

When the desert meets Made in Italy

Posted on November 19, 2026 by Melania Guarda Ceccoli

LONDON — Bookings have opened for Dream of the Desert, which its creators describe as the world's first ultra-luxury desert rail journey and the first of its kind in Saudi Arabia. The first departures are planned for October 2027.

"We are not simply creating a train journey," said Raffaele Breschi, chief executive of Arsenale International and general manager of Dream of the Desert, "but a new way of experiencing and discovering Saudi Arabia, bringing together rail travel, hospitality, culture and exploration of the land in a seamless experience curated down to the last detail."

Source: https://italynow.co.uk/when-the-desert-meets-made-in-italy/



Train bar (*Credits: Dream of the Desert*)

The Dream of the Desert carriages were built at the CPL plant in Brindisi, Arsenale's production hub. The technical design and interior development were handled by Standgreen, a company based in Bergamo, which oversaw the whole process from engineering and production to assembly of the mock-up.

The interiors were conceived by Aline Asmar d'Amman, founder of the Culture in Architecture studio. They draw on the warmth of the majlis, the traditional Arab reception room, reinterpreted for today with hand-carved wood, geometric patterns and artisanal details that evoke the allure of the Arabian desert.

The train will have 24 suite cabins, a dedicated dining car and a Majlis car inspired by the Saudi tradition of gathering and hospitality.



Train exterior (*Credits: Dream of the Desert*)

The routes

There are two inaugural itineraries.

The Desert Kingdoms is a four-day, three-night journey. Guests will explore Al Jouf and Hail through the stories, landscapes and traditions that shaped the north of the Arabian Peninsula. At Dumat Al-Jandal, the Legends of Marid Gala Dinner and Signature Show turns the historic Marid castle into an immersive setting of storytelling, music, light displays and theatre. The evening ends with a candlelit gala dinner inspired by the flavours and culinary traditions of Al Jouf. The journey then continues through the Aja mountains.



Shadows of Aja (*Credits: Dream of the Desert*)

Shadows of Aja is a three-day, two-night itinerary through Hail and Al Qassim, taking in the wildest landscapes of northern Saudi Arabia. On the Aja Mountains Wilderness Escape, guests travel by off-road vehicle to a private desert area. There, they explore the mountains alongside Arabian horses and Saudi riders, with storytelling, art and music. At nightfall, an open-air dinner is followed by a session with specialist astronomers. They explain the stories of the night sky and the ancient navigation traditions that guided travellers across the Arabian Peninsula. The journey then heads to Al Qassim and ends with The Oasis Table, an immersive dining experience celebrating regional produce, Saudi coffee, dates, live cooking and local traditions.

Prices start at about €20,666 per couple, per suite, for a two-night journey, including VAT. The fare covers the private suite, meals on board and at each destination, and all the signature experiences in the programme.

Full details and bookings are available at www.dreamofthedesert.com.

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