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## Italian Ways: On and Off the Rails from Milan to Palermo

Tim Parks

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#300761 in Books Ingramcontent 2014-05-05 2014-05-05Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.30 x .80 x 5.50l, .0 #File Name: 0393348822261 pagesItalian Ways On and Off the Rails from Milan to Palermo | File size: 52.Mb

**Tim Parks : Italian Ways: On and Off the Rails from Milan to Palermo** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Italian Ways: On and Off the Rails from Milan to Palermo:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Not quite as good as his first booksBy Swiss NarraNot quite as good as his first books, Italian Neighbor, and An Italian Education. Humor is still there, but the book moves as slowly as an Italian train.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. It was wonderful. I greatly enjoyed riding the rails with himBy Christina LebedaIt was wonderful. I greatly enjoyed riding the rails with him.I have shared the book with a

friend and they also enjoyed reading it. Trains are wonderful and one of my favorite ways of traveling when overseas. Thank you. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. nice travel enticement By Adele H. Ballcote, made me want to go back and get on the train again!

“So inviting you might find yourself tempted to give the experience a whirl and ride the Italian trains yourself, book in hand.” Liesl Schillinger, New York Times Book Review Tim Parks’s books on Italy have been hailed as “so vivid, so packed with delectable details, [they] serve as a more than decent substitute for the real thing” (Los Angeles Times Book Review). Now, in his first Italian travelogue in a decade, he delivers a charming and funny portrait of Italian ways by riding its trains from Verona to Milan, Rome to Palermo, and right down to the heel of Italy. Parks begins as any traveler might: “A train is a train is a train, isn’t it?” But soon he turns his novelist’s eye to the details, and as he journeys through majestic Milano Centrale station or on the newest high-speed rail line, he delivers a uniquely insightful portrait of Italy. Through memorable encounters with ordinary Italians—conductors and ticket collectors, priests and prostitutes, scholars and lovers, gypsies and immigrants—Parks captures what makes Italian life distinctive: an obsession with speed but an acceptance of slower, older ways; a blind eye toward brutal architecture amid grand monuments; and an undying love of a good argument and the perfect cappuccino. *Italian Ways* also explores how trains helped build Italy and how their development reflects Italians’ sense of themselves from Garibaldi to Mussolini to Berlusconi and beyond. Most of all, *Italian Ways* is an entertaining attempt to capture the essence of modern Italy. As Parks writes, “To see the country by train is to consider the crux of the essential Italian dilemma: Is Italy part of the modern world, or not?” 4 maps

From Booklist Parks’ talents for observation don’t coalesce into a comprehensive project. Modernity, Italy’s relation to Europe, immigration, public-private corruption, byzantine pricing and routing, and resisting change are too many complex concepts to analyze from cramped compartments. Riding in trains hearing regional accents results in “slow unification of the language.” Perhaps, but then we jump off to another topic. Unlike homogeneous Italy, U.S. cities have lost “cohesion and identity”; this better describes the book. Parks believes that Italy “is a nation at ease with the distance between ideal and real. They are beyond what we call hypocrisy. Quite simply they do not register the contradiction between rhetoric and behavior. It’s an enviable mind-set.” Parks, “not native not stranger,” writes of commuting between major cities, southern Italy’s routes, station histories, buying tickets, encounters onboard. He treats this material with his tremendous novelist’s power but not curating or culling it thematically. Parks is too much of a character in this nonfiction exploration of whether Italy is a modern nation; watching sweating illegal-immigrant trinket sellers, he deems them “happy with their lot” since they are chatting. His inner monologues distract, undermining ethos from his larger vision. --Cynthia-Marie O’Brien “This mix of piercing social observation and undying affection for Italy is classic Parks.” - Rachel Donadio, New York Times “[A] treat equivalent to a ride on the Orient Express... *Italian Ways* is no Ferrari on rails but instead something much better: a slow train so thoughtfully appointed that one never thinks to look out the window or care about the destination.” - Ben Downing, Wall Street Journal “Fascinating [and] droll.... Parks [is] perhaps the most faithful foreign inamorato Italy has ever had.” - Andrea Lee, *newyorker.com* “Parks really shines. He gives us a country that is as frustrating as it is endlessly fascinating.” - Marjorie Kehe, *Christian Science Monitor* “[Parks is] a perfect guide—an outsider, but one with a deep familiarity and respect (plus a dash of exasperated skepticism)—to the country’s celebrated eccentricities. Parks has a charming voice and a novelist’s eye.” - Chloë Schama, *Smithsonian* “Incisive [and] hilarious.” - Alexander Aciman, *The Daily Beast* “Relaxed, humorous, meandering [and] charming.” - Brigitte Frase, *Minneapolis Star Tribune* “A movable feast to say the least.” - Richard Eder, *Boston Globe* “Presents a picture of Italy you won’t get from any tourist board... sympathetic and lively.” - Micahel Upchurch, *Seattle Times* “Tim Parks has reinvented the narrative of the train journey with an epic voyage into the essence of Italy itself. With a novelist’s keen eye he mines absurdity and deep meaning from small, overlooked moments and gestures.” - Tom Vanderbilt, author of *Traffic* “This is the best book I’ve ever read about Italy. Never have I encountered a more insightful and hilarious insider/outsider portrait of the country at the center of Western civilization. Tim Parks should be given a villa in Rome and the title of English ambassador.” - Sean Wilsey, author of *Oh the Glory of It All* “Engrossing, entertaining, and wonderfully revealing about the country and its people. It makes perfect armchair travelling – a delight from beginning to end.” - David Lodge, author of *Changing Places* “Delightful [and] hilarious.... Combining wonderfully evocative prose with a wry analysis, Parks provides local color while continually seeking hidden social meaning.... The result is a fascinating portrait of a society that seems rooted in place no matter how fast it goes.” - Publishers Weekly, starred review About the Author Tim Parks was born in Manchester, England, in 1954, grew up in London, and has lived in Italy since 1981. His novels include *Europa*, which was shortlisted for the Booker Prize, and he is the author of several nonfiction accounts of life in Italy, including *Italian Neighbors* and *An Italian Education*. During his years in Italy, Parks has translated works by Italo Calvino, Roberto Calasso, Alberto Moravia, and Machiavelli. He is a regular contributor to the New York of Books, for which he blogs.