



At this modest little pro shop at Rancho G. C. Clarkson does phenomenal business, showing what can be done with space and location handicap.

The "Art" of Salesmanship Means Clarkson of Rancho

Says D. SCOTT CHISHOLM

[Associate Editor, Country Club Magazine]

OF the many hundreds of golf professionals throughout the country with whom I have come in contact during the past twenty-five years, I think Arthur Clarkson, popularly known as plain, everyday Art, is the most extraordinary. I say extraordinary because this black-haired son of Carnoustie is just that in more ways than one. He is an extraordinary salesman, possesses an extraordinary personality and has performed the extraordinary function of keeping together over a period of years the very club that pays him a salary and gives him an income from the sale of his merchandise and his instruction that far outstrips that of the average

professional at a metropolitan club.

Clarkson, and Clarkson alone, has kept the Rancho Golf Club of Los Angeles on its feet and in existence since 1925. I speak very candidly when I say that I don't believe there would be any Rancho club in existence today had it not been for this former Carnoustie man. That is a colossal statement to make, but a hundred members will indorse it.

Arthur Clarkson sells more merchandise of the higher grade than any other professional west of the Rockies. When he sells a set of clubs to a beginner, it is rarely a set that costs less than \$150. When I happened to call on Art for the



Arthur Clarkson, brilliant genius of pro merchandising.

purpose of getting material for this story. Buster Keaton of motion picture fame dropped into the shop. Buster had given Clarkson an order for a set of clubs for a friend of his, the instructions being to "give him the works good and plenty." Clarkson did. I had a look at the outfit. There was a set of ten matched irons at \$7.50 each, three wooden clubs at \$15.00 each and a finely made bag of ultra fancy trimmings at \$55.00. A total of \$175.00. Then, of course, Buster had to see that his friend in the movies had a supply of golf balls, a pair of gloves, two pairs of tartan hose and numerous other items of equipment, more or less gaudy in both color and design. Naturally, motion picture people like the best of everything in colors of ultra vividness.

Front Page Customers

Jackie Coogan, both father and son, own sets of clubs of equal excellence. Mickey Walker and Jack Kearns gave Art a check for \$374.50 for their outfits not so long ago. George Von Elm is one of his very best customers besides being a fine booster for Clarkson's hand-made clubs.

A year ago Art received a royal command from the Imperial House of Japan for two sets of clubs, the order being handled by His Royal Highness Prince Asaakira Kuni. More than that, Hajime Kawasaki, Japanese golf champion, spent five days in and around Clarkson's workshop at Los Angeles waiting for a set of irons being shafted with the finest hickory obtainable.

The standard of the merchandise produced from the bench in Clarkson work shop is so high that many professionals in his district and a great many low handicap players belonging to other clubs have the Clarkson name branded on all their woods and irons. The bench is most capably operated by Jack Cornwall, formerly of Hoylake, England. Jack is freely conceded to be as fine a clubmaker as can be found anywhere. He is tremendously jealous of his artistry in clubmaking. Fickleness of a true artist. Leo Diegel, Ed Dudley, Charlie Guest and many others of the high-powered professionals wouldn't think of having a club reshafted anywhere but at Clarkson's. **HE HAS THE BEST THERE IS IN HICKORY SHAFTS** because he pays the ultimate in price. He charges his customers accordingly. That's only natural.

The Clarkson sales shop is, when the volume of business done in it is considered, the smallest in existence. It is

frightfully inadequate in both space and location. In other words, the selling space is little more than 10x12, while the location of the shop is the very worst possible. It is so far away from the first tee and the clubhouse that very few members ever visit it. Some have never even seen the inside of the shack. It's really a disgrace to the club. (I hope Messrs. Abe and Ben Frank read this.)

Has Selling Knack

Quite naturally, after making such statements regarding huge sales, etc., you will ask, "How does Clarkson sell so much merchandise in such a small space and without his members visiting his shop?" Aha, therein lies a great secret, a secret which every professional and every merchant is dying to know. The elusive knack of selling merchandise without as much as displaying same to your customers. How is it done?

It is all summed up in one word, and that word is **PERSONALITY**. I might make it a bit wider and reword it—**PERSONALITY** plus **SUPERB SALESMANSHIP**.

Arthur Clarkson possesses both in an abundance never discovered by me in any human before. That makes him extraordinary, doesn't it? It brands him, in my estimation, the most superlative salesman of his own wares in any branch of merchandising. For fifteen years I worked with and moved among the super-salesmen of New York City, but I have yet to meet one to match Arthur Clarkson in all-around qualifications.

HOW DOES HE SELL HIS WARES? That is the question. Well, I'll tell you how it's done.

First of all, you have to have a powerful personality—one that sticks out like a sore thumb. You must be honest in all your dealings, even to the most minute detail. One transaction which even has the least suspicion of unreliability may ruin all. Popularity among your members is a tremendous asset. That, to a great extent, is up to yourself.

Clarkson has these valuable virtues in abundance. Although he has a capable salesman in "Sonny" Sunderland in his shop to attend to things, Clarkson sells 90 per cent of his wares while moving among his members and their friends in the locker-room. I've seen him actually sell a prominent motion picture star an old sweater he had hanging in his locker for more money than it was originally

marked to sell at retail. I've seen him sell a favorite iron to a low handicap man, take it right out of his bag, for \$50.00. That iron didn't mean anything to Art. It was just ANOTHER IRON.

Mashie-Niblick for \$50

He disposed of a dilapidated Jim White golf bag he used for three years to Joe Baldy for the price it cost him. Bryan Wardell told me he saw Clarkson accept a \$50.00 bill from a certain well-to-do member for a mashie niblick which Art was about to throw out of his collection. He couldn't use it for sour apples. Don't misunderstand me. Clarkson refused that \$50.00 bill—absolutely. But the member insisted in a very positive manner, so he just had to take it.

Pete De Paolo, famous racer, once said to me that when Clarkson dies it'll be of enlargement of the heart. He'll give you the shirt off his back—if you need it. He has sold more sets of clubs and other equipment in that old locker-room between the hours of 4 and 8 p. m. than he ever sold in his shop. It happens like this.

Locker-Room Selling

A member brings a friend of his to play at Rancho. His friend never played golf before, perhaps. When he gets into the locker-door after the game and meets Clarkson in an informal locker-room manner, he gets enthusiastic. He gained some enthusiasm on the course when he drove a tee shot past the 200-yard marker. That was really the beginning. But those convivial moments with Clarkson and his friend in the alley added the necessary enthusiasm to open his mind and his pocketbook all in one grand whoop. His friend, a great admirer of Art, insists he give the pro an open order for a set of clubs just like his own—his \$175.00 set. Clarkson, in the meantime, says nothing. He sits hard by in his B. V. D.'s. From his attitude, one would think he was no more interested in the transaction than the man in the moon.

The fact of the matter is that Clarkson's extraordinary personality, mute as he may appear, has permeated the atmosphere and is dominating the sales argument, or should I call it the sane advice of a friend to a pal. Before they depart their various ways, the sale is consummated, and Jack Cornwall, clubmaker de luxe, has a new set of clubs in work the day following or as quickly as business will permit.

I remember being one of a party of five in the Rancho locker-room about two years

ago. A very prominent member, Mr. A. T. Jergins, was the host, while Clarkson, with his Scotch brogue, did most of the "blethering." He "blethered" about anything and everything—never about his merchandise. Before the party broke up, Jergins, an extremely wealthy oil magnate of big heart and rare sportsmanship propensities, gave Art an order for upwards of \$500.00 worth of wearing apparel for those present. I got a fine new sweater and hose to match. I was a rare toff the first day I wore them.

This gent Jergins has taken a tremendous liking to the Rancho pro. He won't play at another club, a strange club, unless Art is with him. He won't go to his shooting lodge up in the wilds of Oregon unless his pal promises to spend a week or more with him. And he certainly would not think of going to Europe to play golf without bringing Art as his traveling crony. They did Europe last in '26.

It has been estimated that Jergins has purchased upwards of \$15,000 worth of merchandise from Clarkson in six years.

Enter Madame

I could go on for hours telling you weird, but truthful, tales of this wonder man, Clarkson, for whom I got the Rancho job some ten years ago. He was formerly located at Kenosha, Wis.

He has a fine business head set on a trimly formed pair of shoulders. He never pays a bill. Never. He never will, he says. His wife does all that. Mrs. Clarkson, a business woman of unusual alertness and integrity, looks after all the financial matters and DISCOUNTS ALL BILLS.

"If I take my 2 per cent for cash every month, I save 24 per cent annually, don't I?" is the way she put it to me one day I was a visitor at the 100 per cent Clarkson-owned home at Sawtelle. And isn't she right?

He is without question the most popular professional in the country at the present time. When a chap is admired and appreciated by his fellow professionals 100 per cent, he MUST BE THE WORLD'S MOST POPULAR.

He has three brothers, Dick at the Northland Club, Duluth; Fred at Glen Echo at St. Louis, and Charles at Quincy County Club, Illinois.

Now, don't you agree with me that Arthur Clarkson is a MOST EXTRAORDINARY FELLOW?