

BMW International Open 2014



Press Kit

25th March 2014

BMW International Open: Making a good thing even better.

The debut at Gut Lärchenhof in 2012 was a success – but with the attention to detail BMW is renowned for, even that can be improved.

Cologne. It was like a successful concert debut. A great performance was followed by an intoxicating encore: back in June 2012, the first BMW International Open to be held at Golf Club Gut Lärchenhof went into extra time. For the seventh time in its history, the tournament was decided in a play-off. England's Danny Willett and Australian Marcus Fraser found themselves tied on -11 after four rounds. They then matched each other stroke for stroke over four play-off holes before Willett, at 24 years and 265 days, was crowned the second youngest winner of the BMW International Open. Only Martin Kaymer was younger when he triumphed at his home event in 2008.

The dramatic play-off was a worthy conclusion to a successful debut, with 56,700 spectators turning up over the course of the tournament week. Even on a rainy final Sunday, 14,500 golf fans flocked to the Jack Nicklaus-designed Championship Course at GC Gut Lärchenhof.

"It was the right decision to establish the Golf Club Gut Lärchenhof as a second venue for the BMW International Open. We have received overwhelming positive feedback from our partners and fans, the media and, last but not least, the players themselves," said Stefanie Wurst, Marketing Manager BMW Germany.

This year's tournament will feature another Opening Show Event on the Tuesday, which will offer the golf-mad people of the Rhineland region an entertaining taste of what lies ahead during the tournament week. "Last year we again opened the 25th anniversary of the tournament with an Opening Show Event," said Stefanie Wurst. "The fantastic atmosphere at that event continued throughout the entire week. That is what we are hoping for this year too."

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The Public Area concept will be fine-tuned this year, with a new entry area housing a beer garden with scoreboard, stage and video wall, as well as a BMW i Drive demonstration area. A new solution has also been found to the logistical challenges when arriving at the course, and to the car park situation. Stefanie Wurst: “This year, additional parking places will be available at all times. A shuttle bus service will take guests to and from the course. This will provide noticeable relief – even in the case of inclement weather.”

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2014 BMW International Open: the high-flyer, “Mozart”, “good old friends” and local favourites.

A plethora of world-class players assemble at Gut Lärchenhof.

Cologne. The complete line-up for the BMW International Open (24th to 29th June, Pulheim near Cologne) has not yet been confirmed, but one thing is already certain: the “tournament with the feel-good factor” will once again feature world-class players, fascinating characters, and an interesting mix of experienced pros and the game’s next crop of rising stars. The scheduling of the tournament makes for even more excitement: the last week of June is just a few weeks from the deadline for Ryder Cup qualification – and many pros will be pushing particularly hard during this period in a final endeavour to make it onto their respective teams for the iconic competition between the USA and Europe. This can only be to the benefit of the crowds at Germany’s only European Tour event.

Top favourite & Player of the Year 2013:

Golf fans can look forward to watching last season’s high-flyer: **Henrik Stenson** cleaned up on the major tours on both sides of the Atlantic. The 2006 BMW International Open winner not only triumphed in the Race to Dubai, but also won the PGA TOUR’s FedExCup – something none of his peers had achieved before. The 37-year-old Swede was subsequently named “European Tour Golfer of the Year”. His rivals at the BMW International Open will be hoping that Stenson is not on the kind of run he enjoyed in the autumn of 2013, when the opposition were left playing for second place.

“I was really frustrated not to have won a BMW tournament in 2013,” says Stenson with a twinkle in his eye. “Still, I have another opportunity this year. The course at Gut Lärchenhof suits me and the atmosphere at this event is unique. I finished just two shots behind the eventual winner when the tournament made its debut in Cologne two years ago. I have always had a special relationship with this event since I won the BMW International Open in 2006. It would be no understatement to say I go into the tournament determined to do well.”

The rising star:

France’s **Victor Dubuisson** exploded onto the golf scene at this year’s WGC Accenture Match Play Championship in Arizona. “Mozart”, to use the nickname given to him by his coach in reference to his elegant swing, shocked many by progressing to the final, in which he produced some truly magical shots – including twice escaping from extremely awkward lies among the undergrowth and cacti in the deciding play-off. His efforts even reminded some of those present of a young Severiano Ballesteros. Dubuisson’s highest accolade for the refreshingly creative golf he displayed at that tournament came from ex-champion Gary Player via

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Twitter. The 78-year-old South African stated that he had not seen anything like it for many years. High praise indeed, and a good reason to check out the young Frenchman at first hand at Gut Lärchenhof.

The Spaniards & “good old friends”:

Spain's **Sergio García** was involved in one of the most dramatic final rounds in BMW International Open history. Back in 2011 he went head to head with fellow Spaniard Pablo Larrazábal in the longest play-off in the history of the tournament. Although García eventually missed out on the fifth extra hole, this second place proved the catalyst to a return to form after a lengthy barren spell. Victories on the European Tour and the PGA TOUR were to follow, and victory at the Commercial Bank Qatar Masters in January of this year saw García return to the top ten in the world rankings. When you bear in mind the kind of form García is capable of producing in Ryder Cup years, then much can be expected of the popular Spaniard this year.

The current European Tour season had barely begun when one of its greatest players set about making history. In December 2013, Spain's **Miguel Ángel Jiménez** won the Hong Kong Open for the fourth time in his long career. Not only did the win see the irrepressible “Mechanic” improve his own record as the oldest winner in the top echelon of European golf, but it also presented Jiménez with a nice gift just one month ahead of his 50th birthday. Even if he should eventually stop winning at some point, golf fans will always have a soft spot for him. And with good reason at the BMW International Open, which he won back in 2004, and which he loves as much as the tournament loves him.

Thomas Björn is an old acquaintance and two-time winner of the BMW International Open (2000, 2002) – something only American Paul Azinger and the Danish star have ever achieved. It has been a while since Björn has shown the kind of devastating form he currently finds himself in. “The Big Dane” is second in the Race to Dubai and – after recently taking on the role of vice-captain – looks almost certain to regain his place as a player in this year's European Ryder Cup team. Björn has a score to settle with the BMW International Open, after narrowly missing out to Ernie Els last year. He will be doing everything in his power to become the first player ever to win the BMW International Open three times.

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The local favourites:

Maximilian Kieffer enjoyed a successful amateur career and stormed through the lower echelons of the game en route to the European Tour. Now 23, Kieffer made history in his rookie season on the Tour: at the Open de España in April 2013 he was involved in the longest play-off in European Tour history against Raphaël Jacquelin. The young German eventually had to concede defeat to the Frenchman on the ninth extra hole. However, this second place did ensure “Kiwi” secured his Tour card with plenty of the season still to play. As well as retaining his Tour card, his goals for the season obviously include a good result at his ‘home’ BMW International Open – Kieffer lives in Düsseldorf.

Few players will be yearning for the second BMW International Open at Gut Lärchenhof quite as much as **Marcel Siem**. The man from Düsseldorf was a genuine contender in 2012. After a good start to the final round, with three early birdies, his challenge looked to have fallen apart with a triple-bogey on the seventh hole. However, Siem fought back courageously on the back nine. In the end he came up just two shots short of eventual winner Danny Willett. As disappointed as Siem may have been, sixth place was a sign of things to come. Just two weeks later the German won the prestigious Open de France, which he followed with his third European Tour title at the Trophée Hassan II in March of last year. You can rest assured that the determined Siem has his sights set firmly on making this year’s BMW International Open title number four. After all, he has a score to settle ...

Another “boy next door” at the tournament at Gut Lärchenhof is **Martin Kaymer**. The winner of the 2008 BMW International Open grew up in Mettmann, played for GC Hubbelrath in Düsseldorf during his amateur years, and hones his skills with coach Günter Kessler at the Hummelbachaue golf course in Neuss. As such, the Major winner is looking forward to the only European Tour event on home soil. Victory at Gut Lärchenhof would propel Kaymer back up the world rankings – back to where many feel the 2012 Ryder Cup hero and former world number one belongs.

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BMW International Open: “Green energy” both on and off the course.

The BMW i Drive demonstration area is the highlight of the Public Area.

Cologne. Maximilian Kieffer took a close look at it during the press conference for the BMW International Open (24th to 29th June 2014, Pulheim near Cologne), which took place on the top deck of an event boat on the River Rhine, and it is also set to play a major role when the tournament tees off at Golf Club Gut Lärchenhof: the BMW i3. Together with the breath-taking BMW i8, the fully-electric car demonstrates sustainability in its most beautiful form.

Even before visitors to the BMW International Open get their first view of the 18th green, they will be able to experience 100 per cent “Green Energy” for themselves. The BMW iDrive demonstration area, located immediately after the entrance in the Public Area, gives golf fans the opportunity to complete a few test laps at the wheel of a BMW i3. This fully-electric, zero-emission car sees BMW implement its comprehensive concept for sustainable and forward-looking mobility. The visionary BMW i3 not only impresses through its sustainability, but also its rapid acceleration and agility. The impressive turning circle of less than ten metres can be perfectly demonstrated on the BMW i Drive demonstration area.

While the driver enjoys the spaciousness and lounge feeling of the interior, which is made of sustainable materials, they also become acquainted with a completely novel driving sensation thanks to the “one-pedal feeling”. The BMW i3 can come to a complete stop simply by lifting the accelerator pedal – thanks to the innovative BMW eDrive drive train.

Anyone wishing to admire the BMW i3 or the BMW i8 – also on display in the Public Area – for a little longer can do so from the adjacent beer garden. From here you can also enjoy the on-stage programme or keep up to date with all the action from the tournament in real-time on the scoreboard and video wall. It is also a good starting point for a relaxing wander around the Public Area, which once again features exhibitors and shops from the world of golf and BMW driving pleasure, as well as culinary highlights.

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BMW International Open: Tournament Information 2014. Dates and admission prices.

24 th June 2014	Opening Show Event with stars of the tournament (GC Gut Lärchenhof, late afternoon)
25th June 2014	PRO-AM Experience (selected top pros are each joined by three amateurs for an 18-hole round)
26th to 29th June 2014	26th BMW International Open (4 rounds, cut after 2nd round, presentation ceremony on Sunday 29th June 2014 after final putt, directly on the 18th green) Prize money: 2 million Euros

Admission prices:

24th to 27th June 2014	Free admission
28th or 29th June 2013	Day ticket: 30 Euros (incl. VAT) pre-event, 35 Euros on the gate
28th and 29th June 2013	Season ticket: 45 Euros (incl. VAT) pre-event, 50 Euros on the gate

BMW Card holders receive a 50% discount on **day tickets** (max. 2 items).

A 50% reduction on day tickets purchased on the gate is also available for young persons aged 16 and above, school pupils, students and people with disabilities, upon presentation of the appropriate verification. Admission is free for children and young persons aged 15 and under.

The BMW Event Hotline is available for bookings and information on the tournament.

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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 2013, the BMW Group sold around 1.963 million cars and 115,215 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.