



*Taormina | June 10 - 14, 2026*

*Cannes, Saturday, May 16, 2026* – The **72nd edition** of the **Taormina Film Festival**, directed by **Tiziana Rocca**, was officially presented today during a press conference in Cannes. The festival will take place from June 10 to 14, 2026.

**Tiziana Rocca**, Artistic Director of the Festival, stated: “We are immensely pleased to present to the international public the first previews of the **72nd edition of the Taormina Film Festival**, taking place from June 10 to 14 in the extraordinary setting of the Ancient Theatre. This edition celebrates great cinema through outstanding personalities, authoritative artistic visions, and an increasingly open dialogue between cultures and generations.

It is an honor for us to present the Lifetime Achievement Award to **Helen Mirren**, an iconic artist and performer of extraordinary talent, deeply connected to Italy and beloved by audiences around the world. We are also proud to welcome **Anna Valle** as the festival’s godmother, an elegant representative of contemporary Italian cinema and culture.

The beating heart of this edition will also be a jury of the highest caliber, chaired by Academy Award-winning director **Jane Campion** and composed of Academy Award-winning actress **Holly Hunter**, acclaimed costume designer **Miyako Bellizzi**, casting director **Francine Maisler**, breakthrough artist **Akinola Davies Jr.**, Amazon MGM Studios’ Head of Global Marketing **Sue Kroll**, and one of the most original voices in new Italian cinema, **Pietro Castellitto**.

And then we’ll have an **all-female panel** featuring various figures from the worlds of film, culture, and sports: an intimate and powerful conversation among women who have rewritten the rules.

This 72nd edition aims to be a bridge between auteur cinema and audiences, between tradition and new narratives, reaffirming the role of the Taormina Film Festival as a place of encounter, discovery, and celebration of the seventh art in the heart of the Mediterranean”.

**Bernardo Campo**, Extraordinary Commissioner of Fondazione Taormina Arte Sicilia, added: “Ahead of the 72nd edition of the Taormina Film Fest, which will take place from June 10 to 14, 2026, I feel it is important to underline how this event represents today, more than ever, an operation of cultural engineering for the seventh art, of fundamental importance for our island. We are not simply talking about a film festival, but about managing an intangible cultural asset of significant heritage value. Founded in 1955, the Taormina

Film Festival is the second oldest film festival in Italy, and this historic legacy is not only a matter of academic pride but also an economic pillar we must defend with determination”.

**Felice Panebianco**, Superintendent of the Foundation, stated: “Innovation and tradition: once again this year, the Taormina Film Fest will represent the perfect synthesis between its history — with its rituals and a city transformed into a grand open-air set — and the desire to project itself toward the future, with particular attention to the sustainability of the scheduled events”.

**Elvira Amata**, Regional Councillor for Tourism, Sport and Entertainment of the Regione Siciliana, commented: “Year after year, the Festival confirms itself as a cornerstone of our territorial promotion thanks to its extraordinary ability to represent not only an authentic celebration of great cinema, but also a vital driver for Sicily’s tourism industry. Through the big screen, Taormina once again establishes itself as a world stage capable of showcasing the truest essence of Sicily and expressing the perfect union between the majesty of the Ancient Theatre — a jewel of our extraordinary heritage — and the dynamic vitality of today’s film market.

We continue to invest with determination, alongside the Regional Government, in strengthening the Festival’s content, which proudly represents an unmissable event eagerly awaited by cinema professionals and visitors alike.

Sharing this year’s edition with the General Assembly of FACE and representatives from fourteen European nations also sends an important message of dialogue and cohesion from the Mediterranean.

Once again, we aim for a deeply immersive festival experience capable of attracting elite tourism interested in the beauty of our villages and our cultural identity.

Renewed confidence in Tiziana Rocca guarantees the continuity necessary to strengthen the international positioning of the Taormina brand. We are ready to experience a season of major premieres and the promotion of young talents, with the absolute conviction that cinema remains the most powerful tool to move audiences and, at the same time, to promote the image of a modern, welcoming, and culturally advanced Sicily around the world”.

One of the most extraordinary actresses of contemporary cinema, **Helen Mirren** will receive the **Taormina Film Festival Achievement Award** during a special evening dedicated to **Anna Magnani**, a symbol of authenticity and expressive power in Italian and international cinema history. On Friday, June 12, the restored version of **Bellissima**, directed by Luchino Visconti, will be screened at the Ancient Theatre to celebrate the film’s 75th anniversary.

The patroness of this year’s Festival will be **Anna Valle**. An actress of remarkable elegance and talent, with a solid and refined artistic career, she has distinguished herself through her versatility and charisma, from major television productions to intense roles on the big screen. Her authentic and incisive style, combined with a magnetic stage presence, has made her one of the most beloved and respected actresses in the contemporary Italian scene.

This year’s Taormina Film Festival **jury** is composed of leading figures from the international film scene, each bringing a unique and authoritative perspective. It will be chaired by New

Zealand director **Jane Campion**, one of the most authoritative and refined voices in contemporary cinema and a former winner of the Palme d'Or and an Oscar. Joining her are:

- **Holly Hunter**: for her performance in the film *The Piano* (1993), she won the Oscar for Best Actress, the BAFTA, the Golden Globe, and the Prix d'interprétation féminine at the Cannes Film Festival. She was also nominated for an Oscar for Best Actress for *Broadcast News* (1987), for which she won the Silver Bear for Best Actress at the Berlin Film Festival, and for Best Supporting Actress for *The Firm* (1993) and *Thirteen* (2003). Also nominated for seven Emmy Awards, Hunter has won two.
- **Miyako Bellizzi**: an Oscar-nominated costume designer for her work on Josh Safdie's film *Marty Supreme* (2025), she also designed the costumes for Safdie's films *Uncut Gems* (2019) and *Good Time* (2017). Her work can also be seen in Oliver Hermanus's *The History of Sound*, starring Josh O'Connor and Paul Mescal, a film nominated for the Official Selection at Cannes in 2025.
- **Francine Maisler**: one of Hollywood's most influential casting directors, she was nominated for the first-ever Oscar for Best Casting (a category established in 2026) for Ryan Coogler's *Sinners*. She has worked with the greatest contemporary directors: Denis Villeneuve (*Dune* trilogy), Alejandro G. Iñárritu (*Birdman*, *The Revenant*), Steve McQueen (*12 Years a Slave*), Greta Gerwig, Michael Mann, and Barry Jenkins. She is a two-time Emmy Award winner for the series *Succession* and *The Studio*.
- **Akinola Davies Jr.**: a British-Nigerian filmmaker, he is one of the most significant breakthrough talents in international cinema of 2025. His debut feature film, *My Father's Shadow*, won the BAFTA, the British Independent Film Award, the Gotham Independent Film Award, and the Caméra d'Or in the Un Certain Regard section at Cannes 2025, and was selected to represent the United Kingdom at the 2026 Oscars for Best International Feature Film.
- **Sue Kroll**: Head of Global Marketing, Film, Series and Brand at Amazon MGM Studios, where she has led marketing for acclaimed hits including *Project Hail Mary*, *Fallout*, and *The Summer I Turned Pretty*. Previously, as President of Worldwide Marketing and Distribution at Warner Bros., she championed films by Christopher Nolan, George Miller, Ben Affleck, and Baz Luhrmann, including Best Picture winner *Argo* and Best Picture nominee *Mad Max: Fury Road*. She also founded and led her own production company, Kroll & Co. Entertainment, where she served as an executive producer on the Academy Award-winning hit drama *A Star Is Born*.
- **Pietro Castellitto**: actor, director, and screenwriter, he is one of the most original voices in contemporary Italian cinema. Winner of the David di Donatello and Nastro d'Argento awards for Best Debut Director for *I predatori* (2020), he received the Orizzonti Award for Best Screenplay at the Venice Film Festival. His second film, *Enea* (2023), was presented in competition at the 80th Venice Film Festival. In 2025, he won the Nastro d'Argento for Best Actor in a Comedy Film for *Diva Futura*.

This year's Festival will be divided into **four sections**: The **International Feature Film Competition**; the **Out of Competition** section; **Special Events** at the Ancient Theatre; and the new **Short Film Competition** section, featuring films shot in Sicily that aim to promote the region. The films in the program will span all genres, giving voice to current issues of great cultural significance. They will include at least national premieres and will come from countries and directors around the world, in keeping with the festival's international spirit.

The first film announced, which will have its world premiere as a special event at the Teatro Antico, is **Bear Country** by Derrick Borte. The film stars **Russell Crowe, Luke Evans, Teresa Palmer** with **Nina Dobrev** and **Aaron Paul**. Produced by Jeffrey Greenstein and **Mark Fasano**, and distributed in Italy by **Gianluca Curti's** Minerva Pictures, the story revolves around the legendary owner of a famous club whose retirement plans are shattered after a robbery, leaving him targeted by a cartel and dealing with a mysterious buyer.

Also, on the program is a **panel discussion** on Thursday, June 11, titled "**Women Beyond the Lens**". This event is dedicated to extraordinary women who have redefined their roles in cinema, culture, and the audiovisual industry. Participants will include: the event's patroness, **Anna Valle**; the jury president, Oscar-winning director **Jane Campion**; casting director **Francine Maisler**; costume designer **Miyako Bellizzi**; Oscar-winning actress **Holly Hunter**; **Sue Kroll**, Head of Global Marketing at Amazon MGM Studios; singer **Malika Ayane**; French actress **Clotilde Courau**; director **Francesca Archibugi**; Brazilian actress and writer **Fernanda Torres**; and young actress **Romana Maggiora Vergano**.

Once again this year, the **Youth Campus jury**, which will award the **Cariddino d'Oro**, was formed in collaboration with the **ANEC Sicily** regional chapter.

**ARCA Enel** is participating for the first time in the 72nd edition of the Taormina Film Festival with a cultural and educational project that will involve young people, as well as adult members, in screenings, meetings with filmmakers, masterclasses, and group discussions on the films, to award the **ARCA Prize for Best Italian Film**.

During the Festival, the General Assembly of **FACE** - Federation of European Film Academies will also take place. FACE brings together 23 film academies from across Europe, alongside the European Film Academy. This prestigious event, which for the first time also involves the Taormina Festival, aims to share knowledge and developments, promote common initiatives supporting European cinema, strengthen diversity, inclusion and sustainability efforts, and foster collaboration in film education and audience development throughout Europe.

All the festival awards are exclusively crafted by master goldsmith **Gerardo Sacco**, with the creativity and unique style that set him apart.

Once again this year, **Giovanni Ventura, Artistic Director for Wella**, is creating the hairstyles for the stars who will walk the red carpet - a lineup of artists, Oscar winners, and many familiar faces from Italian cinema.

Makeup artist **Orazio Tomarchio**, along with his **Truccheria Cherie**, will be handling all the makeup for the festival's celebrities in Taormina.



*The Taormina Film Festival is sponsored and organized by:*  
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