

An Insider's Look at the WM PHOENIX OPEN

The Valley of the Sun is one of the best places in the nation for golf, with more than 165 courses in the Greater Phoenix area. Each winter, linksmen from around the world visit Arizona to test their skills on greens designed by legends of the sport, including Jack Nicklaus and Tom Weiskopf.

But there's one golf event that outshines them all. This month, the Waste Management Phoenix Open, often referred to as "The Greatest Show on Grass," returns for the 88th time to Scottsdale.



Writer Rebecca L. Rhoades
Photography Courtesy of WM Phoenix Open



Rickie Fowler tees off on the 16th hole.

This year, players will vie for an elevated \$20 million purse, up from \$8.2 million in 2022. The first-place winner will take home \$3.6 million. More than 130 of the world's top golfers are scheduled to play.

Some notable names include defending WM Phoenix Open champion Scottie Scheffler, seven-time PGA Tour winner and 2020 Olympic Gold Medalist Xander Schauffele, five-time PGA Tour winners Tony Finau and Max Homa, four-time PGA Tour winner Sam Burns and World No. 1 Rory McIlroy. Six-time European Tour winner Tommy Fleetwood also will be making his WM Phoenix Open debut.

“The field for the 2023 WM Phoenix Open is shaping up to be one of the strongest in tournament history,” says tournament chairman Pat Williams.

To help you prepare, *Images Arizona* has put together a guide that gives you everything you need to know about the WM Phoenix Open. All you’ll need to do is show up on game day.

THE GROUP BEHIND THE OPEN

Birdies and bogeys are synonymous with golf — so are Thunderbirds. No, it’s not a newfangled term. Since 1937, this civic organization has been helping run the event.

The Thunderbirds formed in 1937 as a special events committee for the Phoenix Chamber of Commerce. Five young executives were chosen to head the committee; each then selected 10 additional members. To this day, the organization remains limited to 55 members.

The famous 16th hole.



Dressing the Part

“The Greatest Show on Grass” is known as much for people-watching as it is for great golf. That’s why it’s important to have the perfect outfit, whether you’re relaxing with friends in the grass, watching the game from coveted seats in the 16th hole skybox or planning to dance the night away at the Coors Light Bird’s Nest.

To help you decide what to wear, the folks at My Sister’s Closet and Well Suited put together four outfits* — two for her, two for him — that are guaranteed to be a fashionista’s hole-in-one.

*My Sister’s Closet and Well Suited are upscale fashion consignment stores. These fashions are just a sampling of the thousands of products available in their five Valley locations. All items were available at press time. Photos courtesy of My Sister’s Closet and Well Suited.

Dressing the Part



DAPPER AND DARING

Looking good is all about the details. Bold patterns combine with timeless pieces for a look that's easy yet sophisticated.

1. Flaunt your fun side in Italian brand Etro, which is known for its iconic paisley motif. You'll stand out on the links in a good way in this multicolored long-sleeve silk button-down. \$79
2. Straddling the line between casual and formal, the classic navy sport coat anchors the bold paisley shirt without looking like you're trying too hard. \$49.95
3. Look sharp and stay cool in white pants by Enzo Tovar. Pair the corduroy bottoms with your blue blazer for a sleek, effortless and even a little edgy appearance. \$34.95
4. The Shinola Detrola Hanco watch with a navy-blue band and rainbow-hued face monitors your valuable time while seamlessly integrating into your overall style. \$125
5. These blue suede shoes by Filling Pieces put a fresh spin on your look while keeping you comfortable as you follow your favorite player from hole to hole. \$49.95

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February 4 & 5
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Tubac Festival of the Arts
February 8-12
Tubac, AZ

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February 17-19
Litchfield Park, AZ

Litchfield Park Art & Wine Festival
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VERMILLION
PROMOTIONS

One of the earliest inductees was Bob Goldwater, brother of former U.S. Senator Barry Goldwater. An avid golfer, Bob thought it would be fun for the organization to promote a golf tournament, and in 1939, he invited his friends Bob Hope and golf greats Arnold Palmer and Ben Hogan to play at the Phoenix Country Club and sold tickets.

The event was a success — beginning a long and successful relationship with the PGA tournament. Goldwater later became known as the “Father of the Phoenix Open.”

The Thunderbirds pride themselves on their dedication to their community and their philanthropic efforts. Through the WM Phoenix Open, they’ve helped raise more than \$165 million, which supports local food banks, youth programs, employment and skills training programs and more.

BEYOND THE GREEN

The WM Phoenix Open is more than a golf tournament. It’s a lifestyle event that offers something for every member of the family — even those who aren’t fans of the sport. Perhaps that’s why it is also known as “The People’s Open.”

While the professional competition is the main feature, a variety of non-competition activities allow players and fans to simply relax and have a good time. There are motivational talks and Q&As with PGA professionals, a junior golf clinic and a putting challenge between Special Olympics athletes, celebrities and community business leaders. On the course, the players enjoy two days of practice rounds, and they can meet with guests in designated autograph zones.

Photo by Scott McGinty for Experience Scottsdale



Fore! Facts

- The WM Phoenix Open was established in 1932 as the Arizona Open. It is the fifth-oldest tournament on the PGA Tour. The oldest is the BMW Championship, which was founded as the Western Open in 1899.
- Previously known as the Waste Management Phoenix Open, the tournament changed its name to the WM Phoenix Open in January 2022. The change reflects that of its title sponsor, which is now known as WM.
- 2023 marks the 14th year that WM has served as the event's title sponsor.
- The tournament moved to its current home, the Stadium Course at TPC Scottsdale, in 1987.
- The WM Phoenix Open is the best-attended golf tournament in the world. Over five days, more than 700,000 ticketed visitors attend the tournament.
- Saturday at the tournament is the second-largest single-day-attended sporting event in the U.S. and the eighth-largest in the world. The largest is the Indy 500.
- More than 5,000 volunteers are on-hand to manage the raucous crowds. A typical PGA tour event has about 1,500 volunteers.
- The tournament is the most sustainably minded sporting event in the world. The event tracks and offsets greenhouse gas emissions, uses renewable energy to power the tournament, has a food waste-reduction program and participates in water conservation and restoration initiatives. 100% of tournament waste is diverted through recycling, composting, donation, reuse, or creating energy.
- According to a study by Arizona State University's W.P. Carey School of Business, the tournament pumps nearly \$400 million into Arizona's economy each year.
- The 2022 WM Phoenix Open distributed \$10.2 million to local charities. Since 2010, it has raised nearly \$100 million for charity.
- Two golfers share the tournament's record lowest 72-hole score of -28: Mark Calcavecchia in 2001 and Phil Mickelson in 2013.

Dressing the Part



SPORTY CHIC

Comfort is your priority, but you don't want to sacrifice style. Casual pieces in soft, muted tones accented by touches of glimmering gold bring a sophisticated twist that's effortlessly stylish.

1. This lightweight hooded jacket by Vince is a stylish alternative to a sloppy sweatshirt. Wear it on its own as a casual top or over a white T-shirt for when the thermometer reaches into the 80s. \$100
2. Swap traditional blue jeans for white, such as this pair by Anine Bing, for instant refinement with the comfort of everyday denim. \$49.95
3. Carry all your essentials in this Mini Chloé C crossbody. Its cream hue pairs well with light blue, creating a palette that's soothing and effortless. \$995
4. Elephants represent wisdom and good luck. This protective pachyderm adds the perfect amount of playful polish to your casual attire. \$595
5. With mirrored lenses and gold frames, these Givenchy sunglasses add mystery and shine. And bonus, no one in the crowd will know that you're watching them. \$69.95
6. Sneakers are a must-have element in every sporty ensemble. The slim retro profile and Velcro straps of this Isabel Marant pair are trendy without being overpowering. \$245



Photo Courtesy of Communication Links for WM Phoenix Open

The festivities begin prior to opening day with a special concert by Grammy Award-winning rock/pop band Maroon 5. It is the second-ever “Concert in the Coliseum;” last year country singer Thomas Rhett rocked the specially built stage in the middle of the iconic 16th hole.

On Wednesday, Feb. 8, celebrities and famous athletes tee up for the Annexus Pro-Am. Olympic

swimmer Michael Phelps, NFL legend Emmitt Smith, and former St. Louis Cardinals phenom Albert Pujols are scheduled to appear.

One of the most popular attractions at the tournament is the Coors Light Birds Nest. Each night, from Wednesday through Saturday, after the last player tackles the finishing hole, 10,000-plus pumped-up fans head across the Greenway-Hayden Loop to the hottest nightclub in the Valley — a 50,000-square-foot tent where some of the music industry’s top stars will perform.

This year’s lineup includes country superstar Jason Aldean, contemporary rapper and rock musician Machine Gun Kelly and electronic DJ duo The Chainsmokers. Country music stars Dustin Lynch, Lainey Wilson and Chris Lane kick

Dressing the Part



Cool and cosmopolite, this natty ensemble is an elevated take on the classic polo and khakis silhouette. And in chic all-black, it will take you from the clubhouse to the club in style and comfort.

1. A short-sleeved zip sweater by Harrison Wong is both unconventional and understated. The windowpane print is, according to GQ, the modern man’s party pattern. \$195
2. Leave the garish prints at home and opt for a more tailored appearance with sophisticated black golf pants by Bonobos. \$34.95
3. Gucci’s understated leather logo sneakers add timeless elegance. The retro styling, complete with the white double G logo, catches the eye but doesn’t scream for attention. \$345
4. Complete your look with Ray-Ban’s iconic Wayfarer sunglasses. Synonymous with a rock ‘n’ roll aesthetic, they lend a raffish appeal. \$79.99

URBAN COUNTRY CLUB

off the four-day concert series on Wednesday. New for 2023 is an expanded outdoor patio area at the Birds Nest that will feature more live music, outdoor games and various food and beverage options.

CENTER OF THE ACTION

Then there's the legendary 16th hole. This coveted spectator spot is considered one of the most exciting holes in golf — not for its difficulty as it's only a par three but instead for its party atmosphere.

Every year, upwards of 20,000 fans converge on the grandstand setting to boo the bad shots, cheer the good ones and drink — lots. Bolstered by the excitement of seeing their favorite players — and more than a few libations — the rowdy fans do not hesitate to show how they feel.

WM Phoenix Open Credit Halie Sutton for Experience Scottsdale



Experience

WM Phoenix Open

Feb. 6–12 | See website for schedule | TPC Scottsdale | 17020 N. Hayden Road, Scottsdale | Free+ | wmphoenixopen.co

In 1997, Tiger Woods aced the 16th hole, and last year, Sam Ryder notched his first PGA Tour hole-in-one at the same spot. Both times, it was instant bedlam. The crowd went nuts, tossing their beer cans and cups onto the green and spraying beer in the air — and onto each other.

PGA golfer Justin Thomas once said about the hole, “It seems like every year it gets crazier and crazier. It’s a great atmosphere. The fans are unbelievable, they are what makes this event what it is.”

wmphoenixopen.com

Dressing the Part



SOCIAL MEDIA SAVVY

Channel your inner Emily in a Parisian street-style-influenced look that will have you looking picture-perfect whether you’re holding a champagne flute or a 9 iron.

1. With a contrasting color and grosgrain trim, this tweed mini dress by Maje mimics a traditional polo for a golf-inspired look. \$195
2. Chanel is a social media must-have. The Limited Mini Flap Handbag is small enough to pass through security and will hold your cell phone when you’re not snapping selfies. \$5,195
3. You’ll be ready for your closeup in this vintage Chanel choker necklace. The gold iconic double Cs exude luxury. \$2,195
4. Cat-eye sunglasses continue to dominate trends in 2023. The retro angles and striking white frame of this Saint Laurent pair ensure that all eyes are on you. \$245
5. Chunky platform boots by Alexander McQueen add contrasting toughness to the feminine vibe of the tweed mini dress. Substitute white for basic black for an unexpected edge. \$395

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