**Malaysia set to capitalise on top golf events in 2014**

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Page 1 of 3

A golden year of golf beckons for Malaysia in 2014, with the inaugural EurAsia Cup in March heralding a host of key events that will bring many of the world’s top men and women golfers to the destination’s fairways.

With 2014 being designated Visit Malaysia Year, many more visitors are likely to be attracted. The Malaysia Golf Tourism Association (MGTA) is gearing up for the big year ahead and the new biennial, Ryder Cup-style EurAsia Cup, presented by DRB-HICOM – co-sanctioned by the European and Asian tours and held over three days at Kuala Lumpur’s Glenmarie Golf and Country Club from March 27-29 – is expected to peak interest in Malaysia as one of Asia’ strongest golf destinations.

It will be followed by top-flight tournaments including the Maybank Malaysian Open (co-sanctioned by the Asian Tour and European Tour) in April, the Sime Darby LPGA Malaysia (part of the LPGA Tour) in October and the CIMB Classic (co-sanctioned by the Asian Tour and the PGA TOUR and the PGA TOUR's first official FedExCup event in Asia), details of which have yet to be confirmed for 2014.

Chairman of MGTA, Eu Shen Ng, said: “This is a very big year for Malaysia. Visit Malaysia Year 2014 is here and Malaysia’s golfing fraternity is excited to offer the best in Asia to the world. We have added another top notch event, in the EurAsia Cup, presented by DRB-HICOM, and we are honoured to have the first Els Club in Asia being built in Datai, Langkawi, which will open this year.

“There are more than 200 golf courses across Malaysia, and the MGTA member courses and golf resorts in Malaysia’s highlands, coast, jungle and cities are looking forward to welcoming even more golfers from around the world this year. The quality of golf in our cities where all of the big tournaments are taking place is second to none, and we are seeing more and more avid golfers combine a few days of golf in Kuala Lumpur, for example, with a completely different golf experience in Langkawi, in Sabah or up-country in the highlands.”

The MGTA works closely with the global golf tourism industry organisation, IAGTO, to develop golf tourism to the country.

Page 2 of 3

IAGTO chief executive Peter Walton said: “Three years since we hosted our inaugural Asia Golf Tourism Convention (AGTC) at the Mines Golf Resort in Kuala Lumpur, we now have 157 golf tour operators in 41 countries selling Malaysia as a golf destination, which is an increase of over 50%. KL is a really cosmopolitan city, which is one of the main reasons why it has become such a popular part of the professional circuit, with both the men’s and women’s tournaments.”

The EurAsia Cup, presented by DRB-HICOM will pitch Europe against Asia. Playing captain Miguel Angel Jimenez heads a 10-man Europe team that will also comprise fellow Spaniard Gonzalo Fernandez-Castano, Britons Graeme McDowell and Jamie Donaldson and Frenchman Victor Dubuisson, who all qualified as the leading four available players in the European Tour’s 2013 Race to Dubai rankings, with a further four players from the world rankings plus a captain’s pick.

The Asian team will be captained by Thailand’s three-time order of merit winner, Thongchai Jaidee, who will also be playing, along with the leading four players from the Asian Tour order of merit, the top three Asian players in the world rankings and two captain’s picks.

The Maybank Malaysian Open, first staged in 1962 as the Malaysian Open, returns to the Kuala Lumpur Golf & Country Club from April 17-20, with a purse of US$2.75 million. In the half century since international tournaments began in Malaysia, its courses have been graced by such venerable golfing stars as Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, Gary Player, Seve Ballesteros, Vijay Singh, Lee Westwood, John Daly, Tiger Woods, Rory McIlroy and Padraig Harrington.

The Sime Darby LPGA Malaysia takes place from October 9-12, also at the KLGCC. Won in 2013 by rising US star Lexi Thompson from China’s Shangshan Feng and Norway’s Suzann Petterson, it has a purse of US$2 million and saw a host of top women golfers participate in 2013, among them world number one Yani Tseng as well as Michelle Wie, Cristie Kerr, Inbee Park, Sandra Gal, Beatriz Recari, Ai Miyazato, Stacy Lewis and Charley Hull.

The CIMB Classic, which was also played in October 2013 at the KLGCC for a purse of US$7 million, drew megastars from the men’s game including Phil Mickelson, Ernie Els, Rickie Fowler, Stewart Cink, Keegan Bradley, KJ Choi, Bubba Watson and Sergio Garcia.

Page 3 of 3

Other key golf tournaments set to be staged in Malaysia during 2014 include the Iskandar Johor Open and the Selangor Masters, both of which are part of the Asian Tour. Dates and details for both events have yet to be confirmed. Spain’s Sergio Garcia emerged victorious from Jonathan Moore of the USA and Thongchai Jaidee when the event was last staged in December 2012, at the Horizon Hills Golf Club in Johor. It had a purse of US$2 million.

**INFORMATION FOR THE EDITOR**

*The Malaysia Golf Tourism Association (MGTA) is a non-profit making membership organisation whose goal is to create greater international awareness of Malaysia's many exceptional yet relatively undiscovered golf destinations. From the mountains to the beach and from the cities to the rainforests, MGTA member golf courses, golf resorts, hotels and tour operators work together to deliver the ultimate golf experience for every visiting golf traveller.*

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For Further Information:

[www.golftourism](http://www.iagto.com/AGTC)malaysia.org

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