

BRAZIL · PATRICK STEWART · HONEYMOONS

# Hemispheres

DECEMBER 2023



This magazine has been treated with an antimicrobial process

THREE  
PERFECT  
DAYS

# Costa Rica

Where you can get a macaw's-eye view of the rainforest in Mistico Arenal Hanging Bridges Park

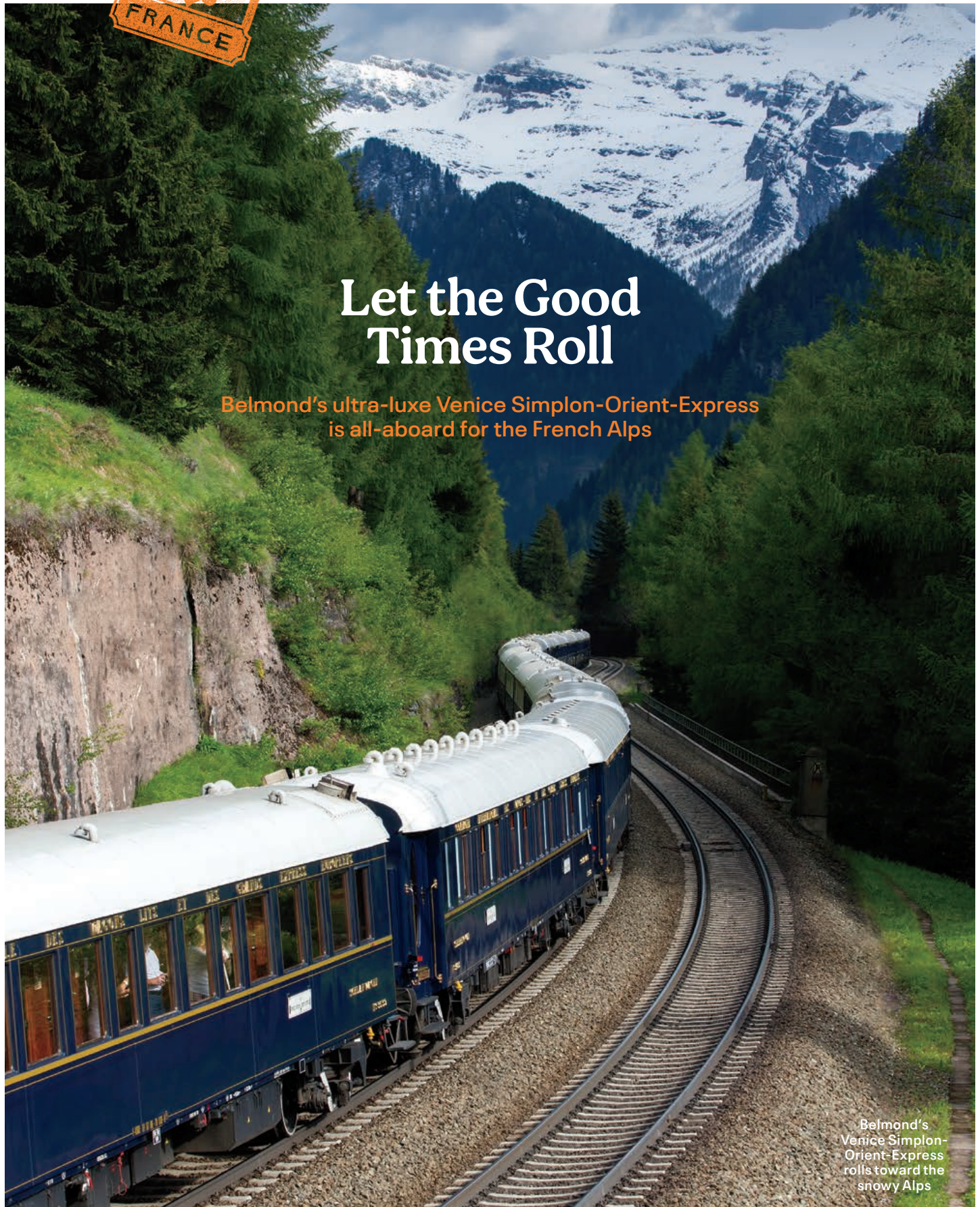
STAR ALLIANCE 

UNITED 



# Let the Good Times Roll

Belmond's ultra-luxe Venice Simplon-Orient-Express is all-aboard for the French Alps



Belmond's Venice Simplon-Orient-Express rolls toward the snowy Alps

## The Indulgence



To board the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express is to travel back in time. The Belmond-operated train, whose historic carriages were saved from destruction in the 1970s and carefully restored to their original Art Deco glamour, whisks well-heeled travelers between the cultural capitals of Europe, and this month it debuts its latest route: an overnight journey from Paris to the French Alps, where guests can disembark at one of three stations (Albertville, Moûtiers, or Bourg-Saint-Maurice) that serve as gateways to some of the world's finest ski resorts.

The journey begins at Gare de Lyon. On board, black tie–attired passengers are seated for dinner in one of three 1920s dining cars decorated with chinoiserie lacquerwork and René Prou marquetry. After dining on cuisine from the current *chéri* of the French dining scene, Michelin-starred chef Jean Imbert, guests file into the blue-and-gold Bar Car to enjoy live music (Rat Pack tunes are crowd favorites) and drink Champagne until the wee hours.

**Clockwise from top:** the restored Bar Car on the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express; a Grand Suite; cuisine from chef Jean Imbert in one of the dining cars

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While the festivities are in swing, stewards transform the cabins into sleeping berths. The accommodations



range from Historic Cabins containing a convertible twin bed and a washbasin hidden behind enameled doors to Grand Suites with rich furnishings and marble en-suite bathrooms. Some of the latter are housed in Sleeping Car 3309, which for 10 days in 1929 was stranded in a snowdrift 60 miles from Istanbul and was one of Agatha Christie's sources of inspiration for *Murder on the Orient Express*.

The morning light brings the Alps into focus. High peaks loom outside

the window, providing the backdrop for a light breakfast in bed of *viennoiseries* and coffee. A little later comes a three-course brunch, complete with Champagne, in the dining car. When the train pulls into the station, a band sets up on the platform to play passengers off. To step down from the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express is to come back to reality—but the day ahead promises skiing, saunas, and, one hopes, other bygone-era escapes. *From \$4,582 per person, belmond.com*

Ludovic Balay (Bar Car); courtesy of Belmond (suite, cuisine)

