

DESERT SWING GUIDE





ABU DHABI SHOWCASE TAKES OFF

With its fabulous Falcon clubhouse and trophy, and outstanding National course, Abu Dhabi Golf Club is a professional's paradise

The Abu Dhabi HSBC Golf Championship has become one of the biggest events on The European Tour. Chris DiMarco won the inaugural Championship with Paul Casey and Martin Kaymer claiming the next 5 Championships – Paul in 2007 and 2009 and Martin in 2008, 2010 and 2011. England's Robert Rock was the winner in 2012, beating off stiff competition from the tournament's strongest ever assembled field including three Major winners, Charl Schwartzel, Rory McIlroy, Darren Clarke and four world number ones, Luke Donald, Martin Kaymer, Lee Westwood and making his Abu Dhabi debut, Tiger Woods. Tour legends such as Gary Player have even joined the Abu Dhabi field in the past, further underlining the appeal of the Championship.

It all started just six years ago under the umbrella of the Tourism Culture Authority Abu Dhabi (formerly the Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority) who built the event into the four-day showpiece it is today. Last year, the Championship drew more than 80,000 spectators and there is expected to be even greater interest in 2013.

Adding to its growth and success has been the partnership with HSBC.

The event's prize fund is now US\$2.7 million - the richest purse in the region. And it's all hosted by **Peter Harradine** designed Abu Dhabi Golf Club, on



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the stunning National course. The 27-hole layout, managed by Troon Golf, features pockets of palms, ornamental trees and shrubs, as well as seven spectacular saltwater lakes. The par-72, 7,600-yard Championship course provides a tough challenge, with 18 holes of lush fairways, strategically placed bunkers and generous greens.

The world's top two players, Rory McIlroy and Tiger Woods, will head an all-star cast of the biggest names in golf at the eighth Abu Dhabi HSBC Golf Championship, running January 17-20.

After dazzling local galleries when

paired over the opening 54 holes of last year's tournament, McIlroy, a two-time Major winner and the current world number one, and Woods, widely-recognised as the most high-profile player in the sport's history and a 14-time Major winner, will head the battle for Abu Dhabi's prestigious falcon trophy.

"Confirming Rory and Tiger, the world's top two players and a duo with well-documented respect and admiration for each other's talents, represents a significant coup and demonstrates how far the Championship has come in its

relatively short history," said Faisal Al Sheikh, Event Manager, Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority (TCA Abu Dhabi), the Championship organiser.

"Rory and Tiger are true giants of the game and represent only our opening salvo - we are actively working to bring another world-class field to Abu Dhabi and further player announcements will be made in coming weeks."

A member of both the European PGA and PGA Tours, Northern Ireland's McIlroy shot to the summit of the sport's rankings earlier this