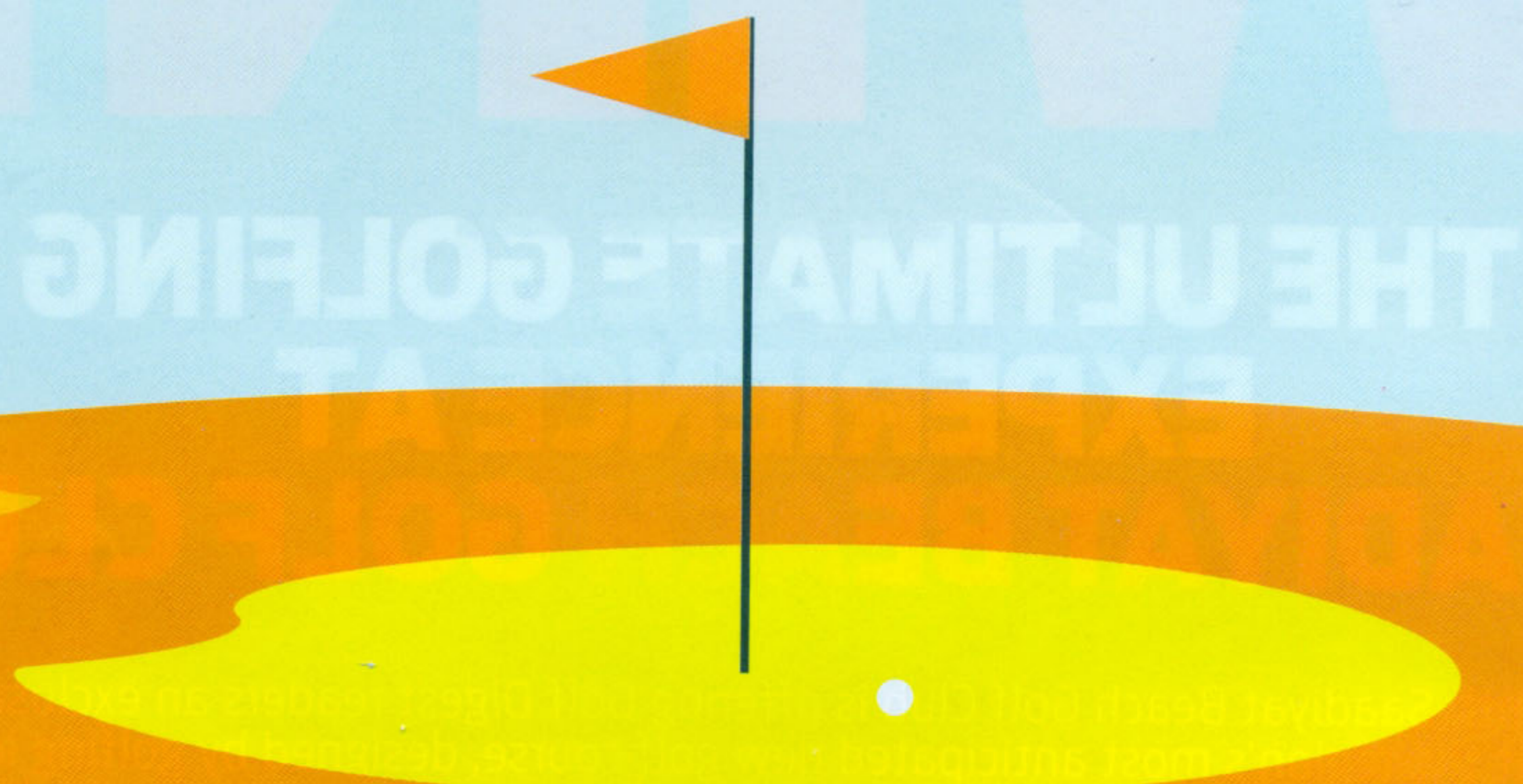


DESERT SWING 2010



JUST TWO MONTHS AFTER LEE WESTWOOD WAS CROWNED THE INAUGURAL WINNER OF THE RACE TO DUBAI, THE EUROPEAN TOUR RETURNS TO THE MIDDLE EAST FOR ANOTHER ALL-STAR INSTALLMENT OF THE DESERT SWING.

BY ROBBIE GREENFIELD

2010 PREVIEW

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NO TIGER, BUT ALL EYES WILL BE ON RORY MCILROY'S DEFENSE

JANUARY 21-24

ABU DHABI GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP

Winners of the European Tour season's first truly high profile event have traditionally gone on to enjoy great years, as evidenced by Paul Casey's rise to world No.3 in 2009, and Martin Kaymer's emergence as one of the brightest young talents in golf the year before. It's no secret that the players love beginning their tour campaigns in Abu Dhabi. Most would agree that the Emirates Palace is the best piece of off-course hospitality they experience all year, while the Abu Dhabi Golf Club's National Course has grown to become a popular and respected layout.

"The course provides a great opportunity to shake off the winter-training cobwebs and if you can play well there, you put yourself in great shape for the rest of the season," says defending champ and the event's only two-time winner, Paul Casey. This year's Ryder Cup captain, Colin Montgomerie adds: "The National is a very good course with a lot of dramatic holes, plenty of chances to pick up shots but always the danger of ruining your scorecard."

If plans go ahead to move the championship to Gary Player's new Saadiyat Beach Golf Club in



2011, Abu Dhabi Golf Club will sign off with easily its strongest field to date. In part this is down to the superb form of the inaugural Race to Dubai's two main protagonists, Lee Westwood (world No.4) and Rory McIlroy (nine), but Geoff Ogilvy (14) and Camilo Villegas (23) will add international star power when they make their debuts in the UAE capital. Joining this illustrious quartet will be Paul Casey (7), 2008 winner Martin Kaymer (13), twice runner-up Henrik Stenson (8) and Sergio Garcia (11), who will be looking to rebound after a poor 2009.

EVENT DETAILS

Off the course, event organisers Abu Dhabi Tourist Authority have upgraded the spectator village and improved the event's entertainment offerings. **Ticket** information is available online at abudhabigolfchampionship.com. Daily passes cost AED125 per day, with a four-day pass available for AED400. UGA members receive a discount.

PLAYERS TO WATCH

PAUL CASEY

AGE 32
WORLD RANKING: 7
'09 TOURNAMENT WINS: 3

Enjoyed a career season that peaked with his first win on the PGA Tour and victory in the PGA Championship at Wentworth. Struggled with injury during the latter half of the season, but will be looking for a hat-trick of Abu Dhabi titles.



GEOFF OGILVY

AGE 32
WORLD RANKING: 14
'09 TOURNAMENT WINS: 2

Began last season as the hottest player in world golf, picking up wins in Hawaii and at the WGC Accenture Match Play. The Australian's form tailed off mid-season, but he ended the year strongly, finishing tied for fourth at the Dubai World Championship.



LEE WESTWOOD

AGE 36
WORLD RANKING: 4
'09 TOURNAMENT WINS: 2

Won his second European Tour order of merit with a career-best performance in the Dubai World Championship. In the form of his life, the Englishman is targeting a major victory in 2010, and will be looking to kick start his season on the right note in Abu Dhabi.



MARTIN KAYMER

AGE 25
WORLD RANKING: 13
'09 TOURNAMENT WINS: 2

Back to back wins last summer took Kaymer to the top of the Race to Dubai, but a freak karting injury sidelined him for two months and cost the German vital momentum. He loves the National course, having won in '08 and finished runner-up last year.





JANUARY 28 - 31

COMMERCIAL BANK QATAR MASTERS

Qatar has built a reputation of attracting popular American players to the second leg of the Desert Swing, and the tournament has once again delivered with the addition of the evergreen Kenny Perry, the 49-year-old Kentuckian who is well established as a serial winner on the PGA Tour. While Perry's inspired performance in the 2008 Ryder Cup matches saw his profile rise outside the US, it was his brave attempt to become the oldest Masters winner in history that won him more admirers.

In truth, Perry should be arriving in Doha as the Masters champion, but consecutive dropped shots on the final two holes in regulation eventually saw him lose out to Angel Cabrera in a play-off. Handling the loss with typical dignity, Perry demonstrated why he has become one of the most popular players on the US circuit.

Golf fans in Doha will also be able to see just what makes Kenny Perry such a prolific winner (14 PGA Tour victories, half of which came after he turned 45) but he isn't the only big name to debut in the event. Columbian Camilo Villegas will be looking to



begin the year with a return to the kind of form that saw him win both the PGA's Tour Championship and the BMW Championship in 2008.

Peter Harradine's formidable course at Doha Golf Club is a proven haven for power hitters, with Spain's freakishly long Alvaro Quiros defending his title, and past winners including big guns Henrik Stenson, Adam Scott and Ernie Els. Arguably the toughest test of the three courses, expect another bomber to add his name to the trophy this year.

EVENT DETAILS

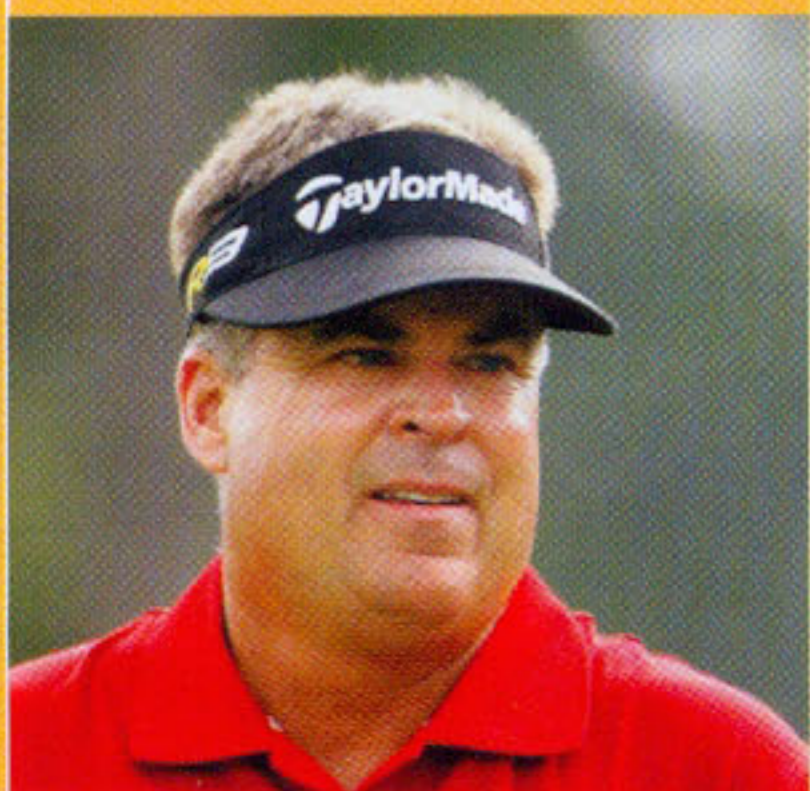
For more information on the event, visit qatar-masters.com. Entrance is free of charge.

PLAYERS TO WATCH

KENNY PERRY

AGE 49
WORLD RANKING: 10
'09 TOURNAMENT WINS: 2

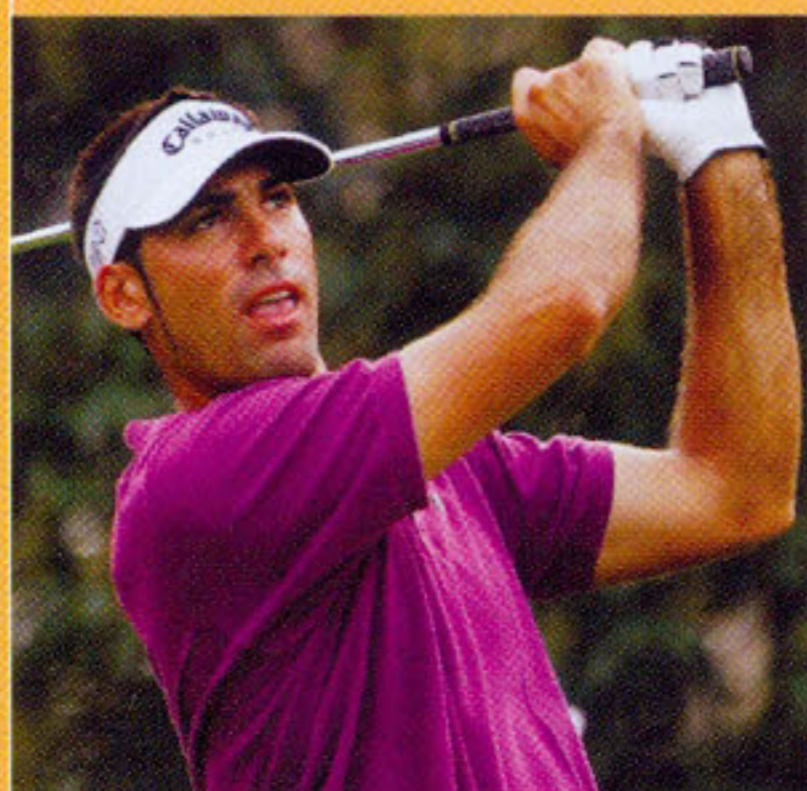
Even though he'll soon be eligible to play on the Champions Tour, Perry looks to have plenty of wins still left in him. His economical swing and solid all-round game has seen him triumph five times on the PGA Tour in the past two seasons.



ALVARO QUIROS

AGE 27
WORLD RANKING: 50
'09 TOURNAMENT WINS: 1

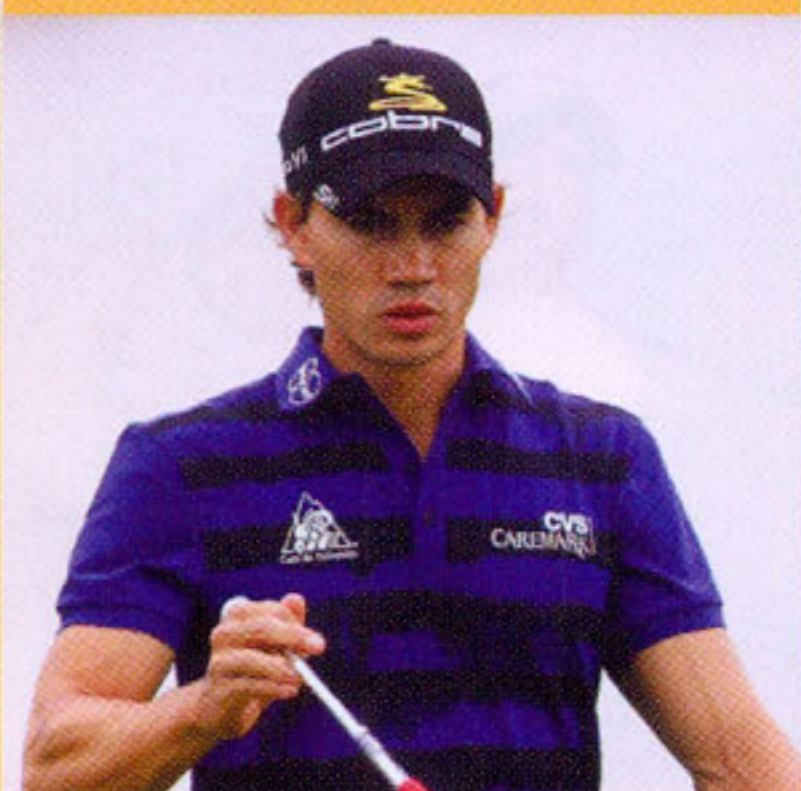
The Spaniard who won in style last year might be the longest hitter in professional golf. His ferocious swing is a sight to behold. But there is more to Quiros than just power, as he proved here last year with some deft touches around the greens.



CAMILO VILLEGAS

AGE 28
WORLD RANKING: 23
'09 TOURNAMENT WINS: 0

After coming of age in the US at the end of the 2008 season with two huge wins in the FedEx Cup playoffs, Villegas has increased his commitment to the European Tour. He didn't manage to hit such heights last year, but remained consistent.



SERGIO GARCIA

AGE 30
WORLD RANKING: 11
'09 TOURNAMENT WINS: 0

Having climbed to a career best world ranking of two at the end of 2008, the Spanish star's form suffered a dip last season, but he is confident of regaining it. "The Middle East is always somewhere I enjoy playing," said Garcia.

