

## Jimmy White Free to press interview



Now back from three weeks in the Jungle on “I’m a Celebrity get me out of here”, a new lean Jimmy White is beginning his build up to Christmas with his family but also the Masters Snooker Tournament at Wembley and the launch of a new project which will see Jimmy returning to famous snooker venues, including the Crucible and Telford, to lock horns once again with Alex Higgins, John Virgo, John Parrott and Cliff Thorburn at the launch of a new venture... Snooker Legends.

We caught up with Jimmy a few days after his return from Australia and the day after he received his invitation to the Masters.

So Jimmy, we have to start by saying how great you look, the Australian diet of cockroaches and bugs is perhaps a lesson for us all in weight loss?

“I lost 22lbs during my time in the Jungle; I feel fitter, have more energy and learnt an awful lot about working as a team and surviving without things like mobile phones, computers and a snooker cue!”

Is that the longest time you’ve gone without picking up a snooker cue?

“Absolutely, but sometimes having a break is good, I’m back practising hard now for the Masters in January and of course the Snooker Legends Events”

Was it a surprise to get the Masters Wildcard, many people had their money on Liang Wenbo after his exploits in Shanghai and at the UK Championships?

“It was really a great surprise to get the invitation to the Masters and I am absolutely thrilled. Although people may not have seen me in the Televised Ranking tournaments this year I have won two 6 red titles in Thailand and Prague and in both of these events I beat the current World Champion John Higgins on the way to winning the tournaments.

You play Mark King on the opening night, a man himself fighting to stay in the top 16, what sort of match are you expecting, you always get massive support at Wembley?

“Wembley is a fantastic venue for me, people seem to really get behind me and I’m determined to put on a good show for them. I’m putting in 4-5 hours a day on the practice table and I’m really pleased with how I am cueing. Mark is a very tough, tenacious opponent, it should be a good battle but I hope to come out on top and prove everyone that it was the correct decision to invite me to the tournament. My fans mean everything to me, they’ve been loyal through thick and thin and I promise them I’ll be giving it everything for them”

While you've been in Australia the board of World Snooker has changed, as someone who's worked with Barry Hearn in many capacities over the years what do you think he will bring to the game, and what do you think his priorities should be?

“Barry Hearn made his name in Snooker and I am delighted that he is now back involved in our game, I know he has the support of all the players who are looking to him to give our sport the facelift it desperately needs. One thing is certain, if Barry can't make a difference then no one can”

You seem as passionate as ever about the game, you've won a couple of tournaments this year, does the hunger to get back into the major tournaments still matter as much as it used to?

“Even more so, this invitation makes me feel the way I did when I got to my first ever professional tournament all those years ago. Christmas has come early in the White household”

Looking at the Snooker Legends Events, the 18 venue tour is starting at the Crucible. As part of the format one audience member will get the chance to play in a frame of snooker with the legends on the night. How much do you enjoy getting the chance to meet the fans up close?

“I have an amazing set of loyal fans and perhaps I've made a few new ones during my time in the jungle, for those who don't follow snooker I hope to show them that I can do a lot more than just carry water!”

Can we expect to see any of your jungle pals at the Legends events?

“Absolutely, we may even get Colin and Justin involved in the event design, Kim can come on board to brush and clean the snooker table and Gino can do the grub!

It seems the format of these nights will see some fun and nostalgia from John Virgo but also some serious snooker as well with one player being crowned Legends Champion on each night. I'm guessing we're in for some serious renewals of old rivalries?

I shared great past matches with all the players involved in Snooker Legends. John Parrott and I played in two UK Finals and one World Final, Cliff and I had some great clashes at the Masters in particular and of course everyone remembers my matches with Alex at the Crucible but people forget we also were a formidable doubles partnership and we remain great friends .

You can meet all the legends via our VIP package which includes a pre event champagne reception, the best seat in the house and a show brochure. All dates for Snooker Legends Events can be found by going to [www.snookerlegends.co.uk](http://www.snookerlegends.co.uk)