



THE VENUE

■ The layout of Doha Golf Club hasn't seen any major changes over the years. The greens were re-laid ahead of the 2014 event but the tournament still attracts a stellar field and boasts a past-winners list peppered with Major Champions and Ryder Cup legends. Due to the wide-open nature of the property it plays like a links course which puts a premium on ball-flight and distance control. The wind is an almost constant factor which calls for knock-down approaches and sawn-off finishes. Indeed, the wind blew so hard back in 2012 that it caused delays and the tournament had to be curtailed to 54 holes. The grain in the greens is



stronger than most venues on the European Tour which can cause problems for players less familiar to the conditions, so the course is a tough test from start to finish. Huge lakes have been created, which double as both hazards and aesthetic features while 65 cacti were imported from Arizona to place emphasis on the rugged surroundings which frame the fairways and greens. Before the renowned architect **Peter Harradine's** design became a reality the site was barren desert but many of the striking limestone rock formations remain and tie the course to the pale desert which stretches out into the horizon.



TOURNAMENT PREVIEW

COMMERCIAL BANK QATAR MASERS

THE Commercial Bank Qatar Masters has long been a favourite stop among the European Tour's elite players for a number of reasons and this year is no exception as a plethora of Ryder Cup stars, past and present, will tee it up at Doha in a quest for the famed Mother of Pearl trophy.

Victory in Qatar has proved a huge stepping stone on the journey towards Major glory for many of the game's best players. Paul Lawrie, Adam Scott, Sergio Garcia and Henrik Stenson were all winners in Qatar before going on to sample Major success – with Lawrie winning The Open the same year he won his first Qatar Masters title in 1999.

South African legends Ernie Els and Retief Goosen were both

multiple Major champions before they etched their names onto the winners' trophy in Doha and the roll of honour is a healthy combination of veterans and young up-and-coming stars.

Between 2010-2012 the winners were Robert Karlsson, Thomas Björn and Lawrie, a trio that has six Ryder Cup appearances and 34 European Tour wins between them.

Following those successes Chris Wood earned his first European Tour title with a superb eagle at the final hole in 2013 and the last two winners in Qatar have been promising youngsters Jeunghun Wang and Eddie Pepperell.

England's Pepperell wrapped up his first European Tour title in

Doha, holding off Oliver Fisher to win by one. Fisher had a 10-foot birdie putt to force a play-off but it stayed high, allowing Pepperell to tap in for victory.

Fisher went on to shoot the first ever 59 on the European Tour later in the season in Portugal while Pepperell clinched his second title on home soil at the British Masters in October.



AMATEUR AND PROFESSIONAL QUALIFIER

This year's Qatar Open, which is played over three days at Doha Golf Club from February 14-16, will serve as a qualifying event for the Qatar Masters, offering a rare chance to tee it up with the stars of the European Tour. A professional competition will run alongside the amateur event with three places in the Qatar Masters field up for grabs for the pros and one for the overall best amateur.

MAJOR GLORIES GALORE

Qatar Masters past winners reads like a Who's Who of golf



Sergio Garcia

Henrik Stenson

Ernie Els

Adam Scott

Paul Lawrie