

Golden Globes 2013: so what are the Golden Globes?

With the Golden Globes 2013 taking place from this evening, we explain the awards' origins and explore their colourful and, at times, controversial history.



Golden Globe 2013 nominations in pictures.

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8:00AM GMT 13 Jan 2013

What are the Golden Globes?

The Golden Globes, now recognised as a key barometer for success at the Academy Awards, began with the founding of the Hollywood Foreign Correspondents Association (HFCA) in 1943. This Los Angeles-based Association constituted a handful of international journalists aiming to accurately cover all aspects of world entertainment and further promote Hollywood films abroad. It was renamed the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA) in 1955, after a five-year ideological split within the HFCA had ended. The Association designed the trophy in 1945 when then-HFCA President Marina Cisternas decided that the design should be a golden globe surrounded by a strip of motion picture film.

How are the films shortlisted?

The 90 voting members, from 55 countries worldwide, are annually invited to approximately 300 events, and interview 400 actors, directors, writers and producers. Here they begin forming opinions about possible film and TV show nominees. Online voting begins in November, with voters having to choose from five nominees in 25 categories. Votes for this year's ceremony were sent to the accountancy firm Ernst & Young on the 10 December, 2012, where they were independently counted and verified.

The Golden Globes ceremony is supposed to be more fun and frivolous than other awards. It is a trend that was famously set in 1958, when Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Sammy Davis Junior unexpectedly took to the stage mid-show. Though journalists within the Association traditionally presented the ceremony, the star takeover was so popular that Sinatra and co were asked to present the awards the following year. Since then, the ceremony has been hosted by an eclectic range of stars, including Ricky Gervais and this Sunday's hosts, US comedians Tina Fey and Amy Poehler.

Who decides which films are shortlisted?

Today there are around 90 voting members, all recognised journalists. But with members of the Academy and Screen Actors Guild (SAG) Awards numbering 6,000 and 2,100 respectively, the comparatively tiny number of voters for the equally respected Golden Globes has led to some critics questioning its credibility.

No stranger to controversy?

In 1981, the ceremony's credibility slumped after the actress Pia Zadora won New Star of the Year for her role in *Butterfly*, which had previously been slated by critics and cinemagoers. There were allegations that HFPA members had been invited by Zadora's casino-owning husband to a weekend in LA before the awards ceremony.

In 2011, Ricky Gervais made a joke of the fact that *The Tourist* was nominated at the Golden Globes, despite it being unpopular with many film fans: "I'd like to crush the ridiculous rumour that the only reason *The Tourist* was nominated was so that the foreign press could hang out with Johnny Depp and Angelina Jolie. That was not the only reason; they also accepted bribes."

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