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Stephen Scourfield The West Australian
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Stephen Scourfield



The Goldenpass Express, which will go into service on 13 December 2020, designed by Italian company Pininfarina. Credit: Supplied/Pininfarina

- Switzerland surely leads the world in public transport – and in train travel in particular. Travellers can confidently make their days up as they go along, knowing they can get anywhere, and get home again.
- And they are poised to take another step forward with the introduction of the GoldenPass variable-gauge system, which has been successfully tested.

There are three different gauges of track in the country, and the Swiss have developed trains on which the distance between their wheels can be changed to accommodate these different gauge.

The Goldenpass Express, which was scheduled to come into service on December 13, can shift from narrow to standard gauge and will connect three of Switzerland's top tourist spots, Montreux, Gstaad and Interlaken.

Not only does the Goldenpass Express encompass spectacular technology – but, it's beautiful, too.

And that's hardly surprising.



📷 The Goldenpass Express, which will go into service on 13 December 2020, designed by Italian company Pininfarina. Credit: Supplied/Pininfarina

For the train has been styled by Pininfarina, one of the world's most prestigious design companies. This legendary company has been in business since 1930 and

is best known for its Ferrari designs, from the Testarossa to the F40, but also designed the Peugeot 406 coupe, Alfa Romeo 164 and Spider, MGB GT and Ford Focus convertible.


They've designed Maseratis and, most recently, the electric Battista Hypercar.

The Goldenpass Express has floor-to-ceiling windows, to give brilliant views of the Swiss Alps.

And those panoramic windows have in-built technology that minimises reflections in photographs. This has been achieved by engraving a near-invisible pattern to reduce reflections and designing lighting to reduce reflections.

The Goldenpass Express is expected to carry 1.5 million tourists a year for the Montreux-Oberland-Bernese (MOB) railway company.



 Golden Pass train in the Chateau-d'Oex Valley in Switzerland. Credit: Stephen Scourfield/The West Australian

CLASSIC RAIL JOURNEYS

GoldenPass Line

The train between Lucerne to Montreux crosses the 1000m Brunig Pass before running along the side of Lake Brienz.

Glacier Express

Running between St Moritz and the Matterhorn village of Zermatt, this is one of the world's most famous trains. It goes over the 2044m Oberalp Pass and through the Rhine Gorge.

Bernina Express

Connecting the chilly north of Switzerland with its warmer south, this runs on the highest railway route through the Alps. The peak point is 2253m at Bernina Hospiz. The complete route is from St Moritz to Lugano in Italy, if the Palm Express is included.

Gotthard Panorama Express

This route uses the Swiss Travel Pass to good advantage, combining boat and rail between Lugano and Lucerne. The train passes through the Reuss Valley and there's

a paddle steamer on Lake Lucerne.

Chocolate Train

... yes, really. And it runs in summer. This train on the Montreux-Bernese Oberland Railway visits the Nestle factory of Cailler, founded nearly 200 years ago and the oldest Swiss chocolate maker.

Cheese Train

On the Montreux-Bernese Oberland Railway to Chateaux-d'Oex, the Cheese Train travels through the Lake Geneva region and runs from early January to the end of April. Wine and cheeses is served and there's insight into Swiss cheese making tricks.

The Grand Train Tour

This Swiss epic combines eight routes to make a 1280km rail journey. Travellers can jump on at any point, point, but to do the whole thing, I'd start in Zurich. Take the train to St Gallen, and then the Pre-Alpine Express to Lucerne. The GoldenPass Line takes us to Interlaken and Montreux. From Lake Geneva, travel on to Martigny, Brig and Zermatt, and then use the Glacier Express to Chur and St Moritz. The it's the Bernina Express and Bernina Express Bus to Lugano. Finally, we join the Gotthard Panorama Express continues to Lucerne and back to Zurich.



📷 Boat travel is included in passes. Interlaken, Switzerland. Credit: Stephen Scourfield/The West Australian

PASS THE PASSES

Swiss Travel Pass

Travel in Switzerland by train, bus, boat and public transport in cities. More than 250 public transport companies and 500 museums work together to create the Swiss Travel Pass. That sort of efficient co-operation is part of Swiss culture. Valid for travel on fixed and consecutive days, passes are available for three, four, eight or days, and included free entrance to those museums. They start from Euro 228 (\$375) for an adult for a three day pass.

Swiss Travel Pass Flex

This pass gives a bit more flexibility. Travellers can chose three, four, eight or 15 non-consecutive days within a month across the Swiss Travel System network. A three day pass starts at Euro 262 (\$430).

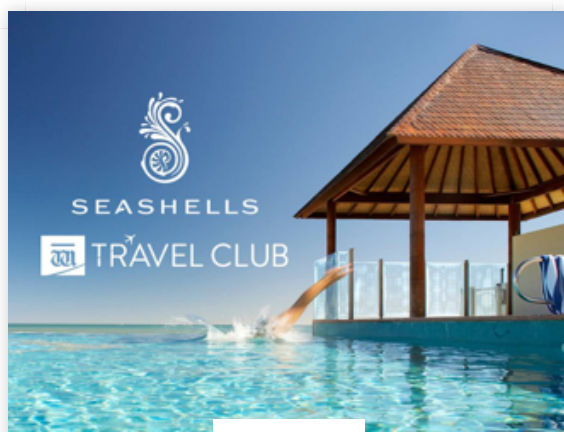
Swiss Half Fare Card

This gives travel throughout Switzerland on trains, buses, boats and a few mountain railways at half price, but there are conditions, of course. Travellers

need to buy discounted tickets for each trip and it's most suitable for those planning just a few or relatively short trips. For frequent and longer trips, travellers are better off considering the Swiss Travel Pass. But it starts from Euro 118 (\$195) for three days.

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