

BMW International Open 2014



Press Information
25th March 2014

BMW International Open: Full speed ahead, back to the Rhineland – Symbolic “Tee Off” in front of the Rheinkniebrücke.

World-class golf returns to Gut Lärchenhof following the success of Germany's only European Tour event in 2012.

Cologne. “Rhine golf reloaded”: following the tournament's successful debut in the Rhineland region in 2012, Golf Club Gut Lärchenhof (Pulheim, near Cologne) will host the BMW International Open for the second time from 24th to 29th June 2014. The iconic tournament celebrated its 25th anniversary in Munich last year, and the only European Tour event on German soil returns to the Rhineland this season. Golf fans can look forward to the best player in the world last season, Henrik Stenson (SWE). Other top stars and local favourites who have already confirmed they will be teeing off in Cologne were announced at today's press conference, which took place on board the “Pure-Liner” event ship as it made its way from Cologne to Düsseldorf.

“The trip on the Rhine took on a symbolic meaning for us,” said Stefanie Wurst, Marketing Manager BMW Germany. “BMW took the decision three years ago to establish the Rhineland region as a second venue for the BMW International Open, alongside Munich. With this voyage we wanted to link the two largest cities on the Rhine, Düsseldorf and Cologne. It is particularly nice for us that the Rhineland is such a golf-loving region – as was seen by the success of the tournament's debut here in 2012. We want to follow on from that success, whilst at the same time raising the bar even higher. We are looking forward to welcoming a lot of visitors, who in turn can look forward to world-class golf and a dynamic BMW experience.”

The BMW International Open offers all golf fans – and those just getting into the sport – a perfect opportunity to watch the game's top international pros plying their trade in a unique atmosphere. Tournament Director Marco Kaussler was pleased to confirm that admission is once again free from Tuesday to Friday this year. Furthermore, an Opening Show Event, at which the star players can showcase both their skill and fun sides, is scheduled for late on Tuesday afternoon. A number of the biggest names in the tournament will take to the course for a nine-hole contest, concluding with an extraordinary trick shot competition on the 18th.

“It has not yet been confirmed who exactly will put their ability and showmanship on display on the Tuesday. However, I am able to announce a number of players who have already accepted the invitation to play at the tournament, and whose names will set golf fans' pulses racing,” said Kaussler. “Henrik Stenson, the current number three in the world, already knows how it feels to win the BMW International Open.

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After his victories in the Race to Dubai and the PGA TOUR's FedExCup in 2013 – the first time anyone has won both competitions in one season – he arrives at Golf Club Gut Lärchenhof as last season's high-flyer and has his sights set firmly upon a BMW double. We are also looking forward to welcoming world-class Spaniards Sergio García and Miguel Ángel Jiménez, who have enjoyed close links with our tournaments for many years, as well as one of the most exciting pros to emerge this season: Victor Dubuisson. Anyone who watched the final of the World Match Play Championship knows what they can expect from the Frenchman. Thomas Björn from Denmark is in top form at the moment, and will be striving to become the first player ever to complete a hat-trick of titles at this tournament. And the three local favourites will also be in action, of course. The three men from Düsseldorf - BMW Golfsport Ambassador Maximilian Kieffer, Major winner Martin Kaymer and Marcel Siem, who narrowly missed out on victory two years ago, are already looking forward to playing in front of their home fans."

The tournament will be played out on the only championship course in Germany designed by the great Jack Nicklaus. Josef Spyth, Managing Director of Golf Club Gut Lärchenhof, said: "Our Stadium Course is unique in this country, and will be in top condition in June. The greenkeepers are working seven days a week to ensure this. It is a shame that we were somewhat unfortunate with the weather two years ago, particularly on the final day, but that is golf. Gut Lärchenhof showcased itself as an outstanding host and, together with BMW, we are hugely motivated to make this year even better. We are very much looking forward to welcoming the players, visitors, sponsors, exhibitors and media representatives to our site for the 26th BMW International Open."

Maximilian Kieffer, who will turn 24 on the Wednesday of the tournament, is set to compete at his home event for the first time. The pro from Bergisch-Gladbach, who now lives in Düsseldorf, is in his second season on the European Tour. "I am delighted to be able to play at the BMW International Open in my home region for the first time as a pro," said Kieffer. "I put pressure on myself to perform well at every tournament, but that pressure is obviously even greater at the only tournament on German soil, simply because it is so important to me. With the fans behind me, I am sure I can find a few extra per cent out on the course."

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Kieffer warmed up for this year's BMW International Open immediately after the press conference, when he stepped onto the top deck of the "Pure-Liner" and launched a number of balls over a BMW i3 in the "Nearest-the-Pin Challenge". Despite the unusual situation, and without being distracted by the impressive backdrop of Düsseldorf's Rheinkniebrücke bridge and skyline, "Kiwi" struck ball after ball to within metres of the flag. A promising start to the BMW International Open for Kieffer. And on that note: cast off and full speed ahead.

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