

# Smart Selling Brings Cash to Coast Munny Course Pro

By D. SCOTT CHISHOLM  
Associate Editor, *Country Club Magazine*

“WHEN you start off by asking me how I conduct business in my golf shop let me say, and I say it very candidly, that I have never employed high-pressure sales talk, no matter how rich or how poor the customer may be. I have found it does not pay and I can truthfully say that not in my 20 years in business as a golf professional, either in the interests of my own business nor that of my former employers, have I ever endeavored to sell a customer any article I knew was not suitable. Give him just what he wants if you have it in stock but don't ever try to pawn off some article which you know in your heart is quite unsuited to his wants, and you'll be repaid a hundredfold in later years. I have been in the golf business in California since 1910 and I want to tell you it gladdens my heart when I see an old customer of many years ago come far out of his way to throw business in my direction. And don't forget it, I have lots of such old timers on my books. It makes a fellow feel as if there is really something more in this world than mere gluttony and cold bloodedness.”

It was Louis Berrien talking. And there was a ring of sincerity in his voice that sounded delightfully pleasing and convincing. He looked better and happier in his ultra luxurious quarters built for him by the city of Santa Monica at the Santa Monica municipal course, adjoining the famous Clover Field flying headquarters, than I've seen him in 12 years. Berrien is one of the old-timers who does business in the most modern fashion. A representative of Spaldings who happened to be in Berrien's shop at the time I was there said, “Don't fool yourself; Lou Berrien knows his onions from A to Z. He's one of the shrewdest buyers of merchandise in Southern California, knows how to sell his merchandise when he gets it, and, strange to say, he's one of the easiest of professionals to do business

with there is in all the golf field.”

## The Old Order Changes

That was an interesting angle. Having seen little of Berrien in recent years, I had an idea he was doing business in the old fashioned way as when he was professional at the Wilshire C. C. years ago. But a glance at his shop, his stock, his assistants and the general appearance of things in and around his working habitat very readily convinced me that here was one old timer who was keeping abreast of the times.

Continuing, Louis said, “Many a customer has come into my shop since I was appointed to this position, a municipal one, and asked me if I could sell them a good golf club cheap. And to exactly the same number I have told that there is no such thing as good merchandise cheap. No matter what they wanted to pay, they would get just what they paid for. I tell them I have \$20 clubs and also \$2 clubs but nothing good that is cheap. Customers at a public course such as I have are different from those at private clubs but I would rather be in my present position than in a private club. I have found that if you call the public links golfer by his first name and show that you are just as human as he is, leaving out the “Mr.” stuff which belongs to private club individuals, you will soon gain their confidence and they will patronize your shop and give you all the business they can possibly afford. More than that, if they learn you never try to gyp them and they know you treat them on the up and up, they will begin to bring their friends from other public courses and their friends in turn bring other friends. It is truly remarkable what a sound business I have built up in this way. Gain their confidence. Do everything within reason to please them. Talk to them in a chummy and friendly way no matter where you happen to meet them and you will soon find your



Here's the gang who make the Santa Monica pro-shop such a success. L. to R. they are: Johnny Johnson, asst. club-maker; Jack Street, asst. pro.; Lou Berrien, pro, and Lou Hinckley, club-maker.

business increasing by leaps and bounds."

At this point of the interview Berrien looked at his watch and realized he had a lesson in three minutes. When he left I got talking to his brother-in-law, Jack Street, who is the assistant professional. Jack is another old-timer and has worked with and for Berrien since they both followed George Smith to the Del Monte job back in 1910. That's a long time for a couple of chaps to be together, isn't it? And they get on just as well today as they did in the dim past. Better I believe, because the passing of time has very closely cemented their friendship. The absolute trust they have one with another truly touched my heart and made me think of how very, very few such cases one sees like theirs nowadays.

### Team-Work Is Theme

"What do you do here Jack?" I shot at him. "I do the best I can and sometimes that's not so very good. I give lessons along with Lou. I sell a good deal of the merchandise but Lou does all the buying. This shop goes along like a song—never any strife, no jealousies, no rum-puses, no quarreling. It's a real pleasure to work amidst such ideal surroundings and wait on the fine clientele we have. All good scouts. There's Lou Hinckley, the clubmaker, and there's Johnny Johnson, his assistant, both working all the time, twelve months in the year and one would never know they were within a mile of the place. We trust one another here."

As he said that, an elderly golfer en-

tered the shop holding a broken brassie in his hands, a steel shafted club that snapped at the neck. "Can you mend this?" he asked. "Yes, we can fix it up by putting in a new shaft. That will cost you \$4.50. If you like the head well enough we'll be happy to put in the new shaft but let me suggest—if you think you'd like a new model club it might be just as well if you invested in a new club. I can sell you a very nice one for \$7.50 and it may be that it will suit you better," advised the courteous Jack.

"Yes, let me see one. I've been topping badly with this club and find I can't get the ball in the air," said the interested customer. From a splendid assortment of beautifully made clubs Jack handed his man a bonnie spoon with the remark, "You see, one of the reasons you have not been getting the ball in the air is because you've been using a brassie. This is a spoon which will help you considerably to get height and I believe you will like it. Let me see how the length is for you. Just right. Now let me find out the difference in weight. Just one-eighth of an ounce lighter." The sale was made there and then, and a very satisfied customer went out of Lou Berrien's shop to return many times again, in all probability.

I was very fortunate to have been present when this smart transaction was made and to learn how truthful Berrien was when he stated to me a few minutes before that neither he nor any of his help ever employed high-pressure stuff.

## Rush for Many Turn-Overs

"We carry a stock of about \$6,000 in clubs, caps, very few sweaters but plenty of all makes of balls, and we never fail to take inventory once every month. We try to turn over our stock as often as possible and I believe it is easier for us to do so than the boys in other parts of the country for we go at high speed here twelve months of the year. Perfect golfing weather accounts for that. Lou pays all his bills himself via the check route and every bill is discounted. We have very, very few accounts to keep on sales, being a public institution and those on our books are well known to us. We don't know what bad debts are. We have none—never."

Jack Street finished this remark as the boss returned from his half hour lesson so I again assailed him with the question, "What do you think of the standardization of golf instruction? Do you think it is possible to put over?" Slowly he answered, "Yes, and no. With motion pictures taken of such men as Bobby Jones and Macdonald Smith, our two greatest stylists, much can be done to start beginners off on the correct track. But outside of the beginners, the individual must be more seriously considered and I think the professional will have to take care of the rest of the gang. I would like to see something done that would bring about stabilization of the swing. Let's get off that subject for the time being as I understand the P. G. A. have something in mind that may work out to the beneficial advantage of all."

Wishing to snare Lou back to his ideas of selling, I popped this at him, "How is it that you have as many high priced sets of clubs in your stock as many of the big private clubs hereabouts? I can count ten sets of matched woods and irons right now. Are they there for display purposes or do you really sell such high priced merchandise?"

## Easy Payments on Good Clubs

"Listen," said Lou, "I'm going to open your eyes. You would be surprised how many sets of these we sell a month. Young men on weekly salaries cannot afford to buy such clubs outright even though their eyes bulge out as they gaze at them. But when a lad whom I know to be right wants to invest in a set, I let him have them on a payment of \$10 a week. That creates a fine follow up business and there is nothing better for any man's business than a follow up. It's the very life of

trade. I let that lad have these high priced clubs on easy terms. I take a chance, but I've never been done out of a red cent yet. That lad tells his friends. They come along after they admired his beautiful clubs and get a set. And so it goes all along the line.

"Then here's another angle rather new to public courses. A fellow who owns a fine set of clubs and a nice bag wants to keep them in nice shape. I suggest to them that for the small sum of \$1 per month he can have them kept in a rack in my shop, cleaned every time he uses them, wrapped when needed and ready to hand out to him in first class shape any time he wants them. That's salesmanship. That's why you see over 100 sets in the racks."

Thus ended one of the most pleasing interviews I've ever had with any professional in any section of the country, with a man who knows the game from A to Z as Nick Shafer said, a man who is known far and wide as a teacher of outstanding ability (one of the country's foremost), a man who gave to the world such a marvelous champion as Mrs. Leona Pressler, twice Western champion and runner-up in the women's national a year ago, a man who, through his untiring efforts and wise council and teachings gave Southern California the finest group of young golfers that ever emerged from a single club. The club I refer to is Wilshire Country Club, Los Angeles.

## Expert Gives Basis for Rating Food Service

A COPYRIGHTED score card for inspecting and rating restaurants is described by its compiler, E. D. Pratt, in April *Hotel Management*. The definite platform for determining the standing of a restaurant has much in it worthy of study and use by golf clubs.

Mr. Pratt lists as major items on the inspector's report, first impressions, service, commodities, atmosphere, order and sanitation, and maintenance.

Under "service" he gives the factors of promptness, attention, manners, proper dishes, etc. As "atmosphere" factors he lists ventilation, the bearing, dress, manners and activities of the management, discipline, and organization.

For check-up under "order and sanitation," Mr. Pratt puts crockery, silver and glasses; napkins and towels; floors, walls and ceiling; stairs, pantry, kitchen, etc.