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BELMOND UNVEILS BLUEPRINT FOR A YEAR OF TRANSFORMATION

Leader in luxury travel forges ahead with long-term strategy encompassing selective expansion, exceptional experiences, and a laser-focus on its brand, environmental and social initiatives

End of 2023 marked with the acquisition of Hacienda Katanchel, a 17th century estate in Yucatán

4 DECEMBER 2023 – Belmond, a visionary leader in luxury travel, has outlined the blueprint for what it expects to be a “year of transformation” in 2024. Marking the close of 2023 with the acquisition of a 17th century estate in Mexico, the brand is announcing plans for 2024 that include the selective expansion and enhancement of its portfolio with heightened focus on train travel, the development of new exceptional experiences and a deeper focus on its environmental and social responsibility.

Dan Ruff, CEO, Belmond, said: *“Long before experiential travel became a buzzword, Belmond, through our diverse portfolio of hotels, trains, boats and safaris, has offered one-of-a-kind experiences that are rooted in authenticity.*

With our purpose to perpetuate the legendary art of travel, we will continue to push boundaries. 2024 will be a year of transformation as we further seek out remarkable properties, exceptional journeys and experiences, especially to cement our leading position in train travel. We will celebrate local culture, launch new experiences that connect our guests to the art of travel, curate contemporary culture and go even deeper with our environmental and social responsibility efforts.”

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SELECTIVE EXPANSION AND ASSET REJUVENATION

MEXICO

Reinforcing its cluster in Mexico, Belmond has acquired **Hacienda Katanchel**, formerly a hacienda dating back to the 17th century situated near Merida, Yucatán. In the Mayan language, Katanchel translates to “where one asks for the arch of heaven,” a name that alludes to the site’s past as an astronomic observatory. With an expanse of 220 hectares, the extraordinary estate is home to a cenote (underground river), a sacred well, native flora and fauna, and the remains of an ancient Mayan pyramid, in addition to the historic hacienda. The rich and lush vegetation, the property’s history and the many vivid cultural expressions of the Yucatán peninsula all come together at Katanchel to create the setting for what will become Mexico’s one of the most beautiful hacienda hotels. **Katanchel, A Belmond Hotel**, is planned to open in 2027 with 35 independent suites upon completing a comprehensive restoration programme.

The acquisition of Katanchel strengthens Belmond’s commitment to Mexico, joining three other distinct properties: on the Caribbean coast, **Maroma, A Belmond Hotel, Riviera Maya**, re-opened in August 2023 following a complete renovation; in the country’s heartland, **Casa de Sierra Nevada, A Belmond Hotel**, a former convent built in the 16th century in San Miguel de Allende; and on the Pacific Coast, **Milaroca, A Belmond Hotel, Riviera Nayarit**, that will open in 2025 after being conscientiously and sensitively built from the ground up.

ITALY

Belmond continues to strengthen its presence in Italy, where it operates ten iconic properties. In 2024, Belmond will expand to Sardinia with **Romazzino, A Belmond Hotel, Costa Smeralda**. Sardinia’s original beach hotel will offer 100 guest rooms including suites and villas, two shimmering blue pools, an array of exceptional restaurants and new experiences that invite guests to experience villeggiatura set in the heart of Costa Smeralda’s most picturesque coastline.

The multi-year renovation of **Splendido, A Belmond Hotel, Portofino**, designed by Martin Brudnizki Studio, will complete its second phase and re-open for the 2024 season with new guestrooms, joining the swimming pool, Splendido Grill restaurant and the Baronessa Suite that have been revealed in 2023.

SLOW TRAVEL - NEW ROUTES, NEW SUITES, NEW EXPERIENCES

A trailblazer in slow travel experiences with a legacy of leadership spanning over four decades since the launch of Venice Simplon-Orient-Express in 1982, Belmond will propel its pioneering approach as it introduces new routes, new suites and new experiences across its six trains and seven barges in response to growing demands for more Belmond slow travel journeys around the world.

Southeast Asia’s legend of the rails **Eastern & Oriental Express, A Belmond Train**, announces the appointment of **Chef André Chiang** as its new chef. Having worked in some of the most decorated restaurants in the world, including his two-Michelin-starred eponymous Restaurant André in Singapore, Chef André will elevate and devise every aspect of the dining experience including the ambience and atmosphere of the two on board restaurants, Adisorn and Malaya. Eastern & Oriental Express is set to return in February 2024 with two seasonal routes out of Singapore that take in the beautiful landscapes of Malaysia.

For the first time in its history, the legendary **Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, A Belmond Train, Europe** will embark on a new journey connecting two iconic destinations: **Paris and Portofino**; the sojourn will continue at Splendido where the train’s Chef, Jean Imbert, will host a Gala Dinner. Due to popular demand, the legendary train will also add a second Paris to Istanbul return journey, in addition to its regular August itinerary. Its first alpine journey will head to the French Alps on December 21, 2023, and it will be repeated in December 2024. Following the huge success of the introduction of Grand Suites and Suites onboard the train, eight new Suites will join the rake in 2024, bringing a total of 16 Suites and 6 Grand Suites to the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express.

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The Royal Scotsman, A Belmond Train, Scotland, will also see the launch of two new Grand Suites designed by Paris-based interior designer Tristan Auer in May 2024. The brand-new Grand Suite experience on board Royal Scotsman will include a pampering spa treatment per person in the lavish Dior Spa, which was unveiled in April 2023.

The iconic **British Pullman, A Belmond Train, England** will elevate its dining offering with the launch of The Carriage Club Dinners in May 2024, a series of immersive evening journeys combining decadent dining, fine wines and entertainment.

In Peru, the two Belmond trains, namely **Hiram Bingham** and **Andean Explorer**, the country's first and only luxury sleeper train, along with **Monasterio, A Belmond Hotel in Cusco** welcomed Peruvian-born **Jorge Muñoz** as Executive Chef. In 2024, Jorge will unveil new culinary creations that tell the story of an exploratory journey through the coast, highlands and jungle of Peru. Hiram Bingham, the iconic train which has been taking guests on exquisite journeys from the Sacred Valley to the ancient city of Machu Picchu, recently celebrated its 20th anniversary.

The official launch of **Coquelicot, A Belmond Boat, Champagne**, in April 2024 will welcome guests to the latest addition to its fleet of river boats gliding across the scenic canals of France. Designed by French architects Humbert & Poyet, this intimate river boat features three cabins, an indoor salon with a bespoke champagne bar, and an extensive outdoor deck with open-air kitchen and dining area. Coquelicot will partner with Maison Ruinart to offer exclusive experiences. These include a four-hand private lunch by Maison Ruinart's Chef In Residence, Valérie Radou, and Coquelicot's Head Chef as well as a private guided tour of the historic Taissy vineyard.

CURATOR AND PUBLISHER OF CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

Belmond has spent the last few years building stronger property brands across its portfolio. With each property's legacy deeply rooted in the destination, the property-first strategy respects their distinctive identity, allowing them to honour their past and celebrate their contemporary culture. 2024 will see more milestones being celebrated as Cape Town's iconic pink hotel **Mount Nelson** commemorating its 125th anniversary as well as the 40th anniversary **Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons, A Belmond Hotel, Oxfordshire**. Belmond will also continue its global brand campaign "Belmond Legends" showcasing fourteen of its iconic properties through a contemporary photography series as seen by acclaimed artists.

In parallel, Belmond is committed to deepen its commitment to the culture and arts communities around the world, whilst enriching guest experiences. The brand will launch a third edition of **MITICO**, a contemporary art installation series in partnership with Galleria Continua. The new edition of MITICO will see large-scale in-situ works by globally renowned French conceptual artist **Daniel Buren** on the captivating grounds of six Belmond hotels; **Copacabana Palace, Mount Nelson, Hotel Cipriani, La Residencia, Villa San Michele** and **Castello di Casole**.

CRAFTING SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL, SHAPING TOMORROW'S HERITAGE

With environmental and social sustainability serving as a key foundation in Belmond's strategic plan, Belmond will accelerate its rigorous efforts as it sets ambitious goals to reduce its impact and reliance on natural resources while driving positive change. The brand will launch a pilot programme at ten properties which will create tailored and actionable roadmaps for them to meet the rigorous LVMH Life 360's sustainability targets. In parallel, it will implement three flagship projects that focus on increasing the use of renewable energy, drastically reducing freshwater withdrawal and creating a Gastronomy Academy to guide its work in reducing impact in food and beverage.

In the meantime, through a global partnership with **EarthCheck**, the world's leading scientific benchmarking, certification and advisory group for travel and tourism, all eligible Belmond properties are set to receive EarthCheck Silver certification by the first half of 2024. This robust benchmarking and auditing process will establish baselines that will be used to measure and improve our performance across energy, water and waste.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

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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 47 properties spread across 28 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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