



The Orient Express

Ivan Fallon, James B. Sherwood

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In May 1977 the French national railways announced they were taking the Orient- Express, the world's most fabled train, out of service. The public outcry which followed caught the attention of Jim Sherwood. The last remaining four carriages, which had featured in the film *Murder on the Orient-Express*, were auctioned by Sotheby's in Monte Carlo, and Sherwood bought two of them. He then set out on a trip across Europe to track down enough original 1920s carriages, with their exquisite ArtDeco marquetry and Lalique glass, to make a full train. In 1982, four-and-a-half years later, the lovingly restored Venice Simplon-Orient Express set off from Victoria Station for Venice, almost exactly 100 years after it had first carried passengers on their exotic and mysterious journeys across the continent. The re-launch of the Orient-Express attracted so much attention that Sherwood used the name for the luxury hotel company he went on to create. Orient-Express Hotels today owns some of the great hotels of the world, all personally bought by Sherwood over a period of last 30 years. It also owns two other de luxe trains - the Eastern & Oriental carries passengers from Singapore to Bangkok, and the Hiram Bingham runs down through the Sacred Valley of the Incas to the mysterious abandoned city of Machu Picchu in Peru. The purchase and restoration of each train and grand hotel has its own extraordinary story behind it, which is wittily and compellingly told.

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