

# Little Shop, Big Profit

by Herb Graffis

**Crammed for space, but full of service and merchandising innovations, a Florida pro and his staff have converted a house trailer into a pro shop.**

It is not true that the pro shop at Beach Bay Golf Club will roll out of Fort Myers some evening when the

golfers have all gone home and the sun has finished its day's work in that part of Florida.

Chances are good that you won't see club pro Bryan Caldwell navigating his mobile home up I 75, because it's his shop.

When you look inside the converted trailer, you'd think Caldwell would need a shoehorn to get any more merchandise inside, but within such modest accommodations, he's built up a \$35,000 inventory and during last year's Christmas season sold over 150 dozen balls.

Caldwell's success is not without assistance. He gets a lot of help from his wife, Carol; and his assistant, John Dennis plus John's wife Sandra. Carol is the keeper of the clothes along with Sandra. The girls have made the wise purchasing decisions that have established Beach Bay as a leader in apparel sales in the area.

It's no wonder that the ladies have added income with the soft-goods business. Both are former models and Carol was once a saleswoman in one of southwest



Caldwell, right, and his assistant John Dennis do a lot of selling to winter tourists in the Fort Myers area. Fitting sessions on the practice tee are commonplace.

Florida's smartest women's shops. During the winter tourist season, Carol and Sandra with a couple of pretty and graceful model friends, put on a monthly fashion show of golfwear. At a local motel, the Beach Bay ladies show their wares to residents and tourists, alike. The shows help draw additional customers to the club and in turn into the shop. It's not an unusual sight to see a lot of people waiting around Caldwell's front door, hoping someone will come out, so they can get in and look at what's new.

Other than a small storage room, Beach Bay's shop is all business and all utilized. Obviously, display space is at a premium. Seventeen bags, containing clubs, dot the aisle along with a dozen sets of irons, eight sets of woods plus assorted wedges and putters.

High on the walls, Caldwell has placed some more bags and suspended from the ceiling are revolving fixtures, that hold a variety of men's shorts.

Several brands of balls are placed strategically near the cash register. Caldwell stacks boxes from the floor to counter height, so they flank a customer who is standing at the register. Beach Bay runs weekly specials on different balls each week and the staff promotes these sales to the hilt.

Like most pro wives, the girls are



Beach Bay is small on space, as shown above. Club pro Bryan Caldwell and his staff have a variety of club lines displayed prominently around the shop's area. The operation has turned over its inventory three times since it opened last September.

gifted with sales imagination and zest and they tell every visiting customer that Florida is a great testing ground for balls that eventually will be the summer big sellers at northern clubs.

Christmas sales are indeed a big part of the little place, which the visitors have dubbed the "Sunshine Shop." The shop provides service from sale to final delivery. All freight or postal charges are cared for by Beach Bay.

Establishing himself as a good trader, Caldwell has added something extra to the purchasing possibilities of a lot of winter transients that inhabit the area during the cold winter of the north. With the lesson and practice area only a few yards away, Caldwell and Dennis can try clubs on prospects until they are sure the fit is good and the clubs feel right.

Transient traffic has made the trade for Beach Bay. By working closely with local motels, Caldwell has gotten a lot of additional rounds played at the course by tourists, who are used to playing first class facilities back north.

Within a corporate development, Beach Bay is a par 65 layout, stretching from 3,457 to 4,136 yards. It's competitive design was provided by architect Ernest Smith. If Beach Bay has a trademark, it's the smartly trapped greens. But more than that, though, might be the pro shop.

Both Caldwell and Dennis had primarily served their apprenticeship in the south. The duo were assistants at Georgia's Athens Country Club under Lonnie Cleveland. Bryan then came to Fort Myers to work under his cousin, Ed Caldwell, at Cape Coral. After that job, Caldwell moved to Fort Myers Country Club, where he was taught a majority of his education about merchandising and community relations by Al Patterson.

Since Fort Myers is largely a retirement haven, Caldwell has worked hard to include lessons for senior golfers as an added service of Beach Bay. Men who have retired from business, but never had the time to learn how to play, get good instructions.

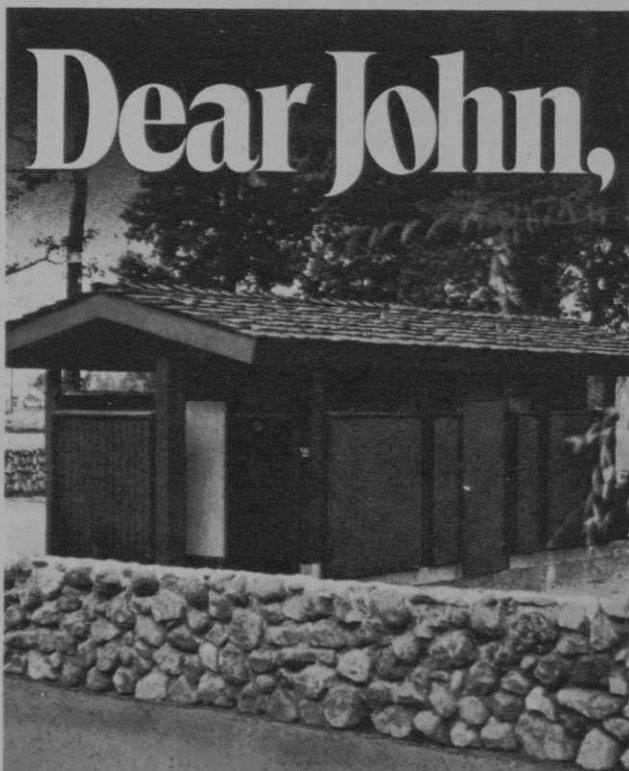
Tight on space, but long on customer service, Beach Bay and Bryan Caldwell have combined for one of the more unique operations in the south. □




This is just one corner of Beach Bay's shop. Caldwell's wife, Carol, is in charge of coordinating the softgoods

business. A number of golf fashions are in view of the customers along with men's slacks, hats and shoes.

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