

TOP OF THE LINE

Planners find luxe transport modes make exciting incentive trips for top corporate performers.

By Michael J. Solender

Grand Train Tour of Switzerland

Dozens of routes and excursions (cultural, culinary and adventurous) are available to planners, with our favorite being the seven-day Classic Tour. Picturesque villages, sites and landmarks are discovered in and around Zurich, Interlaken, Montreux, Zermatt, St. Moritz, Lugano and Lucerne. Groups experience each of Switzerland's panoramic lines including the Luzern-Interlaken Express, Glacier Express, Gotthard Panorama Express and Bernina Express, the highest transalpine railway in Europe. Fine dining, adroit service and unparalleled views make getting off these trains difficult. Diversions like Mount Pilatus reward those who do. Here, after crossing Lake Lucerne via boat to nearby Alpnachstad, groups ride the



Ballooning in Kenya



Aqua Mekong



Glacier Express

steepest cogwheel train in the world. An engineering wonder built 125 years ago, the train ascends nearly 2,000 meters from its base, at times on grades as high as 48 degrees, to the top of the "Dragon Mountain" for one of the most glorious views in all of Switzerland.

Mekong River Cruise in Cambodia and Vietnam

Cultural odysseys are the order of the day on Aqua Expeditions luxury cruises along the Mekong River. Itineraries feature both Cambodia and Vietnam, and include a seven-day downriver cruise from Phnom Penh, Cambodia, to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The ultraluxe Aqua Mekong cruise plays host to groups of up to 40 in 20 air-conditioned suites, each with full-length windows affording panoramic views of the ever-changing river life as it unfolds. Guests take in spectacular cultural sites such as the UNESCO-listed Angkor Wat temple complex at Siem Reap and visits to indigenous villages where artisans are immersed in age-old practices and crafts such as silk weaving.

Hot Air Ballooning in Kenya's Maasai Mara National Reserve

Angama Mara, a lush owner-run safari lodge, takes its name from the Swahili word for "suspended in midair." That's precisely where 30 tented guest suites seem placed—almost floating on the edge of the Oloololo Escarpment and high above the plains on the site where many scenes from "Out of Africa" were filmed. Those seeking added adventure beyond their morning coffee need merely wake predawn and head to one of two launch sites where local partners whisk guests into a massive hot air balloon to soar southward toward the Tanzanian border along the Mara River. The perfect day-starter is followed by a celebratory Champagne breakfast.