

evian masters

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The Evian Masters was the brainchild of father and son industrialists, Antoine and Franck Riboud of the Danone Group, who dreamt of staging a top quality women's tournament at the prestigious Royal Evian golf

course on the banks of Lake Geneva - in 1994 that dream was realised and the first tournament was held. Now celebrating its fifteenth year, The Evian Masters, staged 500 metres above sea level at the Evian Masters Golf Club on the French side of Lake Geneva, has been won by some of the most legendary players in the women's game including two-time winners Laura Davies and Annika Sörenstam, the youngest world golf Hall of Famer Australian Karrie

Webb and, in more recent times, Americans Paula Creamer and the sensational Natalie Gulbis. Its unique position as being an event approved by both the American and European circuits has seen the major players return year after year to play on the famous Evian Royal Resort course. Big names, big prize money and an outstanding golf course all contribute to make this a truly special experience for players, spectators and sponsors alike.

Format

In 2007 the Evian Masters dramatically altered its format - it enlarged the field to 90 players, from 78 in 2006, and introduced a cut after two rounds of stroke play to select the 70 best players to compete over the weekend.

The tournament has a strict selection criterion which guarantees the presence of the international golfing elite. Staged the week before the

British Open to encourage as varied a field as possible, places are initially allocated to previous winners and top-ten finishers of a selection of LPGA Tour events. The remaining places are allocated according to player's position in the Rolex Women's World Golf Rankings. The Rolex Women's World Golf Rankings is the only world rankings system for women's golf sanctioned by the five major women's professional golf Tours: the LPGA; LET; JLPGA; KLPGA; and the ALPG, as well as the LGU. These rankings give the only genuine picture of where a player stands on the international stage and therefore allows the Evian Masters to select the very best players to compete.

The Evian Masters Junior Cup

Uniquely amongst international golf tournaments, the Evian Masters actively encourages the future male and female stars of world golf by staging the Evian Masters Junior Cup, played on the weekend preceding the main event.

Presented by Alstom, the two-day tournament brings together 60 talented amateur golfers under the age of 14 to compete against one another under the optimal conditions of a professional international competition.

This competition is inspired by the powerful values promoted by the Danone Group and the Evian Masters - the pleasure of the game, fair play, respect and enthusiasm.

In 2007 Japan won as a team against the 13 other nations while the gifted Rocío Sanchez from Spain came top of the individual rankings. The 2008 Juniors Cup will feature 15 nations, including the United States, Japan, India, Indonesia and China, all ready to sound out their skills against the top European teams selected.

Venue

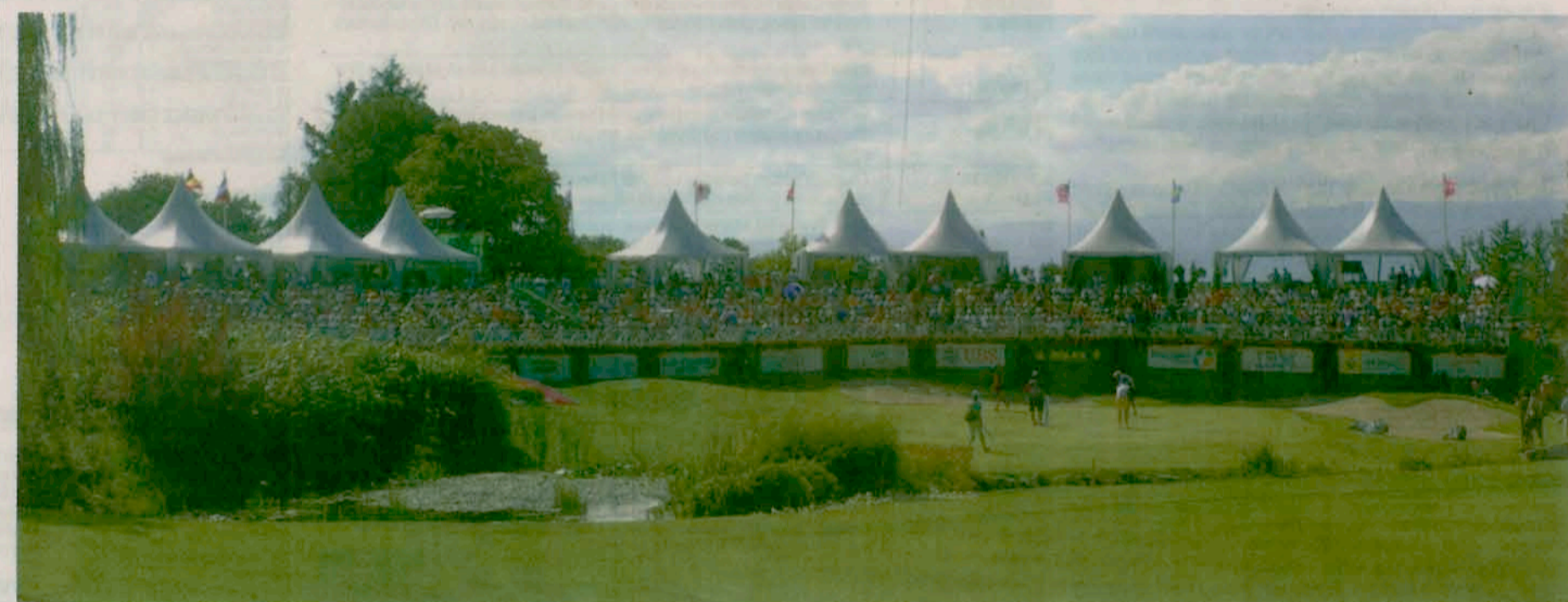
Nestling on the banks of Lake Geneva and surrounded by the French Alps, the Evian Masters Golf Club at the exclusive Evian Royal Resort is one of the oldest and most beautiful golf courses in Europe. Originally created in 1904 by the Evian Mineral Water Company as a 9-hole course, it was extended to 18 holes in 1922.

The course was completely re-landscaped in 1988 and 2000 by renowned American architect Cabell B. Robinson. He created a technical course with 18 highly individual holes featuring stunning water features, large white sand bunkers, rough ground, majestic trees and a continually changing landscape.

Some of the holes really stand out, most notably the 2nd and 18th. Commenting on the 2nd Michelle Wie comments, "A fantastic view over Lake Geneva. But you can encounter serious problems because of the severe changes in altitude."

The 18th, famous for its stunning waterfall, also has its admirers, most notably Annika Sörenstam who said of the hole, "I have some very special memories of this hole; it's a par-5 that doesn't pose a huge challenge, but you are forced to take risks if you want to play it in three."

A par 72, the course is at the centre of the Evian Royal Resort, just 45 km from Geneva. As well as offering two hotels, the Evian Royal Palace, a member of The Leading Hotels of the World and the 4-star Evian Royal Ermitage, it also boasts two spas combining elegance and unique treatments, a Casino and the Evian Masters Training Center.



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CHARITY

The Evian Masters supports women and is associated with research into the causes and prevention of breast cancer through a tie-up with the French branch of the Breast Cancer Research Foundation - "le Cancer du Sein, Parlons-en".

Throughout the tournament the souvenir programme is distributed in a pink backpack along with gifts from all the sponsors. Takings from the backpacks are donated to the "Pink Ribbon" awards, an annual initiative set up by the charity to support clinical research programmes into breast cancer.

As well as "le Cancer du Sein, Parlons-en", the Evian Masters is a proud supporter of the European Leucodystrophies Association (ELA).

The ELA groups together families who mobilise to combat leucodystrophies, orphan genetic diseases that destroy the central nervous system and gradually paralyse all the vital functions.

Throughout the Evian Masters, all money raised by the sale of Evian water at the tournament is donated to the ELA.

Former World Player of the Year and French footballing legend Zinedine Zidane, a sponsor of the charity, will be appearing at the Evian Masters to take part in a charity five-a-side football match featuring some of his former team mates from the 1998 World Cup winning side including Christian Karembeu, Bixente Lizarazu, Youri Djorkaeff and Alain Boghossian. For each goal that is scored during the match a sum will be donated to the ELA.



Ladies' golf? We're huge fans

Their prowess excites us, their talent transports us. Société Générale, Presenting Sponsor of the 2008 Evian Masters is proud to support its female golf team, several times winners on professional circuits under the Société Générale colours.

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Sponsors

Throughout its 15 year history, The Evian Masters has enjoyed the long-term support of some of the world's most prestigious brands. With Evian Royal Resort, Evian and legendary French fashion brand Lacoste were the original sponsors of the event in 1994. Over the years they have been joined by globally recognized partners including IBM, Renault, Air France, Rolex and, of course, Société Générale.

In 2008 global banking giant, Société Générale, will be the Tournament's Presenting Sponsor. Building on its already substantial investment in golf, the bank is looking forward to sharing the pleasure and excitement of the event. As Thierry Dehesdin explains "We will be able to communicate our role as the presenting sponsor by rewarding the best player each day and in awarding the highly-prized trophy to the winner of the hole-in-one at the 14th hole".

What links all these prestige brands is a desire to be associated with the strong values of the Evian Masters.

Celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2008, Lacoste is involved with some of the world's most high profile events women golfers, but the Evian Masters retains a special place in its sponsorship portfolio.

As Michel Lacoste, Chairman of the Board, Lacoste S.A. says, "I am very much struck by the magnitude this tournament has acquired since its creation. The Evian Masters has become an event of the American and European circuits that is impossible to circumvent and stands today at the level of the majors and the Solheim Cup. Lacoste is proud to be a partner of such an event."

From a dream 15 years ago to what is now a major international tournament broadcast to 114 countries across the globe, the Evian Masters has achieved a remarkable position in the women's golf calendar.

As Jacques Bungert, Tournament Director says "From the beginning the purpose of the tournament was to provide players with the best possible framework to do what they do best and to give them the best conditions to perform at the top level of their game. Over the last 15 years the organisers have never wavered from these exacting standards and this goal".

This dedication and focus on delivering the best standard is recognized by all connected to the Evian Masters. It is a tournament adored by the players, sponsors and spectators alike for the outstanding beauty of the course and high quality of the competition. World No 1, Lorena Ochoa, sums up the very essence of the Evian Masters when she said, "I love playing here. It's a course where I feel really at home. I have some very happy memories, and several times I've nearly won this tournament, which is the only one of its kind in the world"



The Evian Masters will feature on The Golf Channel in the USA on the following times:
Thursday July 24, 2008 - 6:30P - 8:30P EDT • Friday July 25, 2008 - 8:30P - 9:30P EDT • Saturday July 26, 2008 - 1:00P - 3:30P EDT • Sunday July 27, 2008 - 1:00P - 3:30P EDT

Live Scoring on:

www.evianmasters.com

Advertising feature