



The clubhouse at Abu Dhabi Golf Club is in the shape of a falcon

UNDER THE FALCON'S MIGHTY WINGS

The unique, Falcon-shaped clubhouse of the Abu Dhabi Golf Club is already recognised as one of the most distinctive clubhouses in the world. What happens in and around that is pure class too.

The 27-hole championship course is home to the European Tour's Abu Dhabi HSBC Golf Championship. The golf course is maintained in mint condition by Troon Golf, who manage the whole facility. The 18-hole National course, designed by Peter Harradine, is a tough but fair challenge – and one that seems to be evolving each year as the club incorporates the feedback from the Tour players and make it more challenging.

The golf course and the clubhouse was officially inaugurated in October 2000.

Featured in Golf World's Top 100 Golf Courses in 2010, the course weaves through undulating terrain that features pockets of palms, ornamental trees and shrubs, as well as seven man-made saltwater lakes. The par-72 course measures 7,600 yards from the championship tees.

There are multiple tees, with the Men's tee measuring 6,723 yards, the Social tee stretching 6,249 yards and the Ladies tee making it a 5,780 yard course.

The greens are Bermuda Tifdwarf, which are touching 12 on the stimpmeter for the championship, while the fairways have paspalum.

Among the changes made to the



Tiger Woods (l), Rory McIlroy (c) and Lee Westwood are playing this week.

course this year are: New back tee on hole 18, adding ten yards and changing the angle of the tee shot; New fairway bunkers on Hole 2 (lay-up area) and 18 (left and right of landing zone); and greens enlarged on the fourth (front), sixth (back right), eighth (front left) and 15th (back left).

The new practice facilities at the club were opened a couple of years back, and it now offers the very best of its kind in the region. The new

facility boasts a fairway practice bunker, 6 target greens and a short game area to hone your skills from inside 75 yards.

Of course, if you are there this week to watch the Championship, there are several added attractions apart from the stunning field they have managed to assemble.

You've got to experience the Village, which has several exciting things to offer, including the HSBC interactive sporting zone.



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VENUE: Abu Dhabi Golf Club

CAPACITY: It's a golf course set over 162 hectares of land. You can have any number of people in there, but for this week's Abu Dhabi HSBC Golf Championship, which has the top four ranked players in the world as well as Tiger Woods, more than 50,000 people are expected to walk through the gates.

FACILITIES: An 18-hole championship-size golf course; a nine-hole executive course; multi-bay driving range; academy with well-trained staff; a well-stocked pro shop; separate locker rooms for ladies and gents; a fully-equipped gymnasium; restaurants (The Grille, Café 28 and The Lounge) and bar; swimming pool; two glass-back squash courts and an attached five-star hotel, The Westin.

PARKING: Plenty of parking available during the Championship.

WHAT'S GOOD: The Peter Harradine-designed golf course, although a straightforward Parkland course, has been refined each year based on the feedback from the Tour players.

Sport360 VERDICT: A great place to go and watch the Championship. The Village area is a massive attraction for visitors of all ages. The walk following the stars in this glorious weather is an added bonus. Rating out of five: ★★★★★

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NEXT WEEK'S VENUE REVIEW: FERRARI WORLD, ABU DHABI