



Press Information  
26th March 2013

## **25th BMW International Open: “The stage is set.”**

BMW celebrates 25 years in professional golf – anniversary tournament in Munich.

**Munich.** 1989: Germany is still a divided country, the top scorers in West Germany's Bundesliga are Thomas Allofs and Roland Wohlfahrt, and Nick Faldo celebrates his first Masters win. Meanwhile, Munich plays host to the inaugural BMW International Open. For organiser BMW and golf, this is the start of a partnership that will in time raise the bar and set new standards. In 2013, the tournament is celebrating its 25th birthday (18th to 23rd June, Golfclub München Eichenried). The anniversary year was officially launched at an opening press conference in Munich today. The officials arrived at the BMW Museum in BMW Classic cars. Among them was golfing legend Paul Azinger. The American was in Munich as the guest of honour at the anniversary event: “Zinger” – alongside Denmark's Thomas Björn – is one of just two players in the 25-year history of the tournament to lift the trophy on two occasions. Azinger won in 1990 and 1992 – both times in a play-off.

“Apart from the Open Championship, the BMW International Open was the first tournament I played in Europe,” Azinger recalls. “As well as the two titles, I also have a lot of very fond memories of the days spent in Munich.” Azinger was full of praise: “BMW's commitment to golf is fantastic. We players cannot be grateful enough.”

Azinger travelled to the press conference in a sky-blue and white Isetta. Next to him at the wheel was Magnus Wiese, Head of Events, Exhibitions and Sports Marketing: “We have established something great with the BMW International Open, and have helped shape the sport of golf for 25 years. That is a success story,” said Wiese. No other tournament on the European Tour has enjoyed such a long and continuous partnership with its organisers. Wiese still remembers what was, for him personally, the most emotional experience in the history of the tournament: “Martin Kaymer's victory in 2008 was a very special moment for all of us.”



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Keith Waters, Chief Operating Officer of the European Tour, not only recognised the importance of the tournament, but also that of the BMW brand for the development of the European Tour: "The longevity and continuity of our partnership with BMW is extraordinary, and have been very lucky for the last 25 years to have a company at our side, which always strives for quality and innovation in everything it does. We have a very strong and powerful partnership with BMW."

The best players in the world – led by world number two Rory McIlroy and BMW Brand Ambassador – also sent their best wishes for the 25th anniversary of the BMW International Open.

The only German winner in the history of the tournament, 2008 champion Martin Kaymer, will be joined by big-hitting American Dustin Johnson, British Open winner Ernie Els of South Africa, and world-class Spaniard Sergio García in Munich this summer, as they take their place among a starting field littered with top European players.

"It is still a while until the start of the BMW International Open," explained Tournament Director Marco Kaussler, "but we have already assembled a very attractive field. By the time the tournament gets underway, I am sure we will have been able to announce one or two more big names. We are looking forward to the anniversary tournament!"

Korbinian Kofler, Managing Director of Golfclub München Eichenried, explained the modifications that have been made to the Championship Course: "We have made a lot of changes to the course. In doing so, we have created more space for greens, fairways and spectators, who will now be able to follow the action even more closely." In total, four holes have been made more challenging in Eichenried. The tees on the 2nd and 6th holes have been moved back, while the water obstacles on the 16th and 18th have been increased in size in order to make the approach shots to the respective greens more difficult in the future.

At the end of the press conference, Magnus Wiese presented the guests of honour with a very special gift: a silver ball marker, appropriately engraved with the number "25". Star guest Paul Azinger then tried his hand at the "Nearest to the BMW 326" competition. He showed he has lost none of his touch as he pitched the golf ball into a historic BMW 326 (built between 1936 and 1941). Azinger landed four of his five attempts in the interior of the convertible.



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Paul Azinger and Keith Waters then paid a visit to the modified 16th hole in a snowy Eichenried. The pair re-enacted the legendary play-off from 1990, when Azinger came out on top against defending champion David Feherty (Northern Ireland).

“I can still remember it well,” said Azinger on Tuesday. “I was playing in the flight in front of defending champion Feherty, and pulled my shot on the 18th way left – out of bounds actually. However, the ball landed in the crowd of spectators and bounced back into play – that was a stroke of luck for me. I still managed to make birdie and force a play-off against Feherty, which I then went on to win.”

**Note to editors:** Today's press conference and the duel on the 16th hole were documented on film. The video will shortly be available to download.

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[www.press.bmwgroup-sport.com](http://www.press.bmwgroup-sport.com)

**If you have any questions, please contact:**

BMW Sport Communications

Nicole Stempinsky, Tel: +49 89 382 51584, E-mail: [Nicole.Stempinsky@bmw.de](mailto:Nicole.Stempinsky@bmw.de),

Internet: [www.bmw-golfsport.com](http://www.bmw-golfsport.com)

**BMW and golf – the “Global Golf Player”.**

BMW first became involved in professional golf when the BMW International Open was held for the first time in 1989. In the meantime, BMW has become a strong, highly respected, integral partner of the golfing world and is the only brand represented on all the major tours. BMW organises another three tournaments on the European Tour. The BMW PGA Championship at the Wentworth Club near London is known as the “Players’ Flagship” and is one of the most prestigious tournaments on the tour. When the BMW Masters (Shanghai) made its debut in 2012, it featured one of the biggest prize funds on the European Tour and a world-class field. On the PGA TOUR, the BMW Championship is one of the most important golfing events in the USA and makes up the third leg of the four FedExCup Playoff tournaments. With the organisation of these professional tournaments, numerous “Official Car” partnerships and the global amateur tournament series – the BMW Golf Cup International – BMW is the most important global player in the world of golf. The relationship with the PGA European Tour, which BMW also supports by providing the “Official Car” at the Ryder Cup, is particularly close. Professionals around the world regard BMW very highly as a golf partner. For example, Major winner Martin Kaymer represents the company as BMW Brand Ambassador.



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## The BMW Group

The BMW Group is the leading premium manufacturer of automobiles and motorcycles in the world with its BMW, MINI and Rolls-Royce brands. As a global company, the BMW Group operates 28 production and assembly facilities in 13 countries and has a global sales network in more than 140 countries. In 2012, the BMW Group sold about 1.85 million cars and more than 117,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax for the financial year 2012 was euro 7.82 billion on revenues amounting to euro 76.85 billion. At 31 December 2012, the BMW Group had a workforce of 105,876 employees. The success of the BMW Group has always been built on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy. As a result of its efforts, the BMW Group has been ranked industry leader in the Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes for the last eight years.



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