

MONTGOMERIE COURSE - New Venue for European Tour

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The Montgomerie Course at The Royal Golf Club, Bahrain, becomes the latest new frontier for the European Tour, with the hosting of the inaugural Volvo Golf Champions from January 27th – 30th. The limited field, €1,700,000 event is the debut for both course and country on the international stage, with Bahrain becoming a welcome fourth partner on the lucrative desert swing.

Colin Montgomerie designed both the dramatic, championship 18-hole course and the stunning, Par 3 'Wee Monty' course at The Royal Golf Club, in association with European Golf Design (<http://www.egd.com>) Both courses have been designed and constructed to provide an authentic links golf experience in the desert, with fast running fairways and open approaches to firm greens to promote the ground game.

Built around the footprint of the old Riffa Golf Club and in association with the brand new, prestigious Riffa Views residential development, the Montgomerie Course embraces the desert environment like no other in the Gulf region. Here, the desert wastes and dramatic wadi landforms entwine with and surround the pristine, paspalum fairways, giving the course a rugged, windswept dunescape. The greens are the focal point. Often dramatically large they are notable for their intricate, abundant contouring. The ragged bunker styling gives the course the natural, eroded character one would expect of an exposed and often windy desert location. The back nine of the Montgomerie Course is floodlit; a first for the European Tour, which may come in handy on Sunday evening in the event of a play off.

Colin first visited Bahrain in 2006 and maintained a close personal overview throughout construction, to ensure that this unique project lived up to its bold concept. "If something is carrying your name, you personally ensure that you give it your full attention. You want it to be something special, not just for yourself but for all golfers who give up their time to play your creation - and, hopefully it leaves them with a long lasting impression."

Robin Hiseman from European Golf Design (<http://www.egd.com>) was the project architect responsible for bringing Monty's vision to life. "Working with Colin was a genuine collaboration" said Hiseman. "He trusts European Golf Design to create courses that respect his design philosophies and which express his character. He gave a great deal of personal time to the creation of this course and that investment has paid dividends with two courses bursting with aesthetic and strategic variety and personality. The tour pro's can't afford to take liberties with Monty's course and if the wind blows hard, as it often does on the island then they will have a real battle on their hands. The opening four holes played into the prevailing wind, is potentially the toughest opening stretch on tour. Equally, there are plenty of birdie opportunities, especially holes 9 through 14. Par is historically a good round at the Montgomerie Course, so it will be fascinating to see the World's best golfers take it on. For sure, they will find that the greens are amongst the most undulating ever seen on tour."

"We always planned on the Montgomerie Course hosting a European Tour event," said Montgomerie. "To have the prestigious Volvo Golf Champions here is a real thrill. It's a brilliant golf course and I look forward to seeing what the World's best can do there. Whether I play poorly or whether I play well, I am going to enjoy the week and I look forward to talking to the other players about the course and seeing what they feel about it. I am delighted with the end result."

Colin Montgomerie currently has several projects under design or construction including The Dutch in Holland, Imperial Springs in China and Akbulak Golf & Country Club in Kazhakstan.

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