

## FINA World Aquatics Gala “Soirée des Etoiles”



WORLD AQUATICS GALA  
"SOIRÉE DES ÉTOILES"

[1]Date:

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### **The celebration of Aquatics!**

There are of course the medals, the records, the celebration, the podium ceremony, the joy or the tears. The FINA competitions are made of great Stars, which produce amazing performances and create unforgettable moments in all aquatic disciplines. They are the best of the best, the superb champions of our Sport. They are on all TV screens, they are national heroes in their respective nations, they are true references for the youth of the world.

All this existed in the past and will continue, for our delight, to exist in the future. But until 2010, there wasn't a formal recognition from FINA's side to these outstanding athletes. Medals and honours were of course well promoted at our major events, but there wasn't another way to recognise these ambassadors of our disciplines in the five continents.

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Throughout the “FINA World Aquatics Magazine”, our main publication, a vote among the FINA Family was then organised to choose the “Best Athlete of the Year”, initially an award given to the nine best in swimming (men and women), diving (men and women), water polo (men and women), open water swimming (men and women) and synchronised swimming (women). The procedure of the vote was quite simple: a pre-selection of the best in each discipline was done by the editorial team of the magazine, and then the vote was open to choose the greatest of the great among those lists, or even to suggest a new name. From 2013, two new athletes were consecrated, the best man and woman in High Diving, a discipline that made its entry at the programme of the World Championships that year in Barcelona.

At the end of 2014, FINA decided to “upgrade” the impact of this vote and for the first time in history a dedicated celebration – the “Soirée des Etoiles” (the “Evening of the Stars”) was held in Doha (QAT), before the start of the 12th FINA World Swimming Championships (25m). In a festive atmosphere, the “Best Athletes of the Year” were present to collect their award and all the guests had the privilege to revive some of the outstanding moments that led to their consecration.

In 2015 the “Soirée des Etoiles” was organised in Budapest (HUN) on January 31th, 2016 and, in order to establish objective criteria for the designation of the best of the best, FINA has put in place a system by which the classification in our main events will provide points. The competitors with the highest number of

points in the end of the year were naturally be elected the “FINA Best Athletes of 2015”. The 2016 awardees were known in Windsor (CAN) on December 4, 2016, a couple of days before the start of the 13th FINA World Swimming Championships (25m). Sanya (CHN) is getting ready to host the next edition of this prestigious "Soirée des Etoiles" on the 2nd of December.

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