

## EUROPE'S RAIL TOURISM CHAMPIONS UNVEILED AT WORLD PASSENGER FESTIVAL 2023

- ETC and Eurail present the winners of the 2023 Rail Tourism Awards at the World Passenger Festival in Vienna, hosted by ÖBB Austrian Federal Railways and Wiener Linien.
- Switzerland Tourism, Occitanie Regional Tourism and Leisure Board, Vienna Tourist Board, Renfe and Turismo de Galicia are among the 2023 winners.

**Brussels/Vienna, 4 October 2023:** On the evening of the 3<sup>rd</sup> of October, the European Travel Commission (ETC) and Eurail revealed the winners of the third edition of the Rail Tourism Awards. The ceremony took place during the 'Austrian Night' Welcome Reception of the World Passenger Festival in Vienna, the first event of the annual, two-day public transportation forum, hosted by ÖBB Austrian Federal Railways and Wiener Linien.

Launched in 2021, the Rail Tourism Awards aim to acknowledge the most outstanding marketing campaigns showcasing the thrill, freedom and sustainability of travelling Europe by train. This year's awards were organised with the support of the Austrian National Tourist Office (ANTO).

The Rail Tourism Awards has grown year-on-year, with the third edition receiving a record 31 entries submitted by a diverse array of participants in the European travel sector, including rail operators, tourism organisations and marketing agencies. The three winners and honourable mention were ultimately decided by a distinguished jury, composed of Elke Dens of The Travel Foundation, Mischa Schreuder of Fitzroy, Nicky Gardner and Susanne Kries of hidden europe, Marit Ruuda of the European Commission, and 'The Man in Seat 61,' Mark Smith.

Austria's State Secretary for Tourism, Susanne Kraus-Winkler, was delighted to be present at the award ceremony and to congratulate the winners. She said of the event *"The Rail Tourism Awards is the best platform to promote existing mobility offers and their advantages. More and more guests want to travel sustainably. A well developed and managed public transport network is key for our guests to move freely to and in their chosen destination. Receiving the Rail Tourism Award is an important acknowledgement of the industry's efforts. I am particularly pleased that the Vienna Tourist Board is among the winners of the Rail Tourism Awards. Congratulations to all award winners!"*

### Switzerland Tourism captivates the judges with its Ride of a Lifetime

[Grand Train Tour of Switzerland: The Ride of a Lifetime](#) by **Switzerland Tourism** was awarded [Best Rail Tourism Campaign](#). This captivating short film starring Roger Federer and Trevor Noah masterfully showcases Switzerland's breathtaking scenery and outstanding rail infrastructure. Through this campaign, Switzerland Tourism demonstrates the joys of in-country travel with wit, precision and mesmerising cinematography showing the beauty of Swiss rail journeys.

The jury praised the film's storytelling and creative brilliance, as well as the impressive reach of the campaign, with 82 million views on YouTube. In addition, the 99% positive comment rate serves as a testament to Switzerland Tourism's ability to capture the public's enthusiasm for sustainable travel and engage a broad spectrum of potential holidaymakers.

### Occitanie Rail Tourism triumphs for innovative multi-media approach

[Occitanie Rail Tour](#) by **Occitanie Regional Tourism and Leisure Board** was awarded [Best Regional Campaign](#) for its innovative and inclusive approach to connecting with a wide spectrum of travellers. Through the combination of several promotional channels, including TV and social media advertising, a collaboration with a cycling app and tailor-made Michelin Guides, the Occitanie Regional Tourism and Leisure Board successfully demonstrated to each

demographic the allure of a rail tour of Occitanie.

The judges praised how this campaign managed to respond to the challenge that environmentally-conscious tourists often encounter when looking for sustainable transportation options for the final leg of their journey. The campaign presents rail travel as the solution to traversing 'the last mile', demonstrating how this sustainable mode of transport can seamlessly connect tourists to breathtaking natural landscapes and authentic cultural experiences without the need for a car.

### **Vienna Tourist Board champions cross-border rail tourism**

[Vienna by Train – Uniting Cities](#) by **Vienna Tourist Board** was awarded Best Cross-Border Campaign for championing rail tourism by connecting cities across borders and promoting inter-cultural exchange between tourists and locals. This campaign, which is comprised of various promotional initiatives, is led by a video illustrating how city trips by rail can provide vital support to local businesses, foster rich cultural encounters, and breathe new life into a community, all while delighting viewers with the distinctive Austrian sense of humour.

The judges commended the ingenuity, imagination and wit of the campaign. They praised the portrayal of rail tourism as a means of promoting solidarity across borders and between cities and enhancing the quality of life for local residents. They were particularly impressed by the campaign's remarkable reach, amassing not only 143 million impressions but also gaining the attention of leading media outlets such as Zeit, Süddeutsche Zeitung, and La Repubblica.

### **Galician enthusiasm for slow travel wins over the jury**

[Trenes turísticos en Galicia](#) (Galicia region tourist trains) by **Renfe** and **Turismo de Galicia** received an Honourable Mention from the jury for providing tourists with an engaging, slow travel experience of Galicia via 14 tourist rail lines. This initiative introduces travellers to the unique gastronomy, landscapes and history of Galicia, promoting slow, sustainable tourism through the promise of more authentic experiences and the opportunity to discover the hidden gems of the region.

The jury was impressed by how this campaign promotes the symbiotic relationship between travellers and locals. The itineraries connect tourists with the independent businesses and attractions that rely on them to thrive, in turn preserving regional traditions and crafts. By achieving a remarkable 90% seat occupancy and experiencing significant growth in the past year, this campaign has undeniably made a substantial impact on a region that typically sees fewer tourists.

## **ENDS**

### [Note to editors](#)

More information about the Rail Tourism Awards, the jury members and the award criteria: <https://railtourismawards.com/>

### [About the European Travel Commission](#)

The **European Travel Commission** (ETC) represents the national tourism organisations of Europe. Established in 1948, ETC's mission is to strengthen the sustainable development of Europe as a tourist destination and to promote Europe in third markets. Its 35-member tourism boards work together to build the value of tourism for all the diverse European destinations through cooperation in sharing best practice, market intelligence and promotion. For more information, visit [www.etc-corporate.org](http://www.etc-corporate.org) and follow [@ETC\\_Corporate](#).

### **Media contact**

Shane Bradley  
Penta Group

[etc@pentagroup.co](mailto:etc@pentagroup.co); Ph: +32 (0)2 234 6860

### [About Eurail](#)

Eurail gives travellers from all over the world the opportunity to experience flexible, borderless train travel across Europe. With

a Eurail or Interrail Pass (for non-European and European citizens respectively), travellers of all ages can use an expansive network of train and ferry connections to travel in and between up to 33 countries. Eurail and Interrail Passes are available via the Eurail.com and Interrail.eu web shops, as well as an extensive network of trusted distribution partners worldwide. Eurail B.V. is owned by over 35 European railway and ferry companies, and is based in Utrecht, the Netherlands. For more information, visit [www.eurail.com](http://www.eurail.com) or [www.interrail.eu](http://www.interrail.eu).