

# VENICE SIMPLON- ORIENT-EXPRESS

A BELMOND TRAIN  
EUROPE



## PARIS TO TUSCANY BY A LEGEND OF THE RAILS, THE VENICE-SIMPLON- ORIENT-EXPRESS, A BELMOND TRAIN, EUROPE LAUNCHES A NEW JOURNEY THROUGH ITALY

**DECEMBER 2024** – Launching May 2025, the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, A Belmond Train, Europe, will present a brand-new, three-night journey to Tuscany, connecting Paris with Belmond's celebrated farm estate – Castello di Casole, A Belmond Hotel, Tuscany. This

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continues the train's legacy as a trailblazer of slow luxury travel to iconic destinations including Amsterdam, Cannes, and Istanbul, and further strengthens its prestigious presence in Italy.

Alongside this inaugural Tuscany journey, the train will celebrate the return of its much-loved Portofino route culminating at the iconic Splendido, A Belmond Hotel. First launched in 2024, the route will make its anticipated return next June.

## LEGENDARY ENCOUNTERS: A JOURNEY TO THE HEART OF TUSCANY

For the first time in its history, the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express will depart Paris on 11 May travelling through the rolling hills of Tuscany ending at Castello di Casole on 12 May. This is Belmond's breathtaking 1,300-hectare farm estate, allowing guests to experience the romance and storied history of both destinations and legendary properties.

The journey begins in Paris with a champagne welcome as guests settle into their cabins with the choice of three lavish accommodations including the characterful Historic Cabins, the Suites, and the opulent Grand Suites.

Guests begin their journey over pastries, tea, and coffee whilst admiring the timeless beauty of the countryside through their windows. As night falls, Chef Jean Imbert prepares an exceptional menu inspired by the regions the train travels through. In the famous Bar Car '3674', drinks continue to flow throughout the night, over live piano music.

Awakened by idyllic Italian vistas, a leisurely breakfast is served in the comfort of the cabins as the train makes its way towards the city of Florence. Lunch is served on board, setting the stage for a culturally enriching afternoon. Here, a transfer awaits to lead travellers through the lush Tuscan landscape towards the medieval city of Siena. Guests will embark on a private guided tour of Siena's UNESCO-listed historic centre, celebrated for its architectural grandeur and timeless allure, an exclusive visit to Palazzo Pannocchieschi d'Elci, a majestic 13th-century aristocratic palace overlooking Piazza del Campo, and the iconic site of the world-famous Palio di Siena horse race. From the palace's tower, guests can enjoy panoramic views over Siena, while sipping specially curated aperitifs by the barman of Castello di Casole and Executive Chef Daniele Sera into the evening.

The day concludes at Castello di Casole, Belmond's farm estate surrounded by verdant vineyards, olive groves, and abundant wildlife, dating back to Etruscan times. Guests will settle into enchanting Suites where they will spend two luxurious nights.

On the third day of the Paris to Tuscany itinerary, the hotel's courtyard comes alive with the 'Festa del Villaggio,' a convivial village celebration and sagra-style lunch mirroring the traditions of Tuscany by gathering local producers and creative artisans over warming dishes and traditional live musical entertainment.

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In the evening, an exclusive stargazing session will take place in the outdoor amphitheatre, under "one of the most beautiful skies in Italy", awarded by Astronomitaly, the network of Astronomical tourism. Guided by astro tourist experts, guests will explore the night sky constellations, navigating through stars, galaxies, planets, and nebulae using state-of-the-art telescopes for an unforgettable celestial journey. Furthermore, the hotel offers a range of guest experiences from wellness activities, including biking, hiking, yoga or indulge in a relaxing spa treatment at Essere Spa or a sound healing experience across the hotel's expansive grounds, available for an additional fee.

The following day, guests may enjoy a leisurely morning stroll through the estate at their own pace, bringing the Tuscany experience to a peaceful close before continuing their personal onward journey.

## THE UNFORGETTABLE RETURN TO PORTOFINO

Following the success of the first voyage in June 2024, the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express will once again make its annual journey to Portofino delivering an unmatched luxury rail experience through the French countryside, the Riviera, and the Ligurian Coast before arriving at Splendido.

On this iconic journey winding through the glamorous French Riviera, guests will be able to choose from four luxurious accommodation options. The latest accommodation type to join the rails in March 2025 will be L'Observatoire sleeper carriage designed by acclaimed artist JR, offering the most exclusive and spacious accommodation on the train.

The evening's ambiance is elevated with a visit to Bar Car '3674' where travellers can sip champagne or bespoke cocktails before enjoying a fine dining experience by Chef Jean Imbert, celebrating regional flavours. The journey continues with incredible views of the Côte d'Azur, across captivating destinations like Cannes, Nice, Monte Carlo, and Genoa.

After disembarking in Santa Margherita Ligure, travellers are transferred to Splendido, reopening after a new, major phase of its multi-year renovation led by Martin Brudnizki Design Studio, capturing the spirit of Ligurian craftsmanship and design. For the 2025 season, the grand dame will continue its evolution revealing an entirely new main building, with a focus on new rooms and communal areas, including a new signature bar, breakfast area, retail space and Dior Spa.

Upon arrival at Splendido, guests are welcomed by the stunning views of the Gulf of Tigullio. They might choose to unwind by the pool, explore the new wellness spaces or enjoy dinner at DaV Mare, situated at the sister hotel, Splendido Mare, A Belmond Hotel, Portofino, down

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by the harbour. The evening is perfectly rounded off with drinks at Splendido's newly renovated cocktail bar, a historic spot once visited by Elizabeth Taylor and Humphrey Bogart.

On the third and final day, the hotel's many attractions continue to impress with the option to play tennis on the panoramic courts led by a professional from LUX tennis; soak in the sun by the heated, saltwater pool; savour homemade pizza at the Pool Grill restaurant; or relax with bespoke treatments at the newly launched Dior Spa. Further afield, guests can take the hotel shuttle to Portofino's Piazzetta, or enjoy nature walks and kayaking, arranged through the Concierge. The evening culminates in an aperitif in the gardens, followed by a Gala Dinner at La Terrazza, featuring Chef Corrado Corti's cuisine and live entertainment.

*Prices for Paris to Tuscany by a Legend of the Rails start from £9,350 per person based on two guests sharing a Historic Cabin on the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express and two nights in a Junior Suite at Castello di Casole.*

*Prices for Paris to Portofino start from £10,400 per person based on two guests sharing a Historic Cabin on the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express and two nights in a Premium Room at Splendido.*

*Both itineraries include an overnight journey on the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express (24h steward service; all meals with sommelier's choice of wine and unlimited soft drinks) and signature menus curated by Chef Jean Imbert. The Tuscany itinerary includes breakfast and a memorable sagra-style lunch whilst the Portofino itinerary includes breakfast and an exclusive Gala Dinner with entertainment curated by Chef Corrado Corti.*

For more information, please click [here](#) for Paris to Tuscany by a Legend of the Rails, and [here](#) for Paris to Portofino.

**ENDS**



## NOTES FOR EDITORS

Images [here](#)

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## **ABOUT VENICE SIMPLON-ORIENT-EXPRESS, A BELMOND TRAIN,**

The original icon of the rails, Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, A Belmond Train, Europe has been at the forefront of luxury railway travel for nearly half a century, since its first journey in May 1982. The history of this legendary train began in 1977, when Belmond's founder, James B. Sherwood, bought two original Art Deco sleeping cars at a Sotheby's auction in Monte Carlo with the ambition to bring back to life the 'golden age of travel' with the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express train. An enduring symbol of luxury, today the train operates between March and December. It features 16 painstakingly restored 1920s and 1930s carriages, inviting guests to surrender to the journey as it criss-crosses Europe's most dramatic landscapes and uncovers some of the world's most fabled cities, such as Vienna, Rome, Florence, Paris, Venice and Istanbul. On board, guests can choose between three different accommodation categories - characterful Historic Cabins; lavish newly launched Suites; and opulent Grand Suites; indulge in refined dining by Michelin-starred French Chef Jean Imbert in the colourful restaurant carriages and enjoy an evening of late-night revelry with live performances and handcrafted cocktails in the famous Bar Car '3674'.

Follow Venice Simplon-Orient-Express: [Instagram](#)

## **ABOUT CASTELLO DI CASOLE, A BELMOND HOTEL, TUSCANY**

A former 10th century castle, Castello di Casole, A Belmond Hotel, Tuscany retains the ambience of a private country house, with 39 suites. It is a gateway to the wonders of rural Italy – rolling hills, olive groves, and vineyards – as well as Tuscan towns Siena, Florence and San Gimignano. The property's identity is deeply rooted in its agricultural past, stretching back to 7th Century BC, with Etruscan artefacts found across the 3,200 acres of land. These are on display throughout the hotel, most prevalent across the Essere spa, housed in the estate's former wine cellars with barrel vaulted ceilings and restored stone walls. The property's cuisine is a celebration of its surroundings, with a farm-to-table concept and a focus on simple and fresh produce, cultivated in the Orti del Castello – the hotel's vegetable garden. Tosca offers guests a fine dining experience whilst Emporio del Castello promotes authentic Tuscan dining, and for the more casual poolside moment, there is the Castello Grill. The region's famous landscape can be discovered through a range of activities, from stargazing, hiking and biking to wine tasting and truffle hunting. Guests can opt for secluded Etruscan luxury in the two recently opened private villas - Villa Thesan and Villa Usil. Inspired by the estate's heritage, both villas reflect the codes of Tuscan tradition and boast outstanding views of the surrounding countryside.

Follow Castello Di Casole: [Instagram](#)

## **ABOUT SPLENDIDO, A BELMOND HOTEL, PORTOFINO**

Nestled in the tranquil hillside above Portofino, Splendido, A Belmond Hotel, offers the epitome of La Dolce Vita; a place of panoramic peace and elevated perspectives. Set in a terraced former 16th Century Benedictine monastery overlooking the bay, the hotel is a glamorous destination, welcoming acclaimed guests including renowned actors, artists, film directors, and even royalty. It is host to a salt-water swimming pool which acts as a radiant stage overlooking Portofino, the exclusive Baronessa Suite as designed by Martin Brudnizski Design Studio, and the new Splendido Grill restaurant - all embodying the spirit of Ligurian craftsmanship. With 20 rooms and 41 suites, the hotel is known for its memorable dining spots – alfresco dining on the wisteria covered balcony of La Terrazza or Italian classics at the Splendido Grill. The iconic hotel also boasts an elevated wellness experience by Dior Spa, located in a secluded corner of the gardens offering al-fresco treatments, as well as a tennis court set on the hillside by Splendido. Guests looking to discover the area can hop onto a complimentary shuttle

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service which stops at Splendido Mare, A Belmond Hotel, Portofino, located on the town's buzzy Piazzetta.

Follow Splendido: [Instagram](#)

## ABOUT BELMOND

Belmond was born from a passion for connecting discerning travellers with the world's most remarkable properties, locations and journeys. From hotels and trains to river cruises and safaris, Belmond curates incomparable experiences and crafts unforgettable stories. With a legacy spanning over 45 years, since the acquisition of Hotel Cipriani in Venice in 1976, Belmond has grown into a global collection of 45 properties spread across 26 countries and territories. Exceptional destinations connected by legendary journeys are the very soul of Belmond, where the path that brings you to a place is as important as the destination itself. A pioneer of slow travel, Belmond has been operating the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express since 1982. The group later expanded to include pristine beach resorts, such as Maroma on the Riviera Maya, historic hideaways such as Villa San Michele in the Florentine foothills, urbane icons, such as Copacabana Palace in Rio de Janeiro, and gateways to UNESCO world heritage sites, such as Hotel das Cataratas in Brazil's Iguassu National Park. As proud custodians of storied properties, Belmond is committed to building on the past to create a new legacy: the heritage of the future. Working with communities and local talents, together with the world's most respected chefs, designers and artists, Belmond continues its purpose of perpetuating the legendary art of travel. Since 2019, Belmond has been part of the world's leading luxury group, LVMH (Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton).

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