



## PRESS RELEASE

### FORMER CHAMPIONS RENEW BATTLE IN VENETIAN MACAU OPEN

#### IN-FORM HEND READY TO DEFEND HIS TITLE

**Macau, 21 October 2014:** The 16<sup>th</sup> edition of the Venetian Macau Open, one of the highlights on the Asian Tour, will tee off on Thursday at the picturesque Macau Golf and Country Club. The tournament boasts a field of former champions, including last year's victor, Scott Hend, fresh from his thrilling Hong Kong Open triumph last week, alongside four-time Major winner, Ernie Els, and the evergreen Spaniard Miguel Angel Jiménez.

The Venetian Macau Open is jointly organised by Macau Sport Development Board of Macau SAR Government (MSDB) and Golf Association of Macau. It is sanctioned by both the Asian Tour and the Golf Association of Macau, and promoted by IMG. The Venetian Macao<sup>®</sup> is the title sponsor of the event for a third successive year. This year's event boasts a total prize fund of US\$900,000, an increase of 12.5% compared to last year.

"We're extremely excited about this year's Venetian Macau Open," commented José Tavares, President of MSDB. "We've got another great field together and it's wonderful to see Miguel here for the first time alongside one of the all-time greats, Ernie Els. Scott Hend is obviously in great form and it would be terrific to see him defend his title. Liang Wen-chong, Thongchai Jaidee, the three-time Asian Tour Order of Merit winner and Zhang Lian-wei, the last player to successfully defend the Macau Open title, are also playing."

"The tournament continues to grow in popularity and scale, as evidenced by this year's increased prize purse and we're extremely fortunate to have such committed and generous partners lead by the Venetian Macao. We thank them for their magnificent support," concluded Mr Tavares.

"This is the third year that The Venetian Macao is title sponsor of the Macau Open; and this is something that we are very proud of." said Mr. Gunther Hatt, Executive Vice President of Operations of Sands China Ltd., "Hosting the Venetian Macau Open is part of Sands China's entertainment and diversification strategy. When we host a high-profile event like the Venetian Macau Open, Macao benefits from the global media coverage, and this helps raise Macao's profile as a world centre of tourism and leisure."

Hend, who overcame a brave Angelo Que in another dramatic Hong Kong Open play-off to take the coveted title, is riding a wave of confidence as he heads for Macau;

"I couldn't have asked for a better lead up to my Venetian Macau Open title defence," said the burly Australian. "Last year I came to Macau off the back of a win in Taiwan and a solid

performance in Korea. That worked out pretty well for me! The Hong Kong win is my first this season and I'd absolutely love to go back to back with another win in Macau."

Ernie Els, the half-way leader in Hong Kong last week, finished third in his debut Venetian Macau Open in 2013 and is hoping to get the better of Hend this time around.

"Every time Scott and I are in the same field, he seems to win!" commented Els. "Hopefully I can end that streak this week and get the win myself."

"I'm thrilled to be back in Macau. I really enjoyed my week last year," continued Els. " I got an amazing welcome to the city, I played well, the hospitality was first class and I experienced first hand some of the world-class entertainment on offer. Macau is a phenomenal place that has to be seen to be believed!"

Jiménez endured a disappointing defence of his Hong Kong Open crown, having been struck down with a stomach bug on the opening day of the tournament. The ever-popular Spaniard was a vice-captain in Paul McGinley's victorious European Ryder Cup team at Gleneagles in September of this year and despite being a familiar face across the region, 2014 will be his debut appearance at the Venetian Macau Open.

Looking forward to the start of his Macau tournament, Jiménez commented, "I have always enjoyed competing in Asia and played pretty well in the region. The climate, culture and courses seem to suit me. I have heard lots of great comments from other players about the Venetian Macau Open - the beautiful course and the vibrant city. I can't wait to experience it all in person."

China's Zhang Lian-wei, Macau Open champion in 2001 and 2002, is also on the field for this week. Other past champions confirmed to join Hend and Zhang include Jason Knutzon (2004), Kane Webber (2006), David Gleeson (2008), Thaworn Wiratchant (2009), Chan Yih-shin (2011) and Gaganjeet Bhullar (2012).

Since its inauguration in 1998, the tournament has been graced by the presence of some of the best golfers the world has ever seen, including Lee Westwood, Colin Montgomerie, Nick Faldo, Padraig Harrington, Fred Couples, Ian Woosnam and Mark O'Meara.

Sponsors joining The Venetian Macao in support of the tournament include Rolex, Lamborghini, Air Macau, Blue Girl, Bonaqua, Twinwoods Wine, Srixon and Hong Kong Descente, which carries both the Le Coq Sportif Golf Collection and Munsingwear.

For more details on the Venetian Macau Open, please visit [www.thevenetianmacauopen.com](http://www.thevenetianmacauopen.com)

**Ends**

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### **Rights-free Photo**

**Photo 1:** (Left to Right) Liang Wen-chong, Mr. Pun Weng Kun, Vice President, Macau Sport Development Board, Macau SAR, Miguel Angel Jiménez, Mr. Charles Lo, President, Golf Association of Macau, Ernie Els, Mr. Jose Tavares, President, Macau Sport Development Board, Macau SAR, Scott Hend, Mr. Gunther Hatt, Executive Vice President of Operations, Sands China Ltd., Thongchai Jaidee, Mr. Lau Cho Un, Acting Vice President, Macau Sport Development Board, Macau SAR, Zhang Lianwei and Mr. Grant Slack, Senior Vice President, IMG attended the 2014 Venetian Macau Open 'Meet the Players' Press Conference.

**Photo 2:** (Left to Right) Liang Wen-chong, Miguel Angel Jiménez, Ernie Els, Scott Hend, Thongchai Jaidee and Zhang Lianwei will fight for the Champion in the upcoming Venetian Macau Open, taking place from this Thursday to Sunday.

**Photo 3:** (Left to Right) Liang Wen-chong, Thongchai Jaidee, Scott Hend, Ernie Els, Miguel Angel Jiménez and Zhang Lianwei posing after the 2014 Venetian Macau Open Skills Challenge at the Venetian Lagoon.

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### **About Macau Sport Development Board of the Macau Special Administrative Region Government**

Macau Sport Development Board, under the capacity of the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture of the Macau SAR Government, is a public organization of administration autonomy. The organization is responsible for the implementation of sport strategy and policy formulated by the Macau SAR Government. Its objective is to stimulate, encourage, and promote all kind of sports in Macau, also to create an essential condition for sport development.

For the development of competitive sports and 'Sport for all', the Macau Sport Development Board organizes various high level international sport competitions as well as recreational classes and thematic 'Sport for all' activities each year, in an endeavor to promote the international status of Macau, reinforce communication and co-operation with other countries and cites, enhance citizens' quality of life and arouse their interest in sport, so as to accelerate and facilitate the enhancement of the level of sport in Macau.

For more information, please visit [www.sport.gov.mo](http://www.sport.gov.mo).

### **About Golf Association of Macau**

Founded in 2000, the Golf Association of Macau is a non-profit organization, with the mission to promote, support and ensure the quality, traditions and development of the game of golf in Macau.

With the mission to encourage and promote golf in Macau, it provides coaching, training and selection of the Macau teams for participation in international events at all levels, and promotes and runs appropriate international and domestic golfing events in Macau, which helps to represent Macau in the golfing world and be a member of appropriate regional and world governing bodies.

### **About The Venetian<sup>®</sup> Macao-Resort-Hotel**

Opened in 2007, The Venetian<sup>®</sup> Macao-Resort-Hotel is Macao's first integrated resort featuring stunning replicas of the famous canals and architectural icons of Venice, Italy. The Venetian Macao features 3,000 suites, 1.2 million square feet (111,000 square metres) of convention and

meeting facilities as well as a 15,000-seat Cotai Arena designed for world-class sports events and electrifying entertainment. The Venetian Macao is also home to the unique, 1,800-seat luxury Venetian Theatre, hosting the best in international and Chinese entertainment; more than 30 renowned restaurants; TAIVEXMALO Day Hospital & Spa; the incredibly fun QUBE indoor playground and more than 300 retailers at Shoppes at Venetian. Outdoor recreation areas include swimming pools and cabanas and a mini-golf course.

For more information, please visit [www.venetianmacao.com](http://www.venetianmacao.com).

### **About Cotai Strip Resorts Macao – Macao’s Integrated Resort City**

Sands China Ltd. is the leading developer, owner and operator of integrated resorts in Macao. The befittingly named Cotai Strip Resorts Macao, situated on reclaimed land between the islands of Coloane and Taipa, is the one destination that provides a stunning array of experiences at the heart of Cotai. Cotai Strip Resorts Macao has transformed a gaming-centric day-trip market into an integrated resort city and international hub for business and leisure travellers.

Pulsating with life, both night and day, Cotai Strip Resorts Macao features an expansive offering of affordable luxury available nowhere else in Macao, with approximately 9,000 hotel rooms and suites, international superstar live entertainment, duty-free shopping with 600 retailers offering an unparalleled array of name brands, 1.3 million square feet (120,000 square metres) of meeting and exhibition space for Asia’s leading conferences and exhibitions, gaming excitement, transportation offerings and well over 100 dining options, including international restaurants, bars and lounges. Cotai Strip Resorts Macao is a must-see destination providing every guest with an unforgettable experience and unparalleled excitement.

Comprised of The Venetian® Macao-Resort-Hotel; The Plaza™ Macao, featuring the Four Seasons Hotel Macao; and Sands® Cotai Central, featuring the world’s largest Conrad, Sheraton, and Holiday Inn hotels, Cotai Strip Resorts Macao is where Asia’s ultimate destination is all within reach.

Cotai Strip Resorts Macao...Macao Starts Here. For more information, please visit <http://en.cotaistrip.com>.

### **About the Asian Tour**

As the official sanctioning body for professional golf in Asia, the Asian Tour leads the development of golf across the region, enhancing the careers of its members while maintaining a commitment to the integrity of the game. The Asian Tour, through its membership of the International Federation of PGA Tours, is the only recognised pan-Asian professional golf tour in Asia. This unique feature positions the Asian Tour at the pinnacle of professional golf in Asia; providing its events with Official World Ranking status. Tour Partners include Abacus (Official Apparel Partner), Inetol Headwear (Official Headwear Sponsor), Oakley (Official Eyewear and Footwear Sponsor), PRG (Official Accessories Supplier), Saxo Capital Markets (Official Statistics Partner), Singha Beer (Official Beer), Srixon (Official Ball), Titleist (Official Web Partner) and Rolex (Official Timekeeper). The Asian Tour has offices in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. Also, visit us at [www.asiantour.com](http://www.asiantour.com), [www.facebook.com/asiantourgolf](https://www.facebook.com/asiantourgolf), [www.twitter.com/asiantourgolf](https://www.twitter.com/asiantourgolf), [www.youtube.com/theasiantour](https://www.youtube.com/theasiantour) and [www.weibo.com/asiantourgolf](http://www.weibo.com/asiantourgolf).

**About IMG**

IMG is a global leader in sports, fashion and media operating in more than 30 countries around the world. IMG's businesses include Events & Media, College, Golf, Tennis, Performance and IMG Academy, Fashion, Models, Clients, Consulting, Licensing, Joint Ventures, and creative management agency Art + Commerce. In 2014, IMG was acquired by WME, the world's leading entertainment and media agency. Together, the companies offer an unparalleled client roster; world-class partnerships with sponsors, brands and broadcasters; and marquee assets across entertainment, events and fashion.