

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Belmond gets glamorous with inaugural Orient Express trip

May 13, 2022



Belmond inaugurates new train routes with opulence. Image credit: Belmond

By NORA HOWE

LVMH-owned hospitality group Belmond's Venice Simplon-Orient-Express is returning to Rome after a decade and is celebrating in the most opulent way possible.

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Introducing a new journey, which includes Venice, Florence and Rome before ending in Paris, Belmond invites affluents aboard the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express for an unparalleled luxury experience, illustrating this through a new festive campaign. From Belmond's 5-star hospitality service to Michelin-level culinary encounters, guests may visit some of Europe's most historically renowned destinations in style.

Legend in motion

In its heyday, the original Orient Express, developed by Belgian entrepreneur Georges Nagelmackers, was viewed as the transport method of the elite, from presidents and aristocrats to notable artists and cultural pioneers.

While the original train completely ceased services in 1977, the concept and some physical elements live on through Belmond.

A full-service express train, the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express offers trips from March to November between London, Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, Geneva, Verona, Venice, Florence, Rome, Prague, Vienna, Budapest and Istanbul.

Like it did between the 19th and 20th centuries, the train still appeals to the ultra-wealthy, as single tickets cost between 2,730 and 17,500 pounds, or \$3,435-\$22,021 at the current exchange rates.

The Venice Simplon-Orient-Express is making a stop in Rome

Upon boarding the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express train, guests are transported into the grandiose world that could best be likened to that of Jay Gatsby. From intricate detailing in each of the private cabins to handcrafted furniture found in the reception cars and 24-hour butler service, the train oozes luxury.

Belmond invites guests to its restored 1920s cabins, offering a choice between a twin cabin or one of the six grand

suites, starting at \$3,083 and \$14,469 per person per night, respectively.

The grand suites, aptly named Paris, Venice, Istanbul, Vienna, Prague and Budapest boast a number of features and amenities, such as unlimited Champagne, private dining, spacious marble en-suite bathrooms a lounge area and more.

Earlier this year, Michelin-starred French chef Jean Imbert was appointed as the head chef of the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express service, who now oversees all culinary touchpoints, from menu curation to ambiance.

He brings his vision to life through dynamic, seasonal menus that incorporate ingredients from local farmers, producers and artisans, as well as guest experiences at visited destinations throughout Europe.

The famed chef redesigned the physical identity of the train's three 1920s restaurant cars, L'Oriental, Etoile Du Nord and Cte d'Azur, adding new ambient lighting to elevate the ambiance, French porcelain dinnerware and color schemes that reflect the history of each car.

Height of life

At the heart of this travel experience and Belmond's campaign for the train service, though, is more than just luxury amenities it is a sense of letting go of inhibitions and enjoying life to the fullest.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by Belmond (@belmond)

To celebrate the new chapter for the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, Belmond hosted an extravagant party on board

The group carries this glamorous spirit across all of its hospitality touchpoints, wanting hotel guests and train guests alike to not simply receive luxury service, but sincerely enjoy their time and create unforgettable memories all while doing so with impeccable style.

For the reopening of its property in Portofino, Italy, Belmond's Splendido Mare Hotel issued a vignette capturing the dolce vita. The scenes showed a glamorous but relaxing slice of life in the coastal town, inviting travelers to unwind and embrace the easy life.

With only 14 rooms and suites, the Splendido Mare offers guests an intimate experience. The hotel's most famous guest was Ava Gardner, who stayed there in 1954 while filming *The Barefoot Contessa* ([see story](#)).

Earlier this year, the group announced the renovation of its Maroma property in Mexico's Riviera Maya. Set to reopen in May 2023, the property is primed for an extensive renovation and redesign, reimagined with the goal of honoring Mexican artisanal traditions, authentic craftsmanship and interiors utilizing local materials.

Belmond intends to combine the harmony of the property's surrounding nature with an indoor-outdoor spa and four dining options that celebrate Mexico's regional cuisines ([see story](#)).

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