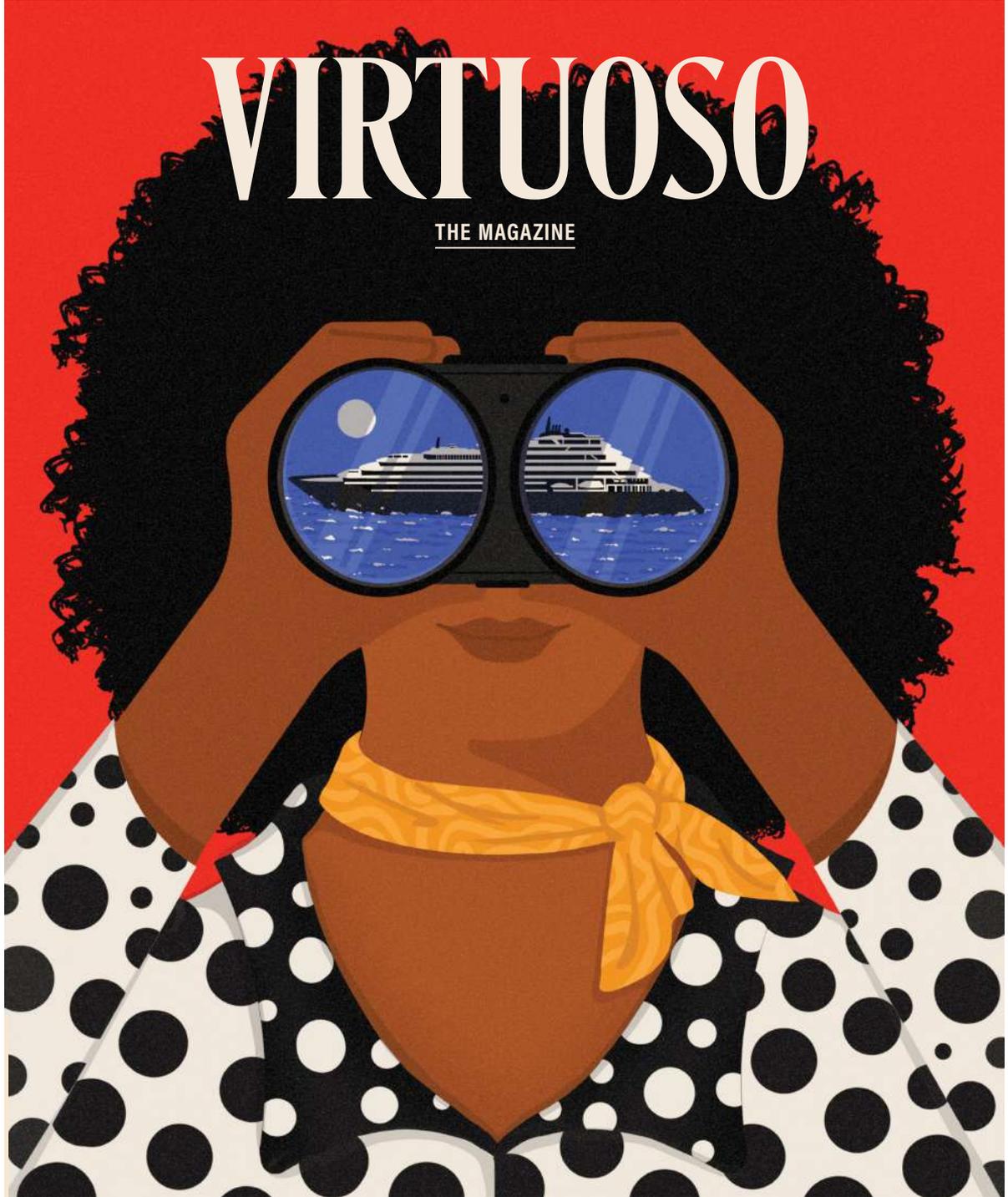


Lounge Car GOLDEN EAGLE SILK ROAD EXPRESS



VIRTUOSO

THE MAGAZINE





WHERE NEXT

A guide to
chasing new
horizons in 2025.

BY ELAINE GLUSAC

A NEW YEAR is a beautiful thing for devoted travelers: A blank calendar begs to be inked with departures to parts unknown. At Virtuoso, we're on the case, polling our travel advisors and industry contacts for their on-the-rise, get-there-first vacation spots that deserve a slot on 2025 agendas. Whether it's heli-skiing South America's untrammelled slopes, diving the Technicolor reefs of West Papua, or taking to southern Italy by train, the time to book for next year is now. (That 12-casita private island in Zanzibar and 22-passenger Peruvian riverboat will fill up fast.) Let this guide be your starting point for a year of new places.

The pride of the Mongolian steppe: A horse-racing team at the Naadaam Festival.

Amid the resurgence of train travel, Orient Express brings romance to the rails with its new 62-passenger luxury train, inspired by twentieth-century Italian design. “This train is for travelers drawn to immersive, one-of-a-kind experiences,” says Gilbert, Arizona-based travel advisor Rachel Stankovic. “The brand’s appeal is legendary, and now it offers access to some of Italy’s most beautiful, harder-to-reach gems.” The two- and three-day itineraries aboard La Dolce Vita Orient Express, launching in spring 2025, visit southern Italian destinations including Basilicata, where Matera, the world’s third-oldest city, is still marked with cave dwellings in its hillsides. A trip to Sicily involves decoupling the train in mainland Calabria to load onto a ferry before it resumes its traffic-free rail route to the island’s capital of Palermo for *arancine* and architecture; then it’s on to cliff-top Taormina with its ancient Greek theater.

GO La Dolce Vita Orient Express’ routes begin in Rome, Palermo, or Catania. Between excursions, guests on the 12-car train can linger over games of chess and backgammon in the Lounge Bar and dine on dishes from Michelin-starred chef Heinz Beck. *Departures: Multiple dates to be announced, beginning spring 2025.*

● —————
**SLOW DOWN IN
SOUTHERN ITALY**
Take in uncrowded scenery by rail.



Suite cabins bring peak midcentury modern vibes.

LUXURY



LINES OF BEAUTY

Phoebe Dynevor is the belle of Barcelona

MAKING TRACKS

A new chapter begins for rail travel next spring. A brand new luxury train offering a contemporary take on the classic sleeper experience that celebrates the golden age of Italian design in the 1960s and 1970s by the likes of Carlo Scarpa and Gio Ponti, La Dolce Vita Orient Express will entirely focus on Italian routes. It's a collaboration between the historic institution that is Orient Express and luxury Italian hospitality brand Arsenale, whose young CEO, entrepreneur and philanthropist Paolo Barletta, dreamt up the concept, and six trains will be rolled out over three years.

'We like to call it "Cruising on Track", says Barletta. 'It's a revival of the past but in a totally new, magical way that redefines relaxed, sustainable tourism.'

Featuring eight one- to two-night round-trip itineraries with enticing experiences all the way, the project also includes the addition of hundreds of miles of new and electrified railway track and a glamorous Executive Lounge at Roma Ostiense where you can leave bigger suitcases overnight, should you want to travel light. Once onboard – each train takes a maximum of 62 people – expect food by Heinz Beck (of three-Michelin-starred La Pergola in Rome), 31 luxurious en-suite cabins



and suites and to be whisked to some of Italy's loveliest off-the-beaten-track destinations such as Palena, a medieval mountain village in Abruzzo, and Matera in Basilicata, the third oldest city in the world. One itinerary involves a passenger rail ferry over to Sicily.

'The itinerary and routes were dreamt up during many late nights working alongside two of my colleagues, with the Rail Network Map and the master book of track switches and traffic directions between

us, living and breathing every kilometre in our minds,' says trainspotter-at-heart Barletta.

And this is only the beginning for the revived Orient Express brand. We will also see the launch of Orient Express's first two hotels – Orient Express La Minerva in Rome in the coming weeks and Orient Express Palazzo Donà Giovannelli in Venice next year.

One-night train itineraries from €3,500 per person; orient-express.com/la-dolce-vita



START SPREADING THE NEWS

New York's Upper East Side is having a moment – or perhaps it's a rebirth, given that, among all the snazzy new apartment buildings, some of the area's best-loved addresses are re-emerging after spectacular revamps. While I can't wait for The Frick Collection to return to its natural habitat early next year, the just-retrofitted art museum housed in the historic mansion house of its original owner, the industrialist Henry Clay Frick, I'm even more excited about the re-opening of The Surrey, the venerable hotel on the corner of East 76th Street and

Madison Avenue that started life as a 'residence hotel' in 1926, frequented by the likes of JFK and Bette Davis, and retains that feel today.

After closing during the pandemic, the hotel was snapped up by David and Simon Reuben, British billionaire property developers, who have just opened it as the chic and serene, 100-room Surrey, A Corinthia Hotel. Within this art deco-inspired building, you will find a Sisley spa, AMP-designed gym and a rooftop bar. It also offers a New York outpost of Miami Beach favourite Casa Tua, the hipster neighbourhood Italian restaurant and private members' club by tastemakers of the moment, Miky and Leticia Grendene, loved by Paris Hilton and Leonardo DiCaprio. *From \$1,000 per night, room only; corinthia.com*



Bright Ideas in Travel 2024

RAIL TRAVEL

Brightline |

Brightline's high-speed passenger train between South Florida and Orlando has hosted more than 1.4 million passengers since the beginning of 2024 alone, providing an easy, low-emission option for traveling a distance that's a significant drive but too short to justify flying. And now, the company is preparing to bring its rail service to the other coast: construction broke ground in April 2024 on **Brightline West**, a route that will connect Las Vegas to California with stations in Apple Valley, Hesperia, and Rancho Cucamonga, where passengers can connect and travel on to Los Angeles. The new train, which will be all-electric (compared to the diesel-electric trains in Florida), will run much of its route on the median of Interstate 15. Its completion is projected for 2028, just in time for the Summer Olympics in Los Angeles.

Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane |

In 2024, Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane (FS), Italy's national railway company, launched **FS Treni Turistici Italiani**: a new arm that operates tourist trains with the goal of promoting slow and sustainable travel in the country. Offerings include luxurious long-distance sleeper trains – such as *La Dolce Vita Orient Express*, starting up in spring 2025 – and “express” itineraries running between major cities and tourist hubs like the mountains or seaside. In the future, there will also be affordable regional services that help direct visitors to lesser-travelled places, mitigating overtourism and highlighting undersung areas with plenty of history and culture to offer. And with its Treni Storici category, the company takes over operations for more than 400 historical locomotives owned by **Fondazione FS Italiane**. Through its **Timeless Tracks** programme, the foundation has also revived around 370 miles of historic but “underused” track, which now sees around 45,000 tourists per year.

Swiss Federal Railways |

Swiss Federal Railways (Schweizerische Bundesbahnen, or SBB) carries more than 1.3 million passengers daily – all on trains that run fully on electricity, 90 per cent of which comes from hydropower and 10 per cent from nuclear energy. SBB buildings – stations, offices, and production facilities – are powered only by energy from renewable sources. The company even acknowledges the negative ecosystem impact of track construction on its own website and is working to promote biodiversity by developing warning systems for animals, among other methods. In April 2024, SBB also began mixing the small amount of diesel fuel it still uses – which powers a few older-model construction and maintenance trains – with hydrotreated vegetable oils, reducing emissions by up to 25 per cent until the old vehicles can be updated or replaced.

Denver Union Station |

Union Station is sometimes referred to as “Denver's living room,” a transport hub that sees more than 15,000 commuters and travellers pass through daily, but that also gives them a soft place to land or linger. In the summer of 2024, this living room got a \$11 million update. The six-month renovation project continues preservation work that started more than a decade ago, when a major restoration project, completed in 2014, helped revitalise this Beaux Arts landmark. The reinvestment in the historically significant building is aligned with a larger post-pandemic effort to stimulate the surrounding Central Business District. The **new renovation** extends through the soaring Great Hall, the 112-key Crawford Hotel, and The Cooper Lounge on the mezzanine level – beautiful spaces that bring together both locals and tourists, and give them a chance to interact, a rare quality in a modern transit hub.

^ **BACK TO TOP** ^

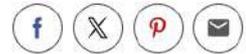
TRAVEL+ LEISURE

CRUISES

This Iconic Luxury Train Will Debut the World's Largest Sailing Yacht — and We Have the First Look

The ship draws inspiration from the golden age of train travel.

By [Stefanie Waldek](#) | Published on November 12, 2024



Aerial view of the Orient Express Corinthian while at sea . PHOTO: COURTESY OF ORIENT EXPRESS

You're probably familiar with the Orient Express as a train. But what if we told you you'll soon be able to experience the Orient Express at sea? The glamorous 20th-century atmosphere of the iconic train is being brought into the world of cruising via a pair of ultra-luxe sailing yachts, and we've just received a first look inside.

Scheduled to debut in June 2026, *OE Corinthian* is the first of two [Orient Express ships](#). At about 721 feet long, it will be the world's largest sailing yacht, capable of sailing at speeds up to 17 knots (about 20 miles per hour) purely using the wind. While the ship might be brand new, its interiors take cues from the design legacy of the Orient Express.

"All the suites have been imagined as unique spaces, taken from the classic decorative grammar of Orient Express, but faithful to its distinctive codes," Maxime d'Angeac, the artistic director of Orient Express, said in a statement provided to *Travel + Leisure*. "It's a contemporary vision of Orient Express, from an era when high quality is synonymous with excellence, and calls for a veritable aesthetic revolution."



Interior of a Sea View Suite on board the Orient Express Corinthian
Maxime d'Angeac/Courtesy of Orient Express

1 of 3



The ship will have 54 suites ranging in size from 484 square feet to 2,476 square feet, each featuring panoramic bay windows with perfect views of the sea. Design details include warm wood paneling, geometric art deco patterns, and sumptuous upholstery, from velvet to leather. *OE Corinthian* will also have two original cabins from the Nostalgie-Istanbul-Orient-Express train installed on board, honoring the golden age of train travel in the 1920s and 1930s.

As for public spaces, there will be five restaurants and eight bars, including a 1930s-style speakeasy, as well as an art deco–inspired cabaret, a cinema, a spa, and a swim lane.

"With *OE Corinthian*, the Orient Express legend is now ready to set sail on the world's most beautiful seas, offering an unparalleled experience of travel and discovery," Sébastien Bazin, Accor CEO and Chairman, said in a statement provided to T+L. "A yacht inspired by the golden age of luxury cruising, reinventing movement and comfort on the water, and designed to meet the sustainable challenges of tomorrow. It's a source of pride for us all."

elite *traveler*

Holiday Gift Guide | 5 days ago

Giftable Experiences

From ice skating above New York to dinner at the Pyramids of Giza.

By Ellys Woodhouse

Why wrap up another sweater when you could gift an adventure to remember instead? From private jet journeys to dining under the stars, these experiences will have your loved ones collecting memories instead of dusting off knick-knacks. Perfect for those who prefer stories over stuff, this is *Elite Traveler's* round-up of the best luxury experiences to give the gift of unforgettable moments.

[\[Visit the Elite Traveler Holiday Gift Guide here\]](#)

The very best luxury gift experiences

La Dolce Vita Orient Express



Skip the plane and treat someone special to the ultimate in luxury travel with the La Dolce Vita Orient Express experience. This iconic journey through Italy offers more than just breathtaking views, it's a five-star adventure on rails. With elegant, Art Deco-inspired interiors and impeccable service, guests are transported back to the golden age of travel. The highlight? A Michelin-starred dining experience crafted by Heinz Beck, where every bite is as exquisite as the scenery. From the rolling hills of Tuscany to the sparkling coastlines, this journey is a celebration of Italy's finest. The perfect gift for anyone craving a taste of *la dolce vita*.

One-night itinerary starts from €3,500 [\$3,752] per person in a deluxe cabin and €4,700 [\$5,040] per person in a suite. orient-express.com/la-dolce-vita

The seven hottest travel trends of 2024, according to expert jetsetters

From luxe all-inclusive resorts to off-grid adventures, these are the travel trends that have defined 2024



By **Robert Leedham**

11 November 2024



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Bar that brief moment in July when the world's airports were grounded due to the largest IT outage in history, it's been a mercifully normal year for travel in 2024. A deluge of spectators descended on the Olympics in Paris and were greeted with little more than a Gallic shrug of protest. A swathe of ChatGPT-planned itineraries went off largely without a hitch and, much to our dismay, the 'bleisure trip' cemented itself as here for the long run. With January's peak season for holiday bookings

creeping ever closer into view, we at *British GQ* thought we'd break out our proverbial Rolodex to discover where you should be jetting to next year based on the hottest travel trends of 2024 so far. Whether you opt for an off-grid Airbnb in the middle of nowhere or Uber yourself a South African safari, here are the seven trends to pay attention to...

All-inclusive for all budgets

“In my twenties, I went to one all-inclusive resort in Jamaica with a big buffet, liquor behind the bar that was served in generic plastic bottles, and a toga party by the pool,” recalls Mel Fish, Vice President of Global PR for Expedia. Come 2024, it's Gen Z that's driving the new rush for all-inclusive travel, with 43 per cent of them declaring in Expedia's most recent [Unpack 25](#) report that it's their preferred hotel type. A number of hotel groups have already jumped on the trend: Hyatt is taking to Cancún, Mexico to roll out the first all-inclusive in its new Vivid collection, [Hyatt Vivid Grand Island](#)... and it's specifically targeted at Gen Z'ers.

TRENDING VIDEO

10 Things Pierce Brosnan Can't Live Without



While we'd never dismiss the cheap thrills of an Easyjet to Lanzarote in search of a week's worth of complimentary margaritas, it's not hard to find a more elevated spin on the

concept. Hyatt's own Impressions line majors in dockside arrivals and multi-course dinners (*sans* any screaming children cannonballing in the background), while W Hotels is opening its first-ever Caribbean all-inclusive later this year in [Punta Cana](#), Dominican Republic.

Go live in a house... a very small house... in the country



Caught the sudden urge to swear off modern life and live in a bunker for the next four years? You're not alone. "Interest in a slower, more mindful way of living is huge on social media and this year we saw a 100 per cent year-on-year rise in searches for off-grid homes," reveals Amanda Cupples, General Manager of Northern Europe at Airbnb. From [Northumberland](#) to [Faygate](#), most of these cabins feature hot running water and a power socket to recharge your iPhone, but if completing your morning ablutions in a compostable toilet sounds a bit much, getaways to secluded British towns are also on the rise this winter. "People are craving quiet, nature-filled escapes more than ever; especially since the pandemic," says Cupples.

Luxe tours and curated day trips

We've all been holed up in the back of an 87-seat coach whose air con is on the fritz and toilet resembles the Somme. So it's

little wonder 2024 has seen an increasing number of hotel groups and transport companies roll out more bespoke experiences with a select guest list. Having introduced its own Ibiza yacht, Scottish Highlands seaplane and, most recently, South African safari tour, Uber is one of the surprising leaders in this field. “These are real experiences in that you can book [them] on the Uber app,” says Andrew Brem, Uber’s UK General Manager. “Despite the fact that we’re now a 10-year-old business, we do want to have some fun.”

It’s not just Uber getting in on the act; luxe hotel group the Dorchester Collection recently introduced its ‘Legendary Art Trails’ across its properties at [45 Park Lane](#), [Hotel Eden](#), [Le Meurice](#) and [Hotel Principe di Savoia](#). From Monet in Paris to Barbara Hepworth in London and Caravaggio in Rome, each tour sees you step around its given city with your own art historian for a personalised look at those who have captured your surroundings via canvas, sculpture and beyond.

One Day in Paros



The White Lotus season 3 is scheduled to air in 2025, so expect Thailand to receive a sordid glow-up à la Hawaii and Sicily in the not-too-distant future. Before Aimee Lou Wood and *Fallout*’s [Walton Goggins](#) get up to no good in Bangkok’s Grand Palace though, Netflix has stepped up to the plate in 2024 with

plenty of TV destination inspiration. “Shows like *One Day* have made the Greek island of Paros a hot spot, increasing searches by almost a third, while *Ripley* has boosted visits to the Amalfi Coast’s Ravello by 90 per cent,” explains Airbnb’s Cupples. Ever since its own Malibu Barbie Dream House swept across TikTok last summer, the short-term rental company has also expanded its own slate of pop cultural properties, including the *Italian villa* from *Normal People* and *Harry Potter’s* parents’ house.

Trains are on the comeback track

Global passenger traffic is projected to grow to 9.5 billion this year, according to the *Airports Council International (ACI) World*, but if you'd rather your carbon footprint tread lightly on the planet, 2024 has been a major year for train travel too. Eurostar is investing in up to 50 new trains for its cross-continental fleet and is set to announce a number of new routes in 2025. These will join a new *high-speed Paris-to-Berlin rail link* that’s launching in December, as well as a *Brussels-to-Venice sleeper train route* and the more luxury-minded *La Dolce Vita Orient Express* that covers Rome, Venice and Sicily with a culinary programme that’s lead by three-Michelin-starred Chef Heinz Beck.

If you’re booking a weekend away by train here in the UK, you can now grab your tickets via Uber... and get 10 per cent back in credit with each booking. It’s all part of the company’s push to own the end-to-end transport experience whenever you make a journey. “I was up at the Labour Party conference earlier this year,” recalls Uber’s Brem. “I got a Lime bike from home to London Euston. I got an Uber train to Liverpool and I got a ride-hailing car to the conference.”

Big city detours



Paris. Milan. Barcelona. These are Europe's city break staples and that's unlikely to change in 2025 unless the Louvre, Duomo di Milano and Sagrada Família relocate across the Atlantic. Still, travellers are increasingly looking to add an extra stop on their next trip when booking: Expedia's latest research shows that 63 per cent of consumers are likely to visit one of these 'detour destinations'. Aside from allowing for a breather from the hubbub of any given tourism hotspot, detours can help to extend your stay in a country while keeping your travels on a budget. "Reims is a good option from Paris because it's a 45-minute train ride and you're in Champagne country," says Expedia's Fish. Elsewhere, both Brescia and Girona are seeing increased interest from those who'd rather keep their 'out of office' on for a few days longer after a trip to Milan or Barcelona.

Rimowa still defines the neo-jetset class

2025's hottest ticket: a new luxury Belmond sleeper train is coming to London

Train travel looks a little different on board the Belmond's new uber-luxury sleeper train, which will chug through some of the UK and Wales's most breathtaking backdrops



BELMOND BRITANNIA

HAYLEY SPENCER
9 HOURS AGO

Think of train journeys in the capital and no doubt your mind goes to crammed carriages, delays and views of endless tower blocks amid grey skies. But next year, departures from London will look a whole lot more

glamorous. The Britannic Explorer, a Belmond train, is launching with routes from July 2025 to some of the UK's most iconic natural beauty spots. It will be the first luxury sleeper train to launch with extended itineraries from the capital to England and Wales.

The new locomotive is offering three-day itineraries, with the choice to chug to either the Lake District and Cornwall, or to Wales. With 18 cabins, including three grand suites, the accommodations have been designed by London-based studio, Albion Nord. A natural palette is inspired by the landscapes of its final destinations, and fittings are timeless and Art Deco inspired. Think sink-in velvet sofas, luxury striped wallpaper and sumptuously dressed beds — you'd never know you were aboard a train if it weren't for the constantly changing views from the windows. And there's an on-board spa to help ease the knots from your regular London commute.





BELMOND

Well known for its immersive events, day trips and gastronomic experiences, the Belmond group's latest train will lean into the brand's culinary credentials with food designed by eight Michelin star decorated chef Simon Rogan. With an eye on sustainability, the menus will celebrate seasonal, locally sourced ingredients. As well as lunch and dinner there's a bespoke afternoon tea to keep guests fuelled up between excursions.

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Stops for off-board activities include national parks, galleries and cultural capitals. Enjoy a private tour and dinner at Somerset's Hauser & Wirth and on-site restaurant Da Costa, take in the country air with a guided hike in Wales, or go wild swimming in the stunning Lake district.



BELMOND

By evening, the train's Botanic bar will be where it's at (it's also the main observation cart). Cocktails made with artisan spirits can be consumed alongside night-lit views of the passing landscapes.

2025 is set to be a major year for high-end holidays aboard locomotives. The Orient Express is launching a landmark new La Dolce Vita journey through Italy. Both also chime with the 200th anniversary of the advent of the modern railway — and travelling by train has never looked more glamorous. All aboard!

Journeys on the Britannic Explorer start from £11,000 based on a double cabin, to include a 3-night itinerary, excursions, meals, wine and alcoholic beverages on board. [belmond.com](https://www.belmond.com)

Forbes

25 New Luxury Hotels To Book In 2025

From a 17th-century noble residence in Rome to a private island paradise in Belize, these are the much-anticipated new hotel openings from each luxury brand worldwide.

Jim Dobson Senior Contributor ☺

Jim Dobson is a European based writer focusing on luxury travel.

Updated Nov 17, 2024, 03:11pm EST



Lake Como Edition | EDITION HOTELS

There will be a wide selection of luxury hotels opening around the world in 2025, including historic Palazzos, spectacular waterfront retreats, and unique properties like a 17th-century noble residence in Rome or a private island paradise in Belize. I have curated a list of all new properties opening in 2025 by individual hotel brands so travelers can visit their trusted favorites.

New hotel construction is booming with record projects around the world; [Lodging Econometrics' Future Forecast](#) indicates 759 new U.S. hotel projects in 2025. New York leads the way, followed by Nashville, Dallas and Phoenix.

Looking ahead for Europe, LE predicts continued growth with 353 new projects scheduled in 2025. The United Kingdom leads the way, followed by Germany, Turkey (with record-high development), Portugal, and France.

India continues to lead Asia Pacific with the greatest number of hotel projects, with a record-high 641 hotels, followed by Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, and Japan. China will make a dramatic rise in 2025, with 1,101 new hotels.



Rosa Alpina Hotel in the Dolomites will become a new Aman ROSA ALPINA

Here are the 25 anticipated luxury hotel openings in 2025 by brand:



Orient Express La Minerva Rome OLIVER ASTROLOGO

Orient Express

Orient Express La Minerva Rome (Italy)

Orient Express La Minerva occupies a 17th-century noble residence just steps from the Pantheon. The historic building marks the legendary brand's first hotel, and is adorned with Roman columns, museum-worthy statues by Rinaldo Rinaldi, and a stunning stained-glass ceiling crowning the lobby. Each of the spacious 93 rooms and suites is uniquely designed: some feature private balconies. Guests can enjoy cocktails at the stunning rooftop bar and restaurant with dramatic views of the Pantheon and the city. There is also a wellness spa offering Ottoman bath-inspired rituals.

The brand will open their second Orient Express hotel in Italy next year at the spectacular Palazzo Dona Giovannelli in Venice. Once complete, it will become one of the most stunning properties in Europe.



The 12 Best Places to Travel in 2025

Elaine Glusac
October 25, 2024



A guide to chasing new horizons in the year ahead.

A new year is a beautiful thing for devoted travelers: A blank calendar begs to be inked with departures to parts unknown. At Virtuoso, we're on the case, polling our travel advisors and industry contacts for their on-the-rise, get-there-first vacation spots that deserve a slot on 2025 agendas. Whether it's heli-skiing South America's untrammelled slopes, diving the Technicolor reefs of West Papua, or taking to southern Italy by train, the time to book for next year is now. (That 12-casita private island in Zanzibar and 22-passenger Peruvian riverboat will fill up fast.) Let this guide be your starting point for a year of new places.

KEY



SUSTAINABILITY



ON THE WATER



CULINARY



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ARTS



Suite cabins bring peak midcentury modern vibes.
Patrick Locqueneux

SOUTHERN ITALY



Take in uncrowded scenery by rail.

Amid the resurgence of train travel, Orient Express brings romance to the rails with its new 62-passenger luxury train, inspired by twentieth-century Italian design. “This train is for travelers drawn to immersive, one-of-a-kind experiences,” says travel advisor Rachel Stankovic. “The brand’s appeal is legendary, and now it offers access to some of [Italy](#)’s most beautiful, harder-to-reach gems.” The two- and three-day itineraries aboard La Dolce Vita Orient Express, launching in spring 2025, visit southern Italian destinations including Basilicata, where Matera, the world’s third-oldest city, is still marked with cave dwellings in its hillsides. A trip to [Sicily](#) involves decoupling the train in mainland Calabria to load onto a ferry before it resumes its traffic-free rail route to the island’s capital of [Palermo](#) for *arancine* and architecture; then it’s on to clifftop [Taormina](#) with its ancient Greek theater.

Get There: [La Dolce Vita Orient Express](#)’ routes begin in [Rome](#), Palermo, or Catania. Between excursions, guests on the 12-car train can linger over games of chess and backgammon in the Lounge Bar and dine on dishes from Michelin-starred chef Heinz Beck. *Departures: Multiple dates to be announced, beginning spring 2025.*

TRAVEL+ LEISURE

TRIP IDEAS

The 50 Best Places to Travel in 2025

By [Travel + Leisure Editors](#) | Published on November 20, 2024

Where to go in the year ahead? According to nearly two dozen staffers at *Travel + Leisure*, the best destination for 2025 might just be one of the most beautiful islands in the Caribbean, or an undiscovered corner of Europe, or a remarkable nation in Asia that's about to become even buzzier thanks to a certain HBO show.

For T+L's Where to Go in 2025, our staff vetted nearly 120 qualified contenders, debating the merits of not only what's new, but what feels like *right now*. To make it on our list requires more than just a hotly anticipated opening or two. These are places that feel of the moment, whether that's because they offer unparalleled access to the outdoors, a cultural immersion you can't find anywhere else, a pulse-quickening hit of excitement, or the sort of blissful luxury only a true five-star property can deliver.

Each of these 50 noteworthy destinations may have their own distinct allure, but all are worthy of a closer look in the year ahead. In fact, the well-traveled staff of T+L is hoping to check out more than a few of them in the coming months. Who knows, maybe we'll see you out there? — Edited by [Paul Brady](#) and [Alisha Prakash](#)



For Big City Thrills

Rome



The Trevi Fountain. PHOTO: ANDREA WYNER/TRAVEL + LEISURE

The year ahead promises to be one of celebration in the city: [the Jubilee](#), which occurs every 25 years, is on the Catholic calendar for 2025. “Rome will welcome pilgrims from all over the world, especially around major religious sites in the Vatican, including St. Peter’s Basilica,” said [Andrea Grisdale](#), founder of the travel agency IC Bellagio and [a member of T+L’s A-List](#). The city is anticipating large crowds and long lines, especially during major holidays like Easter, which falls on April 20. But it’s still possible to have a successful visit, whether you’re joining the Jubilee or not, Grisdale said. “Next year offers a great opportunity to consider some of the lesser-known areas of Rome and to enjoy traveling at a slower pace,” she explained. Helping that cause will be a number of remarkable new hotels. The extravagant [Palazzo Talia](#), for example, will have 26 rooms, a traditional Roman restaurant, and a wellness center, all designed by director Luca Guadagnino (“Call Me by Your Name”). Then there’s the [Romeo Roma](#), set in a historic 16th-century palazzo that’s been updated by Zaha Hadid Architects; it will have several restaurants, including one from Alain Ducasse, as well as a massive wellness area in partnership with Sisley Paris when it opens in December 2024. The 36-room [Casa Monti](#) celebrates and honors art and Rome’s bohemian lifestyle. Slated to open in 2025 and 2026 are the [Corinthia Rome](#), situated in what was the Central Bank of Italy; the Mandarin Oriental, Rome, which will be made up of 10 villas dating back to the 19th century; and the [Rosewood Rome](#), inside three historic buildings, including Italy’s Banca Nazionale del Lavoro. One other opening to watch is that of [La Minerva](#), a landmark that’s now part of Orient Express. After a multiyear renovation, it’s expected to reopen in 2025 with 93 rooms and suites by designer Hugo Toro, a rising star. The brand will also launch a new luxury train, [La Dolce Vita Orient Express](#), in the spring of 2025. It will feature a dozen sleeper carriages, for no more than 62 guests, plus cuisine from chef Heinz Beck, of La Pergola, the Michelin three-starred restaurant at the Rome Cavalieri, a Waldorf Astoria Hotel. Eight different itineraries up and down the peninsula will take visitors to old standbys like Venice and lesser-known towns such as Matera and Palena. — [Jalyn Robinson](#)

Forbes

DAILY COVER

Forbes Travel Guide's 25 Most Anticipated Hotel Openings Of 2025



Sail On: Dubai's Jumeirah Marsa Al Arab will feature an 82-berth superyacht marina. [JUMEIRAH MARSA AL ARAB](#)

From Montana to Melbourne, here are the hottest new luxury getaways for the coming year.

By Forbes Travel Guide

Every year, Forbes Travel Guide rates the finest hotels, spas, cruises and restaurants in the world, but its editors and ratings team are always scouring the globe for the most anticipated luxury hotel openings.

For 2025, the emphasis is on wellness getaways, city-center stays, remote retreats and other hotels that will make guests want to rethink old favorites and be among the first to check into a new property. From a stunning sanctuary rising from the Arizona desert to a snow-capped masterpiece coming to Italy, 2025's best new hotels include a galaxy of future Four- and Five-Star properties.

Orient Express La Minerva, Rome

Famed luxury train company Orient Express is on track to expand into hotels. The first stop: this historic Rome property, a 1620 structure featuring 93 Hugo Toro-designed rooms and suites with a view of the Pantheon, a rooftop restaurant and bar overlooking the city and a wellness facility inspired by Ottoman bath rituals.

Condé Nast Traveler



Patrick Loqueneux/La Dolce Vita Orient Express

NEWS & ADVICE

The Most Exciting Train Routes Launching in 2025

Traverse the verdant English countryside, the dramatic deserts of Saudi Arabia, and the snow-capped Alps.

BY JESSICA PUCKETT

November 25, 2024

With the launch of new train routes, high-speed rail projects, and ultra-luxury journeys, 2025 promises to be yet **another exciting year for rail travel** enthusiasts.

In the US, travelers can expect to finally see long-awaited Amtrak updates, including the **return of its New Orleans-bound route** from Mobile, Alabama for the first time in 20 years, plus the rollout of the new high-speed Acela fleet on the Northeast Corridor. Further away, the so-called **rail renaissance** will also pick up speed, with plenty of new options for tourists to plan train-centric adventures in Europe, the Middle East, and beyond.



The first journeys aboard the *Orient Express La Dolce Vita* are scheduled to depart in April 2025. Patrick Locqueneux/La Dolce Vita Orient Express

The most captivating routes debuting next year will whisk passengers through a variety of cultural sites and landscapes, from the verdant English countryside to the snow-capped Alps. Below, see four of the most notable new train journeys scheduled to launch in 2025 that are worth planning a trip around.

Orient Express La Dolce Vita

The much-anticipated *Orient Express La Dolce Vita* seems poised to finally roar to life across the Italian countryside in 2025. Itineraries feature coastal jaunts to Venice and Portofino, ambles through Tuscan wine country, and journeys to the jewels of Sicily, including Palermo and Taormina. The first journeys are scheduled to depart in April 2025. On board, guests can choose from 12 deluxe cabins and 18 suites, all of which feature intricate design elements like wood paneled ceilings, geometric textiles, and brass sconces. Come evening, the “Grand Transformation” takes place across the train, with the crew shifting the decor and atmosphere to a festive and formal nighttime vibe. Enjoy aperitivo hour with cocktails and antipasti in the sleek Lounge Bar before heading to the Dining Carriage for a menu of Italian cuisine designed by a three-Michelin-starred chef. In the morning, the dining car offers an authentic Italian breakfast featuring “a selection of freshly squeezed fruit juices, Sicilian brioche, artisanal jams, and aromatic Italian coffee,” to fuel you for a day of sightseeing and excursions.

La Dolce Vita Orient Express has appointed three-Michelin-starred Chef Heinz Beck to lead the culinary programme on board, launching in spring 2025.

Chef Beck, with Beck and Maltese Consulting, will craft distinct dining journeys that highlight **Italy**'s landscapes, culture, and flavours through thoughtfully curated menus.



Chef Beck is globally renowned for his culinary mastery and deep affinity with Italy. His refined interpretation of Italian cuisine skilfully balances indulgence with wellness and epitomises excellence through his innovative transformation of ingredients into exquisite flavours.

Beck's unique culinary philosophy is rooted in a profound appreciation for Italy's heritage, which he combines with an innovative approach to flavours and nutrition. His meticulously crafted menus connect travellers to Italy's beauty, history, and culture at every destination featuring a carefully curated selection of traditional Italian dishes, elevated with modern techniques and seasonal ingredients. Each meal will be a work of art, reflecting the essence of Italian cuisine while promising to delight the senses of every passenger aboard of La Dolce Vita Orient Express.

Samy Ghachem, general manager of La Dolce Vita Orient Express, remarked, "The appointment of Chef Heinz Beck represents a remarkable alignment of vision and excellence. His unparalleled culinary mastery, innovative blend of tradition and modernity, and ability to craft unforgettable dining experiences perfectly embody the essence of la dolce vita. Under his expert guidance, dining aboard La Dolce Vita Orient Express will be a grand celebration of Italy's gastronomic diversity, and we have the utmost confidence that he will create something truly exceptional for our guests"

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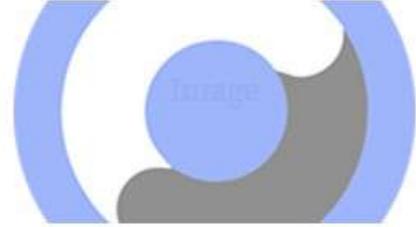
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Commenting on his appointment, Chef Heinz Beck said, "La Dolce Vita Orient Express project represents for me and the Beck and Maltese Consulting team a wonderful opportunity to create a new path to disclose the Italian gastronomy culture. The guests will have the chance to discover our beautiful country not only through its landscapes but also through our menus: from the early morning until the midnight snacks. We want to spread the Made in Italy knowledge in a new way, showcasing the different traditions of each region so the passengers will be able to create a stronger and deeper connection with the territory."

Aboard La Dolce Vita Orient Express, each day unfolds as a culinary and cultural odyssey, where the essence of Italian refinement is intricately woven into every moment of an extraordinary journey. Departing from Ostiense station in Rome, an evocative symbol of Italy's timeless heritage, guests embark on an experience that blends history, elegance, and indulgence.



Each dish, artfully crafted by Chef Beck, will honour Italy's diverse culinary heritage. His thoughtful curation ensures that every itinerary is complemented by a personalised menu, celebrating regional specialities, from Sicilian arancini to Venetian tiramisu, while seamlessly integrating the refined sophistication of la dolce vita. Behind each culinary creation lies the masterful craftsmanship of Rome's ghost kitchen artisans, who guarantee utmost precision and freshness, curating an exquisite dining experience.

This extraordinary journey on Italy's first luxury train transforms travel into an immersive sensory experience. Inspired by the glamour of the 1960s and 1970s, the train offers eight exclusive itineraries to captivating destinations, celebrating Italy's rich cultural tapestry with a focus on its exceptional cuisine.

Guests may reserve directly online by visiting www.orient-express.com/la-dolce-vita. Pricing is tailored to travel preferences and departure date. Starting prices referring to a one-night itinerary are €3,500 per person in a deluxe cabin and €4,700 per person in a suite.

The launch of La Dolce Vita Orient Express precedes the anticipated openings of the first two Orient Express hotels: Orient Express La Minerva in Rome; followed by Orient Express Palazzo Donà Giovannelli in Venice. More information to be announced later in 2024.

TRAVEL SECTION OF THE YEAR

The Daily Telegraph

The glorious evolution of the country house hotel P.11

TRAVEL

Plan your perfect Costa Rican adventure

Lush rainforests and active volcanoes are just the start: Chris Moss maps out an unforgettable escape in Central America's most exhilarating country



Green, serene and blessed with year-round sunshine, Costa Rica is many people's first choice for a holiday in Central America. The environmentally conscious nation won Prince William's first-ever Earthshot Prize in 2021 and has been at the forefront of adventure-focused eco-tourism for three decades. It's famously family-friendly, with hiking and biking trails, rainforests, lovely beaches and comfortable resorts dotted all over. The spine of searing mountains and volcanoes that zig-zags through the country has endowed it with a dramatic, beautiful topography. Drive, trek or ride a bike or horse through landscapes riven by deep can-

yons flowing with white-water rivers and Costa Rica feels far bigger than it appears on a map. In all these environments, flora and fauna abound. The statistics impress: Costa Rica has more than 850 bird species, more butterflies than all of Europe, a quarter of its territory is protected (including 28 national parks and reserves), it contains five per cent of the planet's biodiversity. Costa Rica pioneered the use of zip-lines and walkways in the mid-1980s to offer visitors a window on to the teeming wildlife that inhabits the jungle canopy. These are as much fun for adults as for youngsters, and they are great for birdwatching and sloth-spotting.

Under the volcano: *Nagara Gardens* hotel is set on the edge of Costa Rica's *Arenal Volcano National Park*

The country's Pacific coast contains swathes of unpopulated wilderness, as well as tiny pockets of chic living and surfing – as found on the beaches of the Nicoya Peninsula. At Tortuguero, on the Caribbean side, are some of the best turtle-watching sites anywhere, as well as rare coastal rainforest and mangroves. My suggested itinerary is based broadly around a fly-drive route. I have also tried to ensure you have plenty of time on foot, on boats, in the saddle and in the surf. The accent is on active fun, with a flight east out of the capital, San José, to see the marine wildlife of Tortuguero. Over 13 days, you'll get the chance to hike, bike,

go rafting and zip-lining, while seeing both coastlines. You'll also sample some of the country's culture and cuisine, soak in thermal pools and sip some of the world's finest coffees. English is widely spoken in the main tourist centres. Listen for the best-known local saying: "*Pura vida!*" It means that life is very good indeed, and helps explain why the country tops the Happy Planet Index. Costa Ricans – who call themselves *Ticos* – are friendly and accustomed to visitors. Their country is an ideal choice for a first foray into Central America.

Continued on page 2

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A new golden age of luxury train travel

Fresh rail adventures are about to launch across Europe and Asia, with onboard comfort reaching even greater heights, reveals Adrian Bridge

Travel • Culture

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You wait years for the arrival of a super new luxury train and then along come two. Or three. Oh, very well, let's make that four. Yes, the golden age of rail travel – so often associated with the 1920s – seems to be repeating itself 100 years later. In the next two years, a dazzling array of new trains and departures will have lovers of this form of transport (and is there anyone who isn't?) in raptures.

From the new kid on the block, La Dolce Vita Orient Express, to the more established players, Belmond (of Venice Simplon-Orient-Express fame) and the Golden Eagle (the former Trans-Siberian supremo), there will be new journeys in 2025 in Italy, England and Wales and further afield in Central Asia and China.

In 2026, another expected newcomer, the Norient Express, is scheduled to open up the dramatic landscapes of Norway's lakes, mountains and, for those pining for them, rugged fjords. That year may also see the long-awaited launch of Accor's Orient Express, operating on the original routing between





ii Window on the world: Seven Stars Kyushu in Japan is the country's first modern luxury sleeper train | Feeling plus: Malaysia's Eastern & Oriental Express is part of Belmond's luxury portfolio



i East meets West: the Golden Eagle Silk Road Express will trace the ancient trade route

Paris and Istanbul.

Dawn of a new era

These new trains all play on the idealised view of this form of travel – the glittering, glamorous soirées in the piano bar, the exquisite attention to detail in the decor, the old-school flair of the dining car and the impeccable, unflappable service, all played out against a stunning backdrop of constantly changing, breathtaking scenery.

But these new offerings are far from being replicas of the model immortalised in Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*. Times have moved on, the possibilities of what can be done with a train have expanded and the bar of what constitutes "luxury" has been raised. Passenger expectations have evolved: to a younger, more demanding demographic, those old-style cabins with bunk beds and sink (but no ensuite shower or loo) do not have quite the same appeal.

There is a growing demand for more meaningful, immersive connections with the lands being traversed, gastronomic creativity that encapsulates the flavours of place and ever more oases of on-board comfort that allow for quiet reflection, a board game or two, or a body and soul-enriching massage.

More people want this experience – both Belmond and Golden Eagle are reporting a surge in sales – and are prepared to pay very good money for it (a night in a Grand Suite on the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express costs from £10,165pp). It taps into the zeitgeist of seeking to travel more sustainably (but without the hair shirt); of wanting to switch off from the frenetic demands of 24/7 online connectivity and to travel more slowly and mindfully. It recognises that the journey itself is

the source of great joy – and rejuvenation – rather than simply a means of getting from A to B. It allows people to be adventurous, but at the same time beautifully cocooned in a world of elegance, charm and conviviality.

"Stepping on to one of our trains is like stepping on to a movie set," says Gary Franklin, vice-president of trains and cruises at Belmond. "It's a very special environment; passengers can make of it what they want."

Best of British

So what can lovers of luxury train travel look forward to in the months ahead?

Belmond, the company that, with its launch in 1982 of the lovingly restored Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, pioneered the revival of luxury train travel, this week unveiled its own contribution to the new age in the form of the *Britannic Explorer*. This new train, scheduled to start services next July, incorporates a brighter take on the genre with lighter shades of oak, a bar car

playing on the "timeless charm" of Victorian apothecaries and fine-dining experiences crafted by Michelin-starred chef Simon Rogan.

With three- and six-night itineraries covering scenic stretches in Cornwall, Snowdonia and the Lake District (including the glorious Settle-Carlisle run), the *Britannic Explorer* will break new ground for luxury sleeper train travel in England and Wales and is likely to be a worthy companion for Belmond's hugely popular Royal Scotsman offering north of the border.

Bella Italia

Next April comes *La Dolce Vita Orient Express*, a radical departure from the vintage 1920s model. Here, the aesthetic will have a much more contemporary feel based on the style and exuberance of Italy in the 1960s. Design components will incorporate wood-beamed ceilings, vibrant hues of orange, terracotta and purple, and smoked mirrors.

The launch will feature two trains – from a projected total of six over the next three years – offering a number of itineraries exclusively within Italy. These will venture to some of the country's most sensual and sensational locations including Rome, Venice, Portofino, Tuscany and Palermo. Think longer trips with time to explore, truffles and late-night storytelling, menus artfully curated by Heinz Beck (also of Michelin pedigree). Forget Hercule Poirot – the spirits you are more likely to encounter on this train are those of Gregory Peck and Audrey Hepburn. A Roman Holiday meets

La Dolce Vita.

Eastern promise

Another new train, another motif. The Golden Eagle Silk Road Express, slated to launch next September, will see a significant expansion of the routes currently being operated by the group's flagship train, the Golden Eagle, through the territories that were formerly key staging posts on the ancient Silk Road trading route linking East and West.

Welcome to Tashkent and Samarkand, Khiva and Bukhara and much more beyond, all the way into China, opening up the cultural riches of Beijing and Xi'an and, in one departure, the treasures of Tibet.

Reflecting the exotic nature of these generally much longer journeys, the new train will have an opulent feel with a pale blue, crimson and gold exterior, interiors adorned with Eastern art pieces and larger suites fitted with bathtubs.

"What we provide is luxury adventure travel," says the company's founder, Tim Littler. "People are looking for special once-in-a-lifetime experiences and to visit in comfort countries they probably wouldn't get to on their own."

Littler has his sights set on further dramatic new departures and tantalisingly floats the idea of a future train journey from Shanghai to Saigon.

A Nordic adventure

One new departure scheduled for

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Signature Luxury Travel & Style 26 Nov 2024

2026 is the Norient Express, a Norwegian venture that, as ever, plays on the Orient Express theme (the clue is in the name), but which will be a very different offering. Interiors on this train (or rather two trains) will feature plush furnishings fashioned and crafted out of Norwegian materials and there will be a gym and observation car; you may even catch a glimpse of the northern lights as the train winds its way south from Bergen to Oslo before turning and heading north to Trondheim. Another USP here is the fact that the trains will be electrically powered. Of course. All very Scandi.

These developments don't come out of nowhere. The growth of the luxury train market has been developing apace over the past two decades with Belmond launching the Andean Explorer in Peru and refining its Eastern & Oriental Express offering in Malaysia. The Danube Express – now owned by Golden Eagle – has been another addition to the mix. Further afield, the Seven Stars Kyushu – the first luxury sleeper train in Japan – has been almost completely sold out since its launch in 2013, while the Maharajas' Express and Deccan Odyssey trains in India have turned more than a few heads.

But is there room for so many new players in this very top-end niche of the market? Simon Pielow, co-founder of the Luxury Train Club, believes so: "In the past luxury train travel was seen as the preserve of an older demographic, but the market is opening up to a younger set, people who perhaps weren't aware

that this kind of travel was possible and the train operators are now clearly targeting this group."

In addition to the new trains themselves, Pielow points to the constantly improving standard of accommodation on board – the trend being for all en-suite, larger cabins and ever-grander suites alongside the consistent refinements in the culinary offerings.

Off-train excursions are also being adapted to give passengers more choice and for those who want it, the chance to engage very actively with their surroundings. That could involve joining in bread-making rituals in Kyrgyzstan, delving into the ancient rainforest of Taman Negara or, in the case of one Royal Scotsman excursion, a spot of commando-style training in the Scottish Highlands.

"Being active is another way of switching off," says Belmond's Franklin. "It's part of a slow travel process that has gained in popularity hugely since

Covid. It includes relaxing, recharging, socialising on board – and a real immersion in an activity specific to place. It's about living in the moment and coming away feeling enriched."

Franklin – who reveals that despite the hefty price tags, the suites and the grand suites are always the first to be booked on the Belmond trains – welcomes the new rail arrivals on the market.

"They are creating ever greater

awareness of this very special type of travel and they reflect increasing demand; it's good for all of us," he says.

That's certainly true for passengers. The new golden age of rail travel is well underway. Sit back, relax, order another cocktail – and enjoy the ride.

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A 'golden age' of luxury train travel

Plush new sleeper trains are cropping up across Europe from Norway to Italy

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The art deco bar lounge on board the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express
(Image credit: Getty / VW Pics)

BY IRENIE FORSHAW, THE WEEK UK PUBLISHED YESTERDAY

"You wait years for the arrival of a super new luxury train and then along come two. Or three. Oh very well, let's make that four," said Adrian Bridge in [The Telegraph](#). In the next two years, a "dazzling array" of swanky trains is set to launch, ushering in a new "golden age" of rail travel.

In July 2025, Belmond's new sleeper train, the Britannic Explorer, will be offering a series of itineraries departing from London to locations across the UK including the [Lake District](#), Cornwall, and Wales. Also launching next year is La Dolce Vita Orient Express, which has announced multi-day routes in Venice and the Italian Riviera, Rome and Sicily, and through the Tuscan countryside. And in autumn 2026, the Norient Express is set to "open up the dramatic landscapes of Norway's lakes, mountains and, for those pining for them, the fjords".

These new [rail journeys](#) tap into an "idealised" view of train travel from "glittering, glamorous soirees in the piano bar" to "impeccable, unflappable service", all set against a "stunning backdrop" of ever-changing scenery.

The early bird gets THE WEEK



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"Nostalgia is certainly a factor in the appeal," said J.D. Shadel in [Condé Nast Traveler](#). But while it's "tempting to view these plush train carriages as a kind of Gilded Age cosplay" and "reliving the past", the resurgence of rail travel is just as much about "finding novel ways to be present".

The new generation of [sleeper trains](#) transforms the most "stressful" part of getting from A to B into a "pleasurable" experience. Instead of trying to go between places as quickly as possible, the surge in luxury rail routes prioritises "slow travel"; the trains typically travel at around 50mph so guests can enjoy the journey and soak up the views along the way.

Many of the latest wave of rail routes to be announced will transport people to "bucket list" destinations not previously accessible by premium trains. For example, La Dolce Vita will take guests to hard-to-reach locations like the "ancient stone-carved architecture in the cliffy city of Matera in Basilicata", southern Italy.

And it's not just luxury rail travel that's seen an uptick recently. New data from Eurostat reveals that rail travel in the EU "reached a new peak" in 2023, reported [Euronews](#). Last year passengers across the bloc travelled a total of 266 billion miles by rail – the highest number since data collection began in 2004.

An eco-conscious desire to travel more sustainably, coupled with the "burgeoning network of sleeper services", is driving this demand, said Ben Clatworthy in [National Geographic](#). With new routes currently under way in an array of locations from [Portugal](#) to Budapest, it's clear that rail travel in Europe is "having a bit of a moment".



The Daily Traveler

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The Most Exciting Train Routes Launching in 2025

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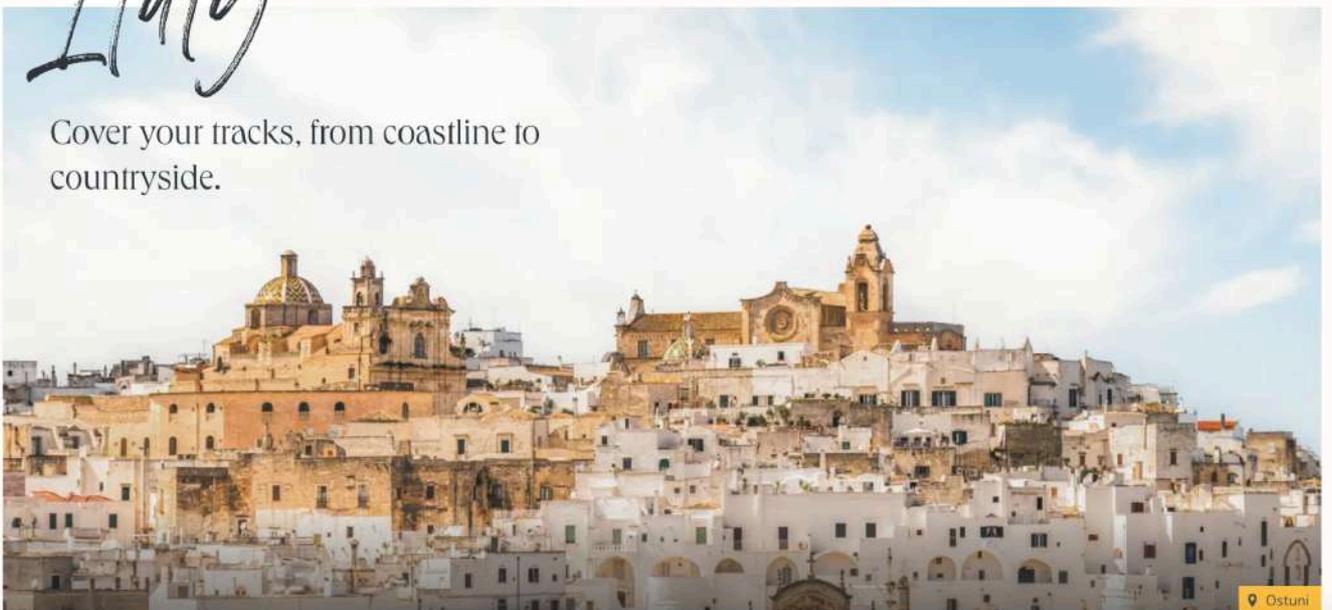
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Rail travel has a strong history in Europe, as anyone who's ever backpacked across the continent can tell you. But 2025 will mark a new chapter for train enthusiasts looking for more ways to explore one country in particular: Italy.

In 2024, Belmond's Venice Simplon-Orient-Express debuted its Paris-to-Portofino route, the train's first trip to the Italian Riviera. The three-night journey, which combines one night on board with two nights at Belmond's iconic Splendido property in Portofino, will remain a summer special. Meanwhile, Accor's highly anticipated La Dolce Vita Orient Express train launches in early 2025. Swanky and shiny, with lacquered walls and vintage silverware, the train's next-level design

and culinary program (think: Sicilian brioche and freshly squeezed fruit juices for breakfast) might almost be enough to keep you inside its nine carriages—if not for the eight distinct itineraries on offer, which include a truffle trek through Piedmont.

While they're not quite as fancy, Italy's *espressi* (express) and *storici* (historic) trains are receiving makeovers of their own, thanks to FS Treni Turistici Italiani; the new tourist-focused brand was launched in 2023 by Italy's state-owned train operator in response to demands for new rail options and more ways to engage in sustainable travel. So really, everybody wins.

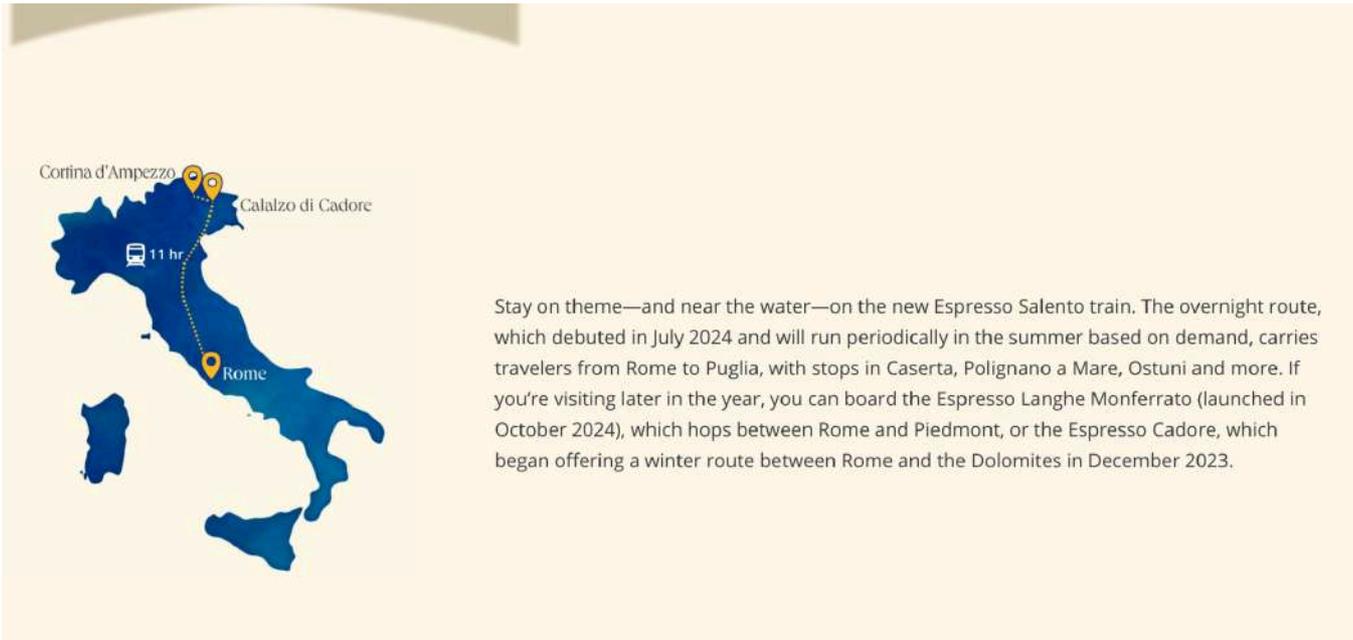
Know Before You Go

Best time to visit: There isn't a bad time to visit Italy. Summer is the busiest season, and currently the only time the Venice Simplon journey is offered. If you're hoping to catch the major grape or olive harvests, aim for late September or early October.

How to say hello: Buongiorno for mornings and buonasera for afternoons and evenings. If you're on friendly, informal terms, ciao works just fine.

Tipping: Many restaurants already include a 10% service charge, and unless the service is particularly good, you shouldn't feel obliged to leave more. Tip porters and bellhops 2 to 3 euros (per bag), and round up and leave taxi drivers your change.





Stay on theme—and near the water—on the new Espresso Salento train. The overnight route, which debuted in July 2024 and will run periodically in the summer based on demand, carries travelers from Rome to Puglia, with stops in Caserta, Polignano a Mare, Ostuni and more. If you're visiting later in the year, you can board the Espresso Langhe Monferrato (launched in October 2024), which hops between Rome and Piedmont, or the Espresso Cadore, which began offering a winter route between Rome and the Dolomites in December 2023.

15 Luxurious New Hotels Opening In 2025

By Olivia Emily
18 Hours Ago

Luxurious spots across the globe



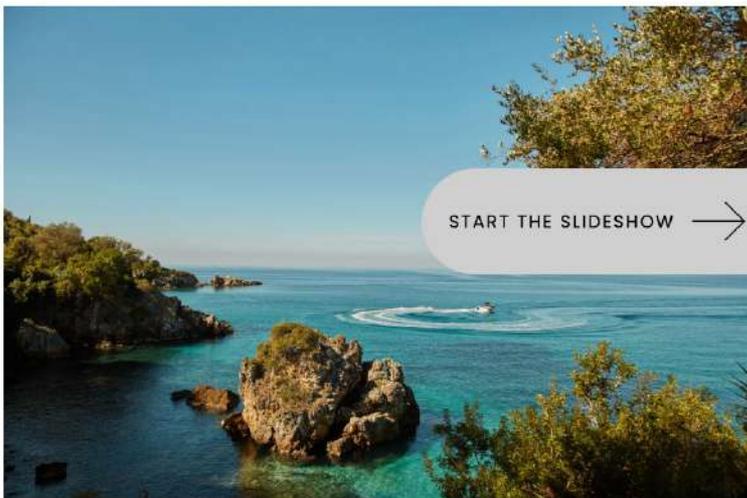
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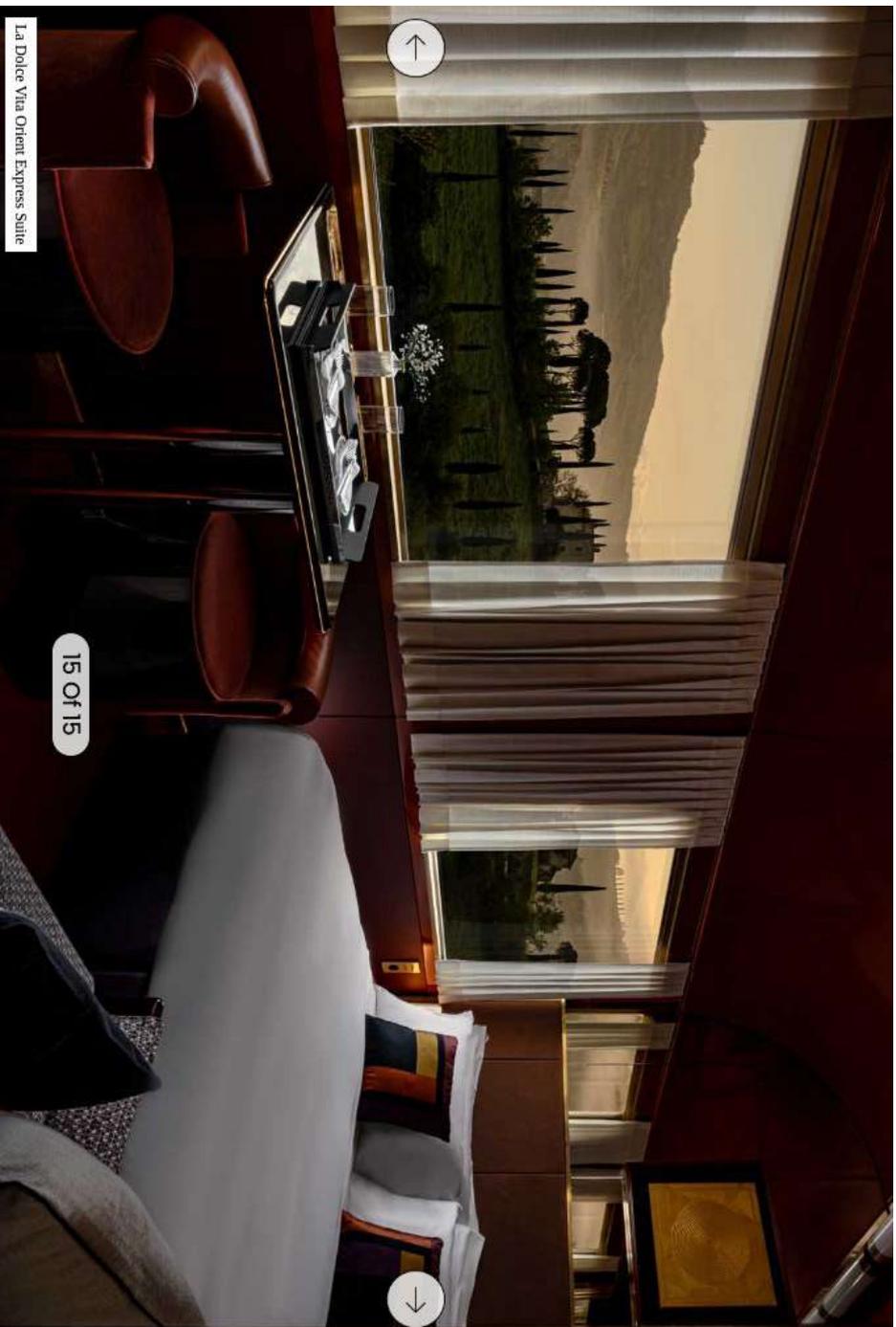


Hjortviken – Gothenburg, Sweden

Planning your 2025 adventures? If a brand spanking new hotel is on your bucket list, check out these shiny spots that have just opened or are still to come in 2025...

15 Hot New Hotels For 2025





La Dolce Vita Orient Express Suite

15 OF 15

[Close](#)

La Dolce Vita Orient Express

For luxury on the tracks, La Dolce Vita Orient Express will embark on its maiden journey in 2025, comprising 12 carriages and whisking up to 62 passengers through Italy's most beautiful natural scenery. With it, Orient Express' first hotel, La Minerva Rome, will launch for the perfect start and end to each journey. [Read all about it here.](#)

[BOOK IT](#)

Orient Express to Open First Hotel 'Orient Express La Minerva' in Rome in Spring 2025

December 4, 2024

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Orient Express La Minerva © Orient Express

Situated in the historic Piazza della Minerva, in the heart of Rome and just steps from the Pantheon, **Orient Express La Minerva** is set to open in **Spring 2025** as the first hotel under the renowned **Orient Express** brand.

The property, formerly known as **Palazzo Fonseca** dating back to the 17th century, occupies an entire island site and was acquired in 2021 by Arsenale SpA. Following a comprehensive renovation, the building's interiors and historical features have been meticulously designed and restored under direction of Franco-Mexican Artist architect and interior designer **Hugo Toro**.

Orient Express La Minerva is composed of ninety-three luxurious rooms, ranging from 25 to 235 square meters, including 36 suites, with 4 Signature Suites boasting spectacular views of the Pantheon the picturesque Piazza della Minerva with its characteristic Bernini elephant, and the captivating Roman skyline.

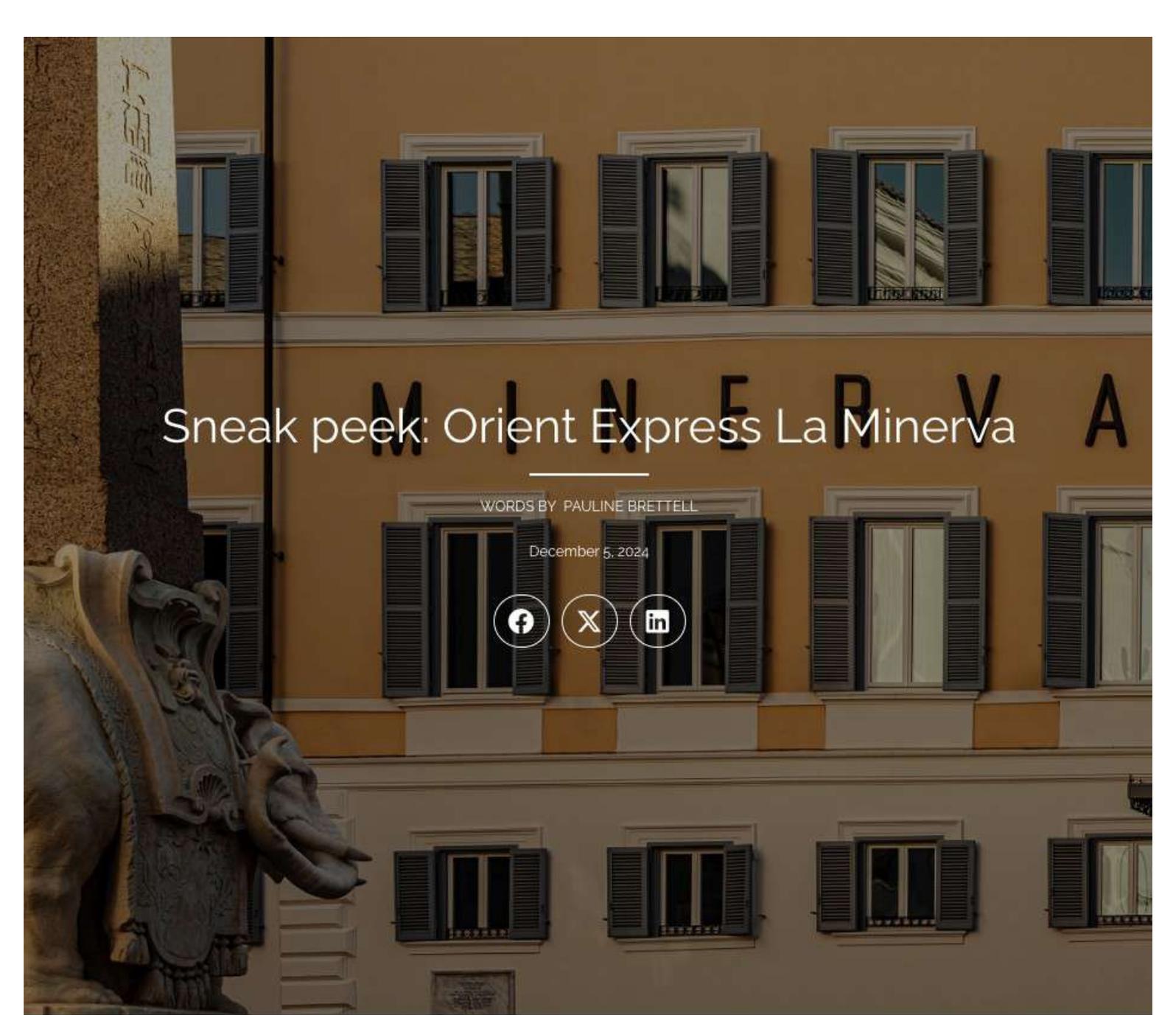
Built in 1620 as the residence of the aristocratic Portuguese Fonseca family and later acquired in 1811 by the wealthy French Sauve family who first transformed it into a hotel, it became a favourite destination during the Grand Tour for prominent artists such as Stendhal, Vittorio Alfieri, and Melville, and even hosted a visit from Pope Pius IX. The restoration work reflects a project rooted in the history of Rome, inspired by Roman domus and the riches of the Eternal City, combining art Déco style with contemporary elegance, in perfect harmony with the mysterious identity of the Orient Express journey.

Upon visiting, guests can savour the allure of **La Minerva Bar**, home to the building's historic skylight and serving as a tribute to Minerva, the Roman goddess of art and craftsmanship who inspired the project. Meanwhile, **Voliera**, the rooftop restaurant and bar, offers Mediterranean cuisine and artfully crafted cocktails against a breathtaking panoramic backdrop. Nearby include views of the domes of Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza and Saint Peter's Basilica, the Altare della Patria, and the tower of the Quirinal. The imposing statue of the deity welcomes guests in its original 1854 form, sculpted by Rinaldo Rinaldi, a disciple of Canova. The spa evokes the atmosphere and rituals of Roman baths, a traditional place of wellness and purification.

In line with its history but remaining contemporary, sophisticated meeting and event spaces are available to celebrate special occasions and organize exclusive business meetings. Among these, the **Olimpo Ballroom**, decorated with exquisite Murano chandeliers and twelve splendid marble statues by **Rinaldo Rinaldi**, depict the four elements, the four seasons, and the four continents known at the time. Three additional welcoming meeting rooms complete the offer.

Reservations are available from today at laminerva.orient-express.com or via your reservations center at +39 06 844 290. Prices for a classic room start from €1,000 with breakfast included; for a Suite: starting from €2,500, breakfast included; for a Signature Suite: from €3,500 and up to €15,000, breakfast included.

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Sneak peek: Orient Express La Minerva

WORDS BY PAULINE BRETTELL

December 5, 2024



Having just opened for booking, La Minerva will make its debut in the spring as the inaugural hotel of the Orient Express collection, with breathtaking views of the Pantheon, Piazza della Minerva, and the captivating Roman skyline...

Situated in the historic Piazza della Minerva, in the heart of Rome and just steps from the Pantheon, Orient Express La Minerva is set to open in Spring 2025 as the first hotel under [the iconic Orient Express brand](#). The property, formerly known as Palazzo Fonseca dating back to the 17th century, occupies an entire island site and was acquired in 2021 by Arsenale SpA.





Image credit: Mr. Tripper

Following a comprehensive renovation, the building's interiors and historical features have been meticulously designed and restored under direction of [Franco-Mexican Artist architect and interior designer Hugo Toro](#). Sheltering ninety-three rooms and suites, the hotel will also unveil one of the city's most exciting and comprehensive food and beverage programs, featuring a new rooftop restaurant and bar with immersive views of the city.

"This milestone proudly marks the long-anticipated arrival of our first Orient Express hotel – Orient Express La Minerva. Nestled in the heart of Rome, it is not only a destination for the most discerning travellers seeking exceptional experiences but also a place for Romans to come together. Here, Orient Express meets the soul of the Eternal City, creating a unique space where stories are shared, and cultures converge. It is with great pleasure to officially introduce the first asset to iconic Orient Express' portfolio of hotels, trains, and sailing yachts" – said Gilda Perez-Alvarado, CEO Orient Express.



Image credit: Mr. Tripper



Image credit: Mr. Tripper

Built in 1620 as the residence of the aristocratic Portuguese Fonseca family and later acquired in 1811 by the wealthy French Sauve family who first transformed it into a hotel, it became a favourite destination during the Grand Tour for prominent artists such as Stendhal, Vittorio Alfieri, and Melville, and even hosted a visit from Pope Pius IX. The restoration work reflects a project rooted in the history of Rome, inspired by Roman domus and the riches of the Eternal City, combining art Déco style with contemporary elegance, in perfect harmony with the mysterious identity of the Orient Express journey.

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Image credit: Mr. Tripper

The spa evokes the atmosphere and rituals of Roman baths, a traditional place of wellness and purification. In line with its history but remaining contemporary, sophisticated meeting and event spaces are available to celebrate special occasions and organize exclusive business meetings. Among these, the Olimpo Ballroom, decorated with exquisite Murano chandeliers and twelve splendid marble statues by Rinaldo Rinaldi, depict the four elements, the four seasons, and the four continents known at the time. Three additional welcoming meeting rooms complete the offer.

"In a period of renaissance for the city, Rome is the ideal setting for a global project aimed at creating an authentic, memorable, and personalized luxury hospitality experience, marked by excellence. With the opening of Orient Express La Minerva, we restore a historic stage to the city that for years has been a refuge for renowned intellectuals and artists. At the same time, we are bringing an iconic name like Orient Express to the Capital, a universal symbol since 1883 of the art of travel and bold, refined adventures, now tied to the allure of our country and positioning Italy at the center as a privileged destination for sophisticated and demanding tourists" states Giampaolo Ottazzi, General Manager of Orient Express Hotels Italy.

Orient Express La Minerva reservations now open for the brand's first hotel arriving Spring 2025

Vicky Karantzavelou

05.12.2024  652



Orient Express La Minerva

Ninety-three rooms and suites housed in one of Rome's most iconic hotels, bookable from today. La Minerva will make its debut as the inaugural hotel of the Orient Express collection, with breathtaking views of the Pantheon, Piazza della Minerva, and the captivating Roman skyline.

ROME – Situated in the historic Piazza della Minerva, in the heart of **Rome** and just

steps from the Pantheon, **Orient Express La Minerva** is set to open in Spring 2025 as the first hotel under the renowned **Orient Express** brand. The property, formerly known as Palazzo Fonseca dating back to the 17th century, occupies an entire island site and was acquired in 2021 by **Arsenale SpA**. Following a comprehensive renovation, the building's interiors and historical features have been meticulously designed and restored under direction of Franco-Mexican Artist architect and interior designer **Hugo Toro**.

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Accor to open first Orient Express hotel in Rome in spring 2025

9 Dec 2024 by Mark Caswell



Accor will debut the first hotel within its Orient Express collection next year, with the opening of the Orient Express La Minerva in Rome.

Long-time readers will recall that there was previously an Orient-Express Hotels brand, which was reflagged as Belmond back in 2014 – although SNCF retained the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express train service and name.

Accor acquired a 50% stake in the share capital of Orient Express alongside SNCF in 2017, and at the time announced plans to revive the Orient Express Hotels brand.

The following year the group announced plans to (re)debut the brand in Bangkok, but the development within the King Power Mahanakhon skyscraper ended up being managed by The Standard (now part of Hyatt).

The 93-room Orient Express La Minerva is scheduled to open in spring 2025, and will be housed within the 17th century Palazzo Fonseca on Rome's Piazza della Minerva.

Features will include La Minerva Bar, home to the building's historic skylight, as well as rooftop Mediterranean restaurant and bar Voliera, a spa, and meeting and events spaces including the Olimpo Ballroom decorated with Murano chandeliers and marble statues by Rinaldo Rinaldi.

Rooms start from €1,000 including breakfast, rising to €2,500 for a suite and between €3,500 and €15,000 for a Signature Suite.

Commenting on the news Giampaolo Ottazzi, General Manager of Orient Express Hotels Italy, said:

"In a period of renaissance for the city, Rome is the ideal setting for a global project aimed at creating an authentic, memorable, and personalized luxury hospitality experience, marked by excellence.

"With the opening of Orient Express La Minerva, we restore a historic stage to the city that for years has been a refuge for renowned intellectuals and artists.

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Bloomberg



By [Bloomberg Pursuits](#)
December 12, 2024



As much as travel writers hate to admit it, nowhere on Earth is actually “new.”

So, then, how are we to create a list that offers fresh temptations for ambitious explorers? Typically we find ourselves inspired by corners of the globe that have long been enticing—but feel full of fresh upgrades—and by the quiet locales that have been to many hiding in plain sight. This year there are even places that haven't been fully open to tourism for decades but that are slowly starting to embrace it as both an economic and cultural opportunity.

On the classic side are places such as Rome, Bangkok, London and New York, which are all getting massive infrastructure investments, big-time restaurant openings and long-awaited luxury hotels. Wildlife lovers will find uncharted frontiers in the Colombian Amazon and São Tomé and Príncipe—in fact, some call the latter “the Galápagos of Africa.” Most exciting, perhaps, are places like Greenland and Algeria: They are becoming newly accessible to travelers, thanks to recently built airports and groundbreaking shifts in visa accessibility.

Narrowing down the world's biggest travel news to just 25 destinations is a year-round obsession here at Bloomberg Pursuits. And in keeping with previous editions of this guide, we've asked our most trusted travel planners to help you determine the best and worst times to visit each place, based on factors that include weather as well as festivals and events.

But this year we've added even more insights. Simply select your nearest city at the top of the page, and you'll get personalized, month-by-month estimates for hotel and flight costs alongside each recommendation. Pulling this off took months of work with the data scientists at Kayak, who gathered billions—yes, billions!—of data points to make it all happen.

ROME

Share this destination   

During the Vatican's 2025 Jubilee year, the Pope will open five Holy Doors at churches including St. Peter's Basilica as a symbol of salvation for Catholics around the world. And the surrounding city will be exciting and more accessible even for nonreligious travelers, as \$1.4 billion in citywide infrastructure investments reach completion. Those funds have gone toward the renovation of all three fountains in the Piazza Navona, upgrades to green areas around the Vatican and the Mausoleum of Hadrian, more commonly known as Castel Sant'Angelo, and the christening of the flagship stations for the \$3 billion Metro Line C that runs under Roman ruins. In addition to relieving traffic, the Porta Metronia and Fori Imperiali-Colosseo stops will double as archaeological museums, allowing you to look through glass walls at ancient history while awaiting your train.

Add to that an enticing array of hotel openings from Corinthia, Rosewood, Nobu and Orient Express—plus the 74-room Romeo Roma, one of Zaha Hadid's final projects, with multiple pools and a rooftop lounge in a 16th century palazzo near Piazza del Popolo.

EDITORS' PICK

Dazzling New Hotels For 2025, The World's Most Expensive Cruise And Other Travel News

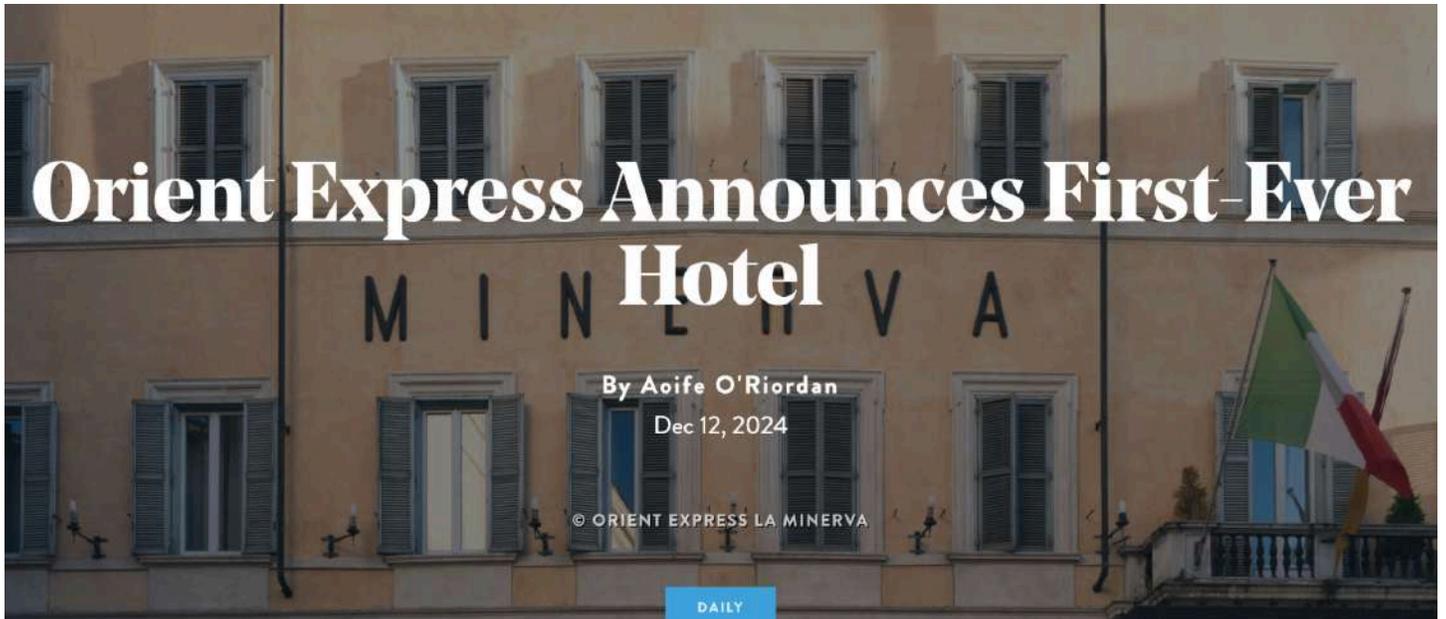
Plus: An Antarctica wellness retreat, holiday travel tips and gift ideas for thrill seekers.

25 Dazzling Luxury Hotels Opening in 2025



FOUR SEASONS

New hotel construction is booming with a record number of projects around the world. According to a recent report by Lodging Econometrics' Future Forecast, there are nearly 800 new hotels being built in the United States, more than 350 in Europe, more than 600 in India and over 1,100 in China. From Austria to Thailand, here are [25 new luxury hotels to check out—or into—in 2025](#).



The first hotel under the [Orient Express brand](#) officially opened for bookings Dec. 4, allowing discerning travelers to indulge in the brand's high standards of services and amenities within a hotel environment. [Orient Express La Minerva](#), in the historic Piazza della Minerva in Rome, Italy, was formerly known as Palazzo Fonesca and dates back to the 17th century.



© Orient Express La Minerva

Arsenal SpA acquired the entire island site in 2021, comprehensively renovating and restoring the building with architect and interior designer Hugo Toro. Orient Express La Minerva spans 93 luxurious guestrooms, including 36 suites, four of which are signature suites. The Stendhal Suite, La Minerva Suite, Obelisco Suite and Orient Express Suite feature unique configurations and are the epitome of opulence.

All accommodations come with bespoke bathroom amenities; Rivolta

Carmignani linen; a minibar with complimentary soft drinks, coffee and tea; and more.

Upon entering, guests can peruse La Minerva Bar, home to the building's historic skylight and honoring the Roman goddess Minerva, which serves cocktails, Italian snacks and afternoon tea with pastries. An on-site rooftop restaurant and bar also graces the property, offering Mediterranean cuisine and craft cocktails. Voliera sits on the seventh floor, meaning guests can take in views of St. Peter's Dome, Altare della Patria and Piazza della Minerva.



© Orient Express La Minerva

Guests are welcome to celebrate special occasions within the hotel's Olimpo Ballroom, adorned with Murano chandeliers and 12 marble statues by Rinaldo Rinaldi. There's also three additional meeting rooms available.

The hotel opens spring 2025.

The Britannic Explorer Luxury Train Launches In England And Wales

The Belmond Britannic Explorer is part of the trend for slow travel on luxury trains that featuring high-design carriages, outstanding service, and memorable scenic journeys



The Britannic Explorer Observation Car. LVMH

[The Britannic Explorer, A Belmond Train](#), the first luxury sleeper train to tour through England and Wales, will begin inaugural journeys in July 2025. Departing from London, it will offer three-night trips on three different routes in the glorious British countryside. It's part of the current trend for slow travel on luxury trains around the world – think of Japan's Shiki Shima and Italy's new Orient Express La Dolce Vita – that pride themselves on their exceptional high-design train carriages, outstanding service, and journeys that are punctuated by memorable “experiences.”

As the author of *National Geographic's 100 Train Journeys of a Lifetime* (which will be published in 2025), I've observed the growing demand for over-the-top train journeys that cater to small numbers of well-heeled travelers on trips through some of the world's most scenic locations.

How Accor Is Stepping Up Its New Openings in 2025



Accor is entering 2025 with a powerful array of new hotels, resorts and hospitality experiences set to open throughout the year. Across its spectrum of more than 45 hospitality brands, ranging from luxury to economy and everything in between, Accor is giving travelers fresh inspiration to explore the world, from ultra-luxurious train journeys to seaside wellness retreats and stylish urban hotspots.

While the choices are diverse, each new offering demonstrates Accor's commitment to sustainability and service excellence. Around the world, more than 330,000 talented Accor Heartists are delivering passion for hospitality and genuine care, crafting truly distinctive experiences and fostering meaningful connections. Here's a preview of the places and spaces Accor will unveil in 2025.

Luxury: La Dolce Vita Orient Express is an opulent “slow travel” experience created by Accor and Arsenale S.p.A., the first Italian venture in luxury rail hospitality. With regional and thematic trips through Italy's beautiful countryside, La Dolce Vita Orient Express celebrates the glamor, joie de vivre, and artistic fervor of Italian culture in the 1960s. Guests will be treated to the culinary artistry of three Michelin-starred chef Heinz Beck, whose innovative blend of tradition and modernity perfectly embody the essence of la dolce vita. Journeys begin in spring 2025.

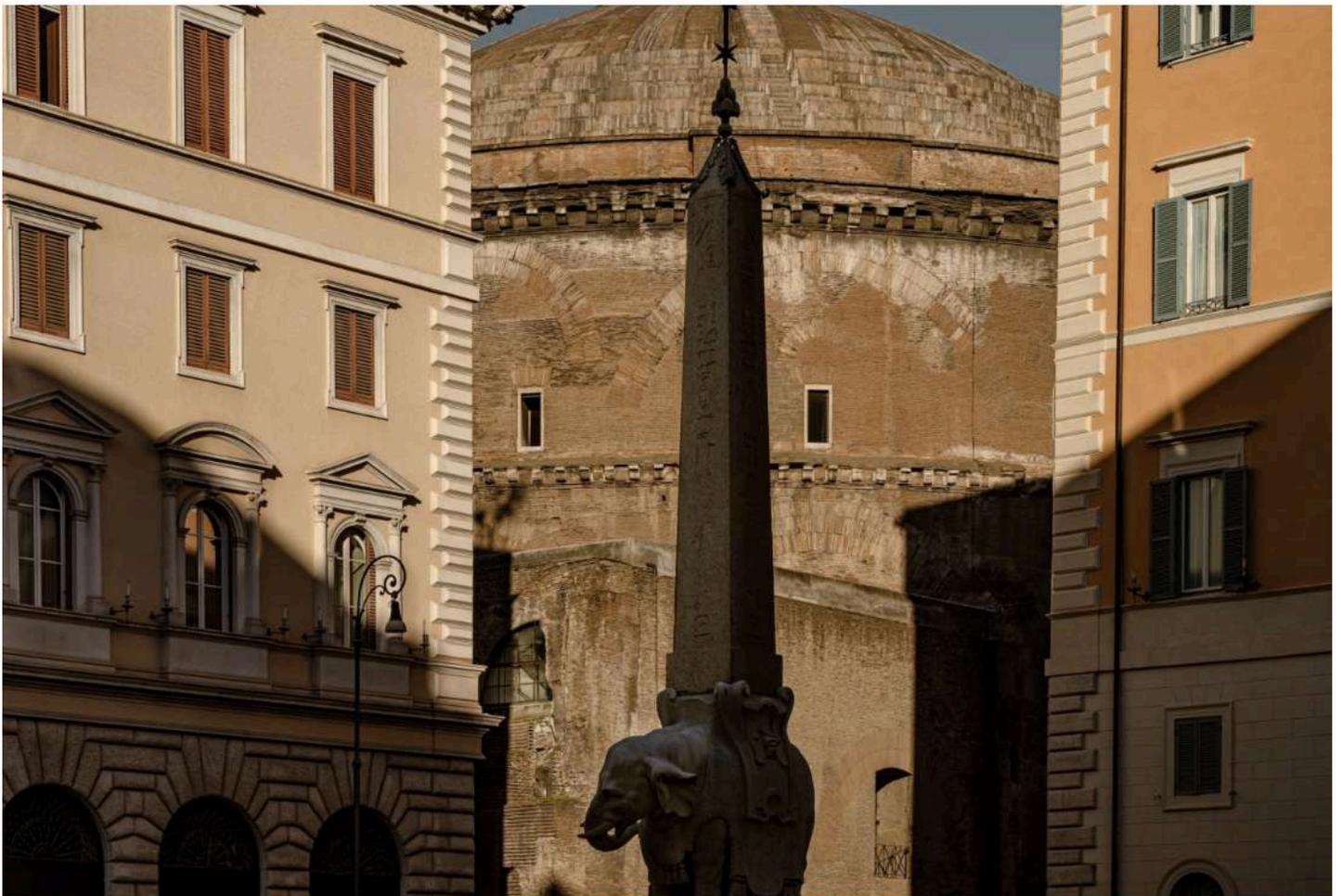
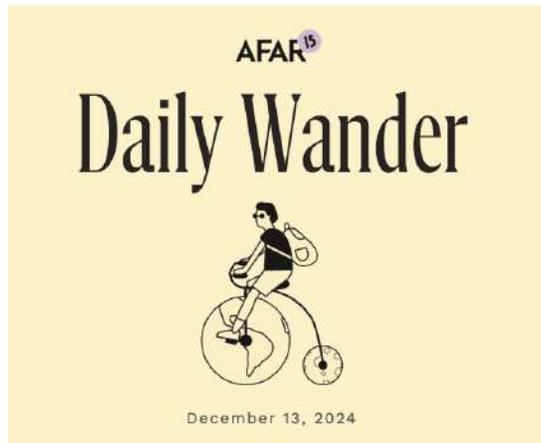
Orient Express La Minerva is a heritage hotel site set in the heart of Rome, Italy, and will be the brand's very first hotel in the world. Offering 93 rooms and suites in the former Palazzo Fonseca, the property is located in a sumptuous 17th century palace restored for modern comfort. The interior design and artistic direction of the hotel have been entrusted to famed architect and designer Hugo Toro, who will soon reveal a glamorous experience inspired by the Roman domus and the riches of the Eternal City. The hotel's opening is scheduled for early 2025.



How Accor Is Stepping Up Its New Openings in 2025

Important since you Specialize in: Luxury, USA/Canada

Accor is entering 2025 with a powerful array of new hotels, resorts and hospitality experiences set to open throughout the...[Read More](#)



The Orient Express Is Opening Its First Hotel in a Historic Palace in Rome With Views of the Pantheon

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