



TRAVEL / HOTELS

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The Original Orient Express Has Been Turned Into a Lavish Suites-Only Luxury Hotel

The sleeper is expected to enter service in Paris in 2024.

By DANA GIVENS 



Accor Hotels

Who needs a five-star hotel when you have the [Orient Express](#)?

Some 140 years since the train's first voyage—it debuted on October 2, 1883—Accor has announced it is opening a new luxury hotel inside the original locomotive. The “dream on wheels” will consist of 17 cars that used to be part of the Nostalgie-Istanbul Orient-Express (the train's moniker changed according to route). Dating back to the 1920s and '30s, the convoy has been meticulously restored and now includes 12 sleeping cars, one restaurant and one caboose.

The French hospitality group tasked Paris-based architect Maxime D’Angeac with creating a new contemporary look for the rolling hotel that still reflected the train’s storied past. The result is a classic Art Deco interior that seamlessly blends the two worlds of modern luxury and bygone travel. Charming original features—like woodwork, engraved wall motifs and Lalique panels—play against chic new furnishings. As for accommodation, the century-old sleeper comprises only suites that each come complete with a lavish bathroom.

“The rebirth of the Orient Express is a technological challenge, meeting scientific, artistic, and technical criteria, where the entire project has been conceived as a work of art,” D’Angeac said in a statement. “From the nuts and bolts stamped with Orient Express’ signature to the innovative concept of the suites, an exact science of detail will allow travelers to rediscover the great splendor of the Orient Express.”

The project has been years in the making. The original cars were discovered in 2015 by industrial history researcher Arthur Mettetal, who was on a quest to see what was left of the Orient-Express. The famous train company shut down in 1977 and was briefly resurrected in the 1980s before it disappeared almost entirely. As a result, many cars have gone off the grid. Mettetal found the Nostalgie-Istanbul on the border between Belarus and Poland. Following two years of negotiation between Accor and the owner of the train, the cars were eventually escorted back to France for renovation.

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“Entrusted to the best artisans and decorators specializing in their unique fields, this embassy of French luxury will unveil a set of absolute refinement, faithful to the art of tailoring,” D’Angeac adds. “It will be an incomparable train travel experience, imagined through a contemporary vision of comfort and extreme luxury.”

The railroad icon is expected to enter service in Paris in 2024. Although itineraries have yet to be confirmed, it’s likely the train will journey along some of its celebrated routes throughout Europe. Tickets will go on sale in 2023. If that seems too far away, though, the [Orient Express La Dolce Vita](#) (also run by Accor) is set to make its first voyage throughout Italy in 2023.

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