

Castelporziano wins Green Film Festival honour

Posted on May 18, 2026 by Newsdesk

ROME — A nature reserve, not a film, took one of the top honours at the Italia Green Film Festival, as the event broke with its tradition of celebrating cinema. The Presidential Estate of Castelporziano won the Golden Leaf Speciale 2026 at the closing gala of Italy's leading sustainability film festival in Rome on May 25.

The choice was deliberate. In past years the special award went to celebrated cultural figures, among them renowned Italian filmmaker Giuseppe Tornatore in 2025. This year the jury looked past the screen, honouring a protected woodland on Rome's coast.

"There are places that cease to be geography and become symbols. Castelporziano is proof that man, when he chooses to, can be a custodian and not a master of the Earth," said Pierre Marchionne, the festival's artistic director, explaining its special prizes. "Why award the Golden Leaf to a place and not to a person? Because the Presidential Estate of Castelporziano is not simply a geographical space, but a living organism and an institutional symbol." The reserve clearly embodies the festival's broader Return to Human theme, the jury said.

The estate spans more than 60 square kilometres of Mediterranean coastal forest, wetland and protected wildlife outside the capital. Since 2015, under President Sergio Mattarella, Italy's head of state, it has opened for scientific research and conservation.

Source: https://italynow.co.uk/castelporziano-wins-green-film-festival-honour/



Green Film Festival awards ceremony (*Credits: organisers*)

Land and people

The jury praised the reserve for pairing conservation with social inclusion. It runs barrier-free summer stays for people with disabilities and older visitors, plus *ippoterapia* (therapeutic horse riding) and sensory learning trails.

“We manage many projects that carry real weight and bring biodiversity into dialogue,” said Giulia Bonella, who heads the Castel Porziano estate service. “Since 2015 the estate has been open to the public, becoming a place of research and sustainability.”

Festival reach

Now in its seventh year, the festival screens films on environmental and social themes and carries recognition from the European Parliament and UNESCO, the United Nations cultural agency, for its educational value. This edition drew more than 500 films from 70 countries, a record, under the theme “Return to Human.”

Franco Nero, the actor and the festival’s honorary president, told the audience the stakes had shifted. “Cinema is a powerful tool for opening our eyes. Today the real challenge is no longer played

Source: https://italynow.co.uk/castelporziano-wins-green-film-festival-honour/

out on the screen, but on the ground we walk on," he said.

Source: https://italynow.co.uk/castelporziano-wins-green-film-festival-honour/