

Paris, 19 October 2026

## Press release

# Prix Versailles 2026: The World's Most Beautiful Arenas

Today, 19 October 2026, Prix Versailles is announcing the names of the seven projects chosen for the World's Most Beautiful Arenas List 2026.

Representing five of the planet's continents, the 2026 List stands out for its diversity, blending architectural maturity with stylistic audacity and local integration.

Jérôme Gouadain, Prix Versailles Secretary General, introduces this year's extraordinary selection:

"Sports arenas are some of the most festive gathering places. They also showcase the vibrancy and reinvigoration of their regions.

Primarily associated with youth, these buildings have proved to be true, contemporary reflections of the geographic areas where they are located. Thanks to the well-established expertise of firms which specialise in this type of infrastructure, each one embodies the idea that excellence is always the fruit of experience, and that creativity always stems from vitality.

We are thrilled to see that these spaces have also come to thoroughly and brilliantly encapsulate the values of sharing and of pushing one's limits."

The awards discerned by Prix Versailles aim to promote intelligent sustainability, in which culture serves and transcends the notion of the environment.

Three arenas from the 2026 List will also receive the further distinction of a World Title (Prix Versailles, Interior or Exterior), to be awarded at UNESCO Headquarters on 10 December next.



## PRIX VERSAILLES

---

### WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL ARENAS LIST 2026

#### **Coronation Park Centre**

*Edmonton, Canada*

#### **Xiangyang Olympic Center Stadium**

*Xiangyang, China*

#### **Armand Cesari Stadium**

*Furiani, France*

#### **Unipol Dome**

*Milan, Italy*

#### **Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium**

*Rabat, Morocco*

#### **Tangier Grand Stadium**

*Tangier, Morocco*

#### **One New Zealand Stadium, Te Kaha**

*Christchurch, New Zealand*

*The Laureates are listed in the alphabetical order of the countries they represent  
(based on their two-letter ISO 3166 country codes).*



## **PRIX VERSAILLES**

---

PRESENTATION OF THE LAUREATES

# Coronation Park Centre

*Edmonton, Canada*

Building an indoor cycling track could almost be considered a luxury, but Canada is now home to a third such amazing facility, certified by the UCI and open to the general public.

Far from being intended solely for use by professional racing cyclists, Coronation Park is a complex where high-level sport meets all-ages leisure, designed by hcma and Dub Architects in collaboration with FaulknerBrowns.

This coexistence is made possible by a layout that is not only warm and friendly but also structurally innovative.

In elevating its velodrome by a full storey and encircling it with a running track, the architects have given the public the opportunity to watch, from the ground floor, the fantastic spectacle of two-wheeled speedsters tearing along the track above, without involving an underground passageway.

Below the 90-metre roof, the ribbon-wall envelope twists to conform to the geometry of the track, producing a different silhouette from every angle.

With the Peter Hemingway Aquatic Centre brought under its umbrella, Coronation Park is the ideal training centre for triathletes.

Set in a park named in honour of Queen Elizabeth II's coronation, the new venue intelligently joins the spirit of elegance with the spirit of openness.



© Nic Lehoux



© Nic Lehoux



© Nic Lehoux

# Xiangyang Olympic Center Stadium

*Xiangyang, China*

Xiangyang Olympic Center Stadium in Hubei Province was designed by Central-South Architectural Design Institute (CSADI) to be built amidst lush greenery and open to the local community. Its singular architecture immediately catches the eye, featuring a 30,000 seat stadium whose white canopy appears to unfurl in a continuous ribbon over the grandstands.

Inspired by the surging rhythm of the Han River and the image of a soaring Chu phoenix, that expansive awning produces a fluid silhouette that speaks directly to its environment. It covers the stands whilst leaving the south side open, uplifting the composition and inviting air to flow through the structure. This architecture is one aspect of a bioclimatic approach which aims to enhance spectator comfort whilst minimising the use of energy-intensive systems.

The stadium is set inside a larger 138,000 m<sup>2</sup> sports complex that notably includes facilities dedicated to everyday public fitness. The broader ambition for this project is to turn sport into a living legacy within the urban landscape.



© Yilong Zhao



© Yilong Zhao



© Yilong Zhao

# Armand Cesari Stadium

*Furiani, France*

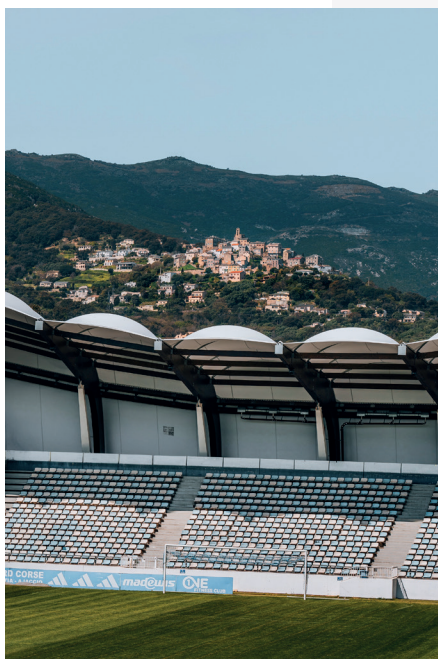


© Banzaiprod

Renovating this stadium, also known as the *Stade de Furiani*, meant contending with powerful emotions. A popular facility in Corsica since 1932, the stadium was home to SC Bastia when the club reached the UEFA Cup Final in 1978. Later on, it was heart-stricken by events in 1992. To this day, it is etched into football's collective memory. In 2025, Ateliers A+ gave it a new outlook, one that fully embraced the local environment of mountains and sea.

Three continuous rings bring architectural unity to the 16,500-seat terraces, which were built in stages. The first ring edges the contemporary bowl around the pitch and also houses the lighting, the second features the canopies, and the third encircles and protects the outer enclosure. As an extension of the existing wooden framework, this envelope contains all of the stadium's successive transformations within a single, highly symbolic architectural structure.

Now completed and adapted to contemporary entry and broadcasting requirements, the new Armand Cesari is a reincarnation of the heart and soul of the original, legendary arena. More than a mere playing field, this monument to French football has retained its sacred aspect, in a unique setting where each terrace radiates passion for the sport.



© Banzaiprod



© Banzaiprod

# Unipol Dome

*Milan, Italy*

Inaugurated for the 2026 Winter Olympic Games, Arena Milano (now known as the Unipol Dome) is Italy's biggest indoor venue.

In a contemporary expression of a historical archetype, the teams at David Chipperfield Architects and Arup have made this arena into a modern-day Roman amphitheatre, where technology supports shapework and lighting effects, adapting them to today's expectations.

The building, which can accommodate up to 16,000 spectators, possesses three rings of increasing heights that appear to float above a monolithic podium.

During the day, their aluminium tubes shimmer in the sun while, at night, built-in LED strips deliver a different kind of light display. The architecture of this elegant edifice also sets another stage, with a sprawling staircase leading to a 12,000 m<sup>2</sup> raised esplanade that can be used for anything from major events to everyday gatherings.

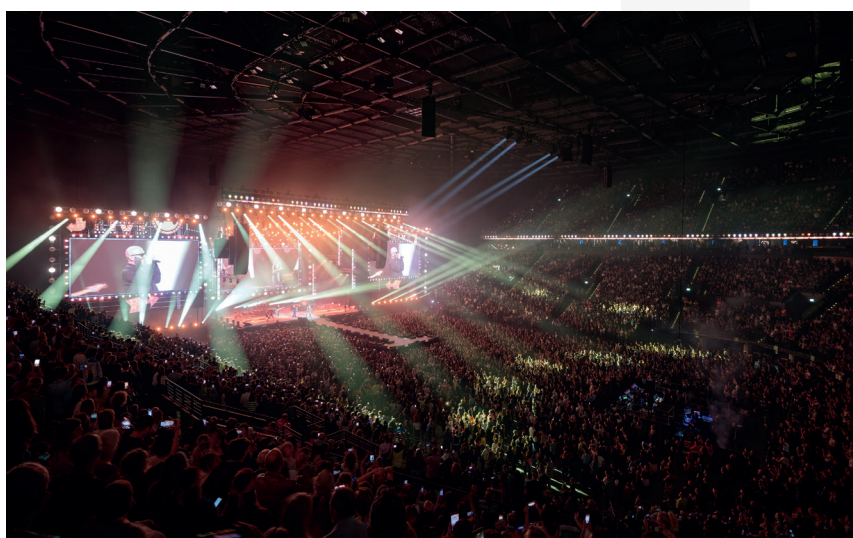
Between minerality and gardens in the new Santa Giulia district, the arena has emerged as both a defining feature and an urban catalyst, claiming its position as a new centrepiece of Lombardy's capital city.



© Noshe



© Noshe



© Noshe

# Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium

*Rabat, Morocco*

With its sculptural architecture, Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium is a high-tech heritage site and the newest showcase for Moroccan football, in plenty of time to majestically co-host the 2030 World Cup. Rebuilt in the space of just 24 months, this facility devised by Populous has a seating capacity of 67,000, with an international reach that also embraces national passions.

Emerging from a green belt of eucalyptus, its golden envelope – whose colours reappear in its sumptuous reception areas – was inspired by the palm trees lining the major thoroughfares of Rabat and by traditional Fez embroidery techniques. Comprising some 19,000 champagne-coloured triangles of different dimensions, it connects the façade with the canopy in a unified movement and, at night, it transforms into an enormous, animated screen. Inside, monumental terraces (kops) can seat around 20,000 spectators, with the top level projecting outwards by 8 metres, every detail designed to amplify the zeal of attending supporters.

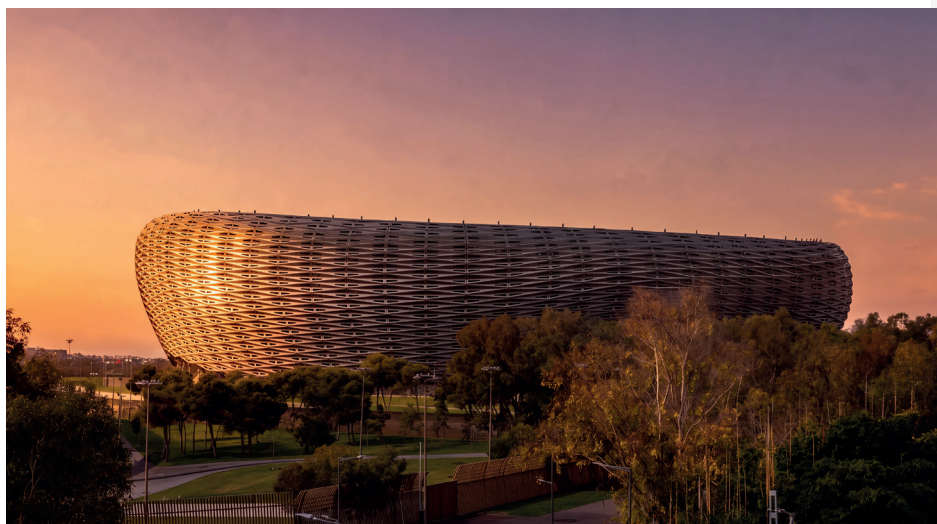
Applauded during the latest Africa Cup of Nations, the stadium has affirmed its two-fold ambition of offering the world a view of contemporary Morocco without losing any of the fervour that is the hallmark of Moroccan football.



© Société des Infrastructures Sportives de Rabat



© Société des Infrastructures Sportives de Rabat



© Société des Infrastructures Sportives de Rabat

# Tangier Grand Stadium

*Tangier, Morocco*

At the gateway to Africa, in this city of expansive horizons, Ibn Batouta Stadium (also known as Tangier Grand Stadium) is a new incarnation of our modern times. Originally inaugurated in 2011, it underwent a profound transformation, supervised by architect Anouar Amaoui, in preparation for the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations and the 2030 FIFA World Cup. Its new seating capacity of 75,500 makes it Morocco's biggest stadium today.

The elimination of its old athletics track and the lowering of its pitch by about 8 metres allowed the terraces to be brought closer to the field of play, intensifying the match-day experience for supporters.

But the highlight of the arena's revamped identity is its new 52,000 m<sup>2</sup> canopy, designed in conjunction with engineers from Schlaich Bergermann Partner. Its structure combines metal cables with supple membranes in a remarkably sprawling configuration. Protecting the terraces and pitch from the wind, it blends technical prowess with visual airiness.

At nightfall, the outlines of the stadium's architecture are revealed when its lighting puts on a whole show. Home to Morocco's most famous Ittihad Riadi, nothing less would have sufficed to magnify the scenery of the revitalised Bride of the North.



© Morocco lens



© Abdou Faiz



© Morocco lens

# One New Zealand Stadium, Te Kaha

*Christchurch, New Zealand*



© Dennis Radermacher



© Dennis Radermacher

Inaugurated in April 2026, One New Zealand Stadium at Te Kaha marks a new chapter in the area's emergence and renewal. This major civic monument is the embodiment of architectural reinvention and confidence in the future.

Designed by Populous and by Warren & Mahoney with a fixed roof made from transparent ETFE, this 30,000 seat venue draws its visual language from the landscapes of Canterbury and from the rich Māori culture. The façade of the Crusaders' stronghold, which sometimes plays host to the All Blacks as well, calls to mind mountains, waterways and the colours of the changing seasons.

Within the seating bowl, the stands proudly display a tribal pattern based on the *mangōpare*, the hammerhead shark, a distinctive symbol of New Zealand's identity, power and perseverance. Fuelled by a close partnership with the indigenous Ngāi Tahu people, this project was inspired by the ancestral story of how Tāne separated Sky Father from Earth Mother in order to bring light and warmth to the world.

Through this unique alliance of myth and matter, the building stands out as a major cultural landmark shaped by the history, strength and values of the people of Christchurch.



© Alec Huisman



## PRIX VERSAILLES

---