

BMW Masters 2013

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Press Information
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BMW Masters: "We are proud of the Best Tournament award". Interview with Eckhard Wannieck, Head of BMW International Sponsoring, Cooperations and Product Placement.

Shanghai. The final round of the BMW Masters is in full flow – and the opening tournament of the European Tour "Final Series" is already being heralded as a huge success. In an interview, Eckhard Wannieck, Head of BMW International Sponsoring, Cooperations and Product Placement, discusses the importance of the tournament to golf in China, improvements on last year's inaugural event, and Sunday's thrilling finale.

Mr. Wannieck, thousands of golf fans have flocked to the course to watch the European Tour's top players do battle for the coveted BMW Masters trophy. What are your impressions of the 2013 BMW Masters?

Eckhard Wannieck: "We are more than happy with the way the tournament week has worked out. On the one hand, we have once again been treated to a world-class display of golf from the 78 players present – and that despite the wind making conditions particularly testing on the opening two days. Seven Major winners, 18 Ryder Cup stars and 60 players who know what it takes to win on the European Tour: it was a field littered with champions. You could feel how the tournament had grown in importance, even on last year's premiere, thanks in part to its status as the opening event on the European Tour's Final Series. On the other hand, we have also used the experience gained from last year to raise the bar off the course. The feedback we have received from our guests, the fans and the media shows that we have taken another big step forward in this regard."

Can you name any examples?

Wannieck: "It begins with small details, which may not be very obvious to the public, but which have a big effect. On the one hand, fans can now get closer to the stars than last year at the driving range. We have also added another stand on the 18th green, to allow even more spectators to watch the decisive closing moments. On the other hand, we have made the visitor experience at the BMW Masters even more interactive. The public village is bigger than in 2012 and this year offered even more opportunities for visitors to

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both emerge themselves in the world of BMW and to discover more about what makes golf such a captivating sport.”

What has the feedback been like from the fans?

Wannieck: “Very positive. Well over 20,000 spectators came to watch the BMW Masters at Lake Malaren Golf Club over the first three days. We reckon there will be another 20,000 people out on the course for today’s final round too. As such, the total spectator figures will eclipse those of last year. We are definitely on the right track. And the ‘Best Tournament’, which we received on Tuesday from the highest Chinese sports federation – the General Administration of Sport of China –, is proof that last year’s event was already a top-class tournament. That is something we are very proud of.”

And the players also see the BMW Masters as a special tournament on the European Tour

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Wannieck: “Our tournaments around the world – particularly the BMW International Open – are valued by the players for their special atmosphere and the excellent standard of service they receive. Our goal is to convey the same unique feel-good factor as we have come to expect in Munich at our tournaments around the world. And that has worked very well again here at the BMW Masters. The players stay on-site at the course, can practice all day long, and can focus fully on their game. Our BMW shuttle fleet of 80 cars has been on hand to ferry players and guests between downtown Shanghai and the course. The pros are full of praise for the quality of the course, which has matured since 2012. The players have been very happy again here this year.”

How important is the BMW Masters to the company?

Wannieck: “The BMW Masters plays a special role in our global golf strategy. China is a key market for BMW and golf, as well as an ideal stage on which to showcase our approach to dynamics, aesthetics and precision. We are delighted to be able to present our customers and spectators with golf of the highest standard – both from a sporting and spectator experience point of view. The BMW brand in China is developing at a similarly dynamic rate to Chinese business. Our customers here are both demanding and enthusiastic about innovation and sport. Through golf, we are able to allow many more people in China to experience the BMW brand.”

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How is BMW promoting golf in China?

Wannieck: "At the BMW Masters, we are cooperating with the Chinese Golf Association, which has awarded 14 places in the tournament. The opportunity to line up as part of such an exclusive and strong field as we have at the BMW Masters is an experience that simply cannot be underestimated for the Chinese players. On top of that, we have projects like the BMW Junior Golf Program. Over 1,000 children and youngsters in four different cities took part in this project. Four participants played in the Pro-Am here in Shanghai, and made a great impression. Promoting the development of golf in China is a big issue for BMW."

And you are also supporting rising German players ...

Wannieck: "We also invited BMW Golfsport Ambassador Maximilian Kieffer to this tournament – and he has produced an impressive display. For Max, it has been an invaluable experience to play in front of such big crowds alongside Major winners Rory McIlroy, Graeme McDowell and Padraig Harrington."

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BMW and golf – the "Global Golf Player".

BMW first became involved in professional golf almost a quarter of a century ago when the BMW International Open was held for the first time in 1989. In the meantime BMW is an integral part of the golfing world. As a strong and highly regarded partner it is the only brand represented on all the major tours. BMW organises another two 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 features one of the biggest prize purses on the European Tour and a world-class field. On the PGA TOUR, the BMW Championship is one of the most important golf events in the USA and makes up the third leg of the four FedExCup Playoff tournaments. With

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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 as “Official Car” at the Ryder Cup, is particularly close.

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.