

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Ryder Cup Rendezvous: Iconic trophy's arrival at London St Pancras International turns fans' focus to France and The 2018 Ryder Cup**

- *Golf's most famous team trophy on public display at London St Pancras International as part of special 'Ryder Cup Rendezvous' event*
- *600 golf courses in France ready to welcome fans and golf travellers before, during and after The 2018 Ryder Cup*
- *Eurostar appointed Official Supplier of The 2018 Ryder Cup – and makes travel easier for golfers with clubs now allowed on board.*

With less than a year to go until the 42nd Ryder Cup at Le Golf National, France (September 28-30, 2018), golf fans and commuters enjoyed their own rendezvous with one of the world's most famous sports trophies when it went on public display at London St Pancras International.

Having returned from Paris and the Year to Go celebrations, which saw European and United States Team Captains Thomas Bjørn and Jim Furyk engage in a range of promotional activities including hitting balls off the Eiffel Tower, the trophy was the star attraction at Eurostar's London terminus on Thursday October 26.

Fans were able to sit on the European Captain's golf car and have 'selfie' photographs taken with the trophy (#FeelFranceRC18).

The event also showcased France, next year's host of the biennial match between Europe and the United States, as the perfect destination for international golfers before, during and after The 2018 Ryder Cup.

Gwénaëlle Maret-Delos, Managing Director of Atout France UK & Ireland, the France Tourism Development Agency, which hosted the Ryder Cup Rendezvous event, said:

*"There are 600 golf courses in France including some of the most beautiful courses in Europe. While France is the most visited country in the world, it remains less well known as a golf destination. The 2018 Ryder Cup, broadcasting from Le Golf National to the world, will no doubt encourage more golfers to choose France, our golf courses and, of course, our 'après-golf', for their golf holidays."*

In 2016, France welcomed 82.6 million international tourists, including 11.9 million from the UK via convenient train, ferry and air links. Figures for the first half of 2017 indicate a 5% year-on-year increase in the number of visitors to France from the UK.

Among the most popular golf regions for UK golfers are Normandy, Brittany and Provence, as well as the Paris region. Le Golf National is just 21 miles from the centre of Paris.

The number of golfers travelling to France could be boosted further after Eurostar was announced as Official Supplier of The 2018 Ryder Cup, carrying representatives of the European Team to Paris next September.

Richard Hills, Ryder Cup Europe Director, said: “Le Golf National, Paris and France is ready for The Ryder Cup and will be a wonderful host for the 42nd edition of this match, which has become one of the greatest sports events in the world.

“In just under a year’s time, representatives of the European Team will set off from London St Pancras International and travel by Eurostar train to Paris. I have no doubt fans and golfers will be making their own journeys to France in the coming months, to play on the country’s beautiful courses and support the team next September.”

Le Golf National, France, will host The 2018 Ryder Cup from September 28-30, 2018, when Europe will try to regain the trophy following defeat at Hazeltine National in the United States, last year. The team, under the captaincy of Thomas Bjørn, will be looking to extend an impressive winning record on home soil which stretches back to 1997.

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**Photo Caption:** Ryder Cup Rendezvous: The Ryder Cup trophy arrives in front of a Eurostar train, Official Supplier of The 2018 Ryder Cup, at London St Pancras International, where it was on display to fans on Thursday October 26. Eurostar will be transporting representatives of the European Team to Le Golf National, Paris, for next year’s match, September 28-30.

**Pictured (from left): Pictured (from left):** Paul Armitage (Director Le Golf National, Paris, Host Venue of The 2018 Ryder Cup), Gwénaëlle Maret-Delos (Managing Director Atout France, UK & Ireland, the France Tourism Development Agency), Richard Hills (Ryder Cup Director).

### **Notes for Editors**

#### **About The Ryder Cup**

The Ryder Cup has become one of the world’s greatest sporting events. Every two years, 24 of the best players from Europe and the United States go head-to-head in match play competition. Drama, tension, incredible golf, camaraderie and sportsmanship are served in equal measure, captivating an audience of millions around the world. It’s an event that transcends sport, yet remains true to the spirit of its founder, Samuel Ryder, who instigated the first contest in 1927.

#### **About Atout France**

Atout France - France Tourism Development Agency, is responsible for promoting the development of the tourism industry, the country’s largest economic sector. Atout France’s primary mission is to monitor and analyse the supply and demand in the tourist market. Atout France is also committed to promoting destinations and tourism partners in and from France. This is achieved through marketing campaigns, online promotion, PR and working closely with the travel trade sector. Atout France is represented in the UK and Ireland from its office in London.

### **About Eurostar**

Eurostar is the high-speed train service linking St Pancras International, Ebbsfleet International, Ashford International, Paris, Brussels, Lille, Calais, Disneyland Resort Paris, Avignon and the French Alps.

Eurostar was established in 1994 as a partnership between three railway companies: SNCF, SNCB and LCR (London and Continental Railways). On 1 September 2010, Eurostar became a single, unified corporate entity owned by three shareholders: SNCF, SNCB and LCR. LCR's holding was transferred to the Treasury in 2014, and sold by the UK government to a consortium comprising Caisse de Depot et Placement du Quebec (CDPQ) and Hermes Infrastructure on 28th May 2015.

Eurostar is a founder member of Railteam, a partnership between Europe's leading high-speed train operators that is developing simpler ways to book and travel on the fast-expanding, European high-speed rail network.

Eurostar and Eurotunnel are entirely separate companies. Eurostar operates high-speed passenger trains, while Eurotunnel operates vehicle shuttle services and the Channel Tunnel itself. Eurostar is Eurotunnel's biggest customer.

### **About Le Golf National**

Le Golf National is Host Venue to The 2018 Ryder Cup. Featuring slick greens, vast undulating fairways dotted with water hazards and numerous links-style bunkers, the L'Albatros Championship course is ranked amongst the top 100 course in the world and is considered one of the best spectator experiences. It also hosts the HNA Open de France and Paris Legends Championship. The venue, which is the national golf centre and operated by the Fédération Française de Golf, also offers the 18-hole L'Aigle and the 9-hole L'Oiselet, a large modern clubhouse, golf shop, extensive practice facilities and an impressive golf school. The onsite Novotel hotel has 131 quiet, bright rooms, some with views of the famous last four holes of L'Albatros.

### **About Brittany**

All year round, Brittany's golf courses offer the very best. More than 40 carefully designed courses, suitable for all levels, can be found across the region nestled among spectacular scenery. Uncrowded greens, inexpensive fees and easy access combine to make the region a natural choice. The lure of a warm welcome and fine gastronomy should seal the deal.

### **About Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur**

With over 60 golf courses spreading across the Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur (PACA) region, the destination is well known and loved amongst golfers. Amateur and expert players alike will enjoy teeing off with panoramic views over the Alps or the Mediterranean.

### **About Lafayette Travel**

With a wealth of experience creating comprehensive sport packages, Lafayette Travel is bringing its expertise to The 2018 Ryder Cup creating comprehensive and A La Carte packages delivered to the highest standard. Lafayette Travel has also been an approved introducer of the hospitality packages for The 2018 Ryder Cup.

### **About Normandy**

From the bay of Mont-Saint-Michel to the Alabaster coast, from Perche to the Seine valley, from the Cherbourg peninsula to the Pays d'Auge, there are more than 40 courses to challenge you. Pure Scottish style links, inland courses following the natural contours in the heart of hills or forests, greens and fairways overlooking the sea...