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WORLD'S TOP 25 TRAINS

Revealed by The Society of International Railway Travelers®

by Owen Hardy, CEO

What does Europe's very dignified grande dame, the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, have in common with India's wheezing, narrow-gauge geezer, the 100-year-old steam "Toy Train"? They're both members of a select group, namely "The World's Top 25 Trains," as determined by The Society of International Railway Travelers®. An organization of travelers who love the comfort, romance, and fun of great trains, the Society celebrates its 26th year in 2009.

Some on the list are over-the-top luxury, such as the 36-passenger Royal Scotsman, the posh Royal Canadian Pacific, and Rovos Rail's Pride of Africa. Others offer the most stylish and comfortable way to see less-developed regions, such the world's newest private train, the Danube Express, which offers week-long, rail-based "cruises" through Central Europe.



Photos by Owen Hardy



This story is printed in tribute to President Obama's recent historic train trip, which traced the route Lincoln took to the capital before assuming the presidency in 1861.



Photo by Owen Hardy



Photo by Bruce Anderson

Per-person double prices for these mostly private-train tours range from \$3195 per person for a 10-day trip through the steep mountains of Norway to \$17,195 for a 15-day Mumbai-Calcutta excursion aboard India's Deccan Odyssey in a Maharaja Suite (comprising half a train car and including bedroom, sitting room, and two bathrooms

"The World's Top 25 Trains are based on the Society's experience and that of our writers, editors, members, and staff," said Owen and Eleanor Hardy, the Society's CEO and President, respectively. The selections were announced in a Special Edition of the *The International Railway Traveler*® magazine: *The IRT Society's Best-Loved Railway Journeys – 2009*™.

"The trains met stringent standards for service, accommodation, scenery, itinerary,

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off-train experiences, and passenger enjoyment. Trains cannot pay to be included in this book; we choose them," the Hardys said. With a few exceptions, the top trains are privately owned and operated, offering "rail cruises" on which passengers can spend the night on board. The IRT Society's Best-Loved Railway Journeys – 2009 includes complete descriptions of each of the "Top 25" trains: their compartments

TOP TRAINS

(in geographical order)

NORTH AMERICA

1. Canadian (Canada)
2. Royal Canadian Pacific (Canada)
3. Rocky Mountaineer (Canada)

SOUTH AMERICA

4. Andean Explorer (Peru)
5. Hiram Bingham (Peru)

AFRICA

6. Blue Train (South Africa)
7. Pride of Africa (Rovos Rail) (South Africa)

ASIA/INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

8. Palace on Wheels (India)
9. Eastern & Oriental Express (SE Asia)
10. Shangri-La Express (China/Tibet)
11. Toy Train (India)
12. Deccan Odyssey (India)

EUROPE

13. Danube Express (Central Europe, Turkey)
14. British Pullman (Europe)
15. El Transcantábrico (Spain)
16. Golden Eagle Trans-Siberian Express (Russia)
17. Venice Simplon-Orient-Express (Europe)
18. Glacier Express (Switzerland)
19. Royal Scotsman (Scotland)
20. Bernina Express (Switzerland)
21. Flam Railway (Norway)
22. Bergen Railway (Norway)

"DOWN UNDER"

23. Ghan (Australia)
24. Indian Pacific (Australia)
25. Sunlander (Australia)

and public spaces, equipment used, and preferred routes. DTJ

For more information on the Society, visit their recently remodeled website at: www.irtociety.com or call (800) 478-4881.