



Sunset Ridge's pro lounge provides atmosphere to encourage buying instead of making it necessary to heat 'em up and sell 'em

# Ordinary Shop Is Converted Into Profitable Pro Lounge

By HERB GRAFFIS

ONE OF THE intriguing things that accounts for golf's popularity is the lucky bounce. You've seen plenty of shots of your own that took a sour bound and landed in traps that ate holes into the score card while the other guy, the lucky stiff, hit a ball that knocked against 3 trees, 4 rocks and several cock-eyed blades of grass and trickled into the cup.

This lucky bounce business reaches over into pro shop sales and if you doubt it ask Dave Tosh, pro at Sunset Ridge C. C. (Chicago district). Davie is one of those nice apple-cheeked Scotch laddies who attends strictly to catching a perfect game. He sends the members letters at the start of the season, gives prizes to the women's tournaments, keeps the scores, does the starting and all those

other little things that makes a pro perform his appointed job.

Dave had one of those hind-end-to pro shops with the clubs stored in the spot where the selling should be done. There are a hundred other pro shops where the architects laid the same sort of a stymie. A couple that your correspondent has seen in his travels are those of Messrs. McDonald at Rolling Green and Jones at Champaign, Ill. In their shops the bag racks are right out there where folks can see their bags in all the usual state of disrepute. Why the bag manufacturers haven't provided some tactful and forceful advertising display material to show in such spots and call attention to the general need for bag replacement continues to be a mystery to your alleged author.

Some of the pros are using hand-lettered signs to point out delicately that tattered bags need replacement, and such signs are making sales.

But, to get back to Tosh's situation. His shop was just one of those things. It was so narrow that a fat member had to suck in his breath to stay in the sales room.

### Officials Take an Interest

Tosh, like most pros, is shy about mentioning defects in the shop's set-up to his club officials. The pros hear the club members' sobs about finances and although the Sunset Ridge club finished 1931 with a profit and is in excellent financial shape, Dave hesitated to mention the need of a shop revision.

A couple of the club officials, R. B. Umberger, president, and Wallace Johnson, the green chairman who is Dave's boss, started figuring last winter on what could be done to make the club more serviceable for its members and concluded that an attractive pro shop was greatly to be desired.

They, and other club officials, doped out that the large, square room then used for club storage and cleaning should be converted into a pro shop.

Instead of having the usual pro shop with show cases and club display racks, it was decided to make the place a pro lounge and have the merchandise displayed with an inviting air of informal sales and service.

Because the room would thus become a loafing place for members and a place handy for keeping first tee appointments, there was an excuse to spend some money on remodeling. About \$600 was spent on attractive wood panelling, curtains, rugs and furniture. The furniture was picked up at a sale and that's one of the reasons for the balls being displayed on a table that would fit perfectly into any living room and the accessories being displayed on a cabinet like one of those to which the master used to go when his guests gave indications of parched palates.

### An Experiment that Worked

The unusual furnishing of the pro shop was something that Tosh and your correspondent questioned as a set-up for sales. It never had been done before, so far as we knew. The nearest thing to it was the veteran Ogilvie's de-luxe establishment at Augusta, Ga. The Sunset Ridge officials, Umberger and Johnson,

maintained it was just the thing for stirring up business and they are two club officials who want the pro to make some money so he will exercise lively initiative in providing a valuable factor of club service.

The club officials reasoned that the shop should be a place where club members would come as part of the game's enjoyment, for the fellows or women who haven't the right equipment can't get fullest fun out of the game. They pointed out that the more people who came into the shop the better the chance of increasing sales.

Comfortable chairs, radio reports and a general atmosphere of buying ease rather than selling intent was put into the place.

The men's and women's handicap cards are kept in the shop and when the game is over, as well as before it starts, these records are consulted or revised.

### Did Business Pick Up?

Well, Tosh had been shivering plenty about prospects of a lean season and now a sunshiny smile illuminates his round face. June goes down in the books as one of his best months since he left Carnoustie a dozen or more years ago.

Looking at the successful experiment solely from the pro viewpoint, the explanation seems to be that people want to buy from the pro rather than be sold by the pro. Even in these times there are plenty who will buy if the shop is a high spot in the club's appointments. What makes things tough for the pro is that merchandise often must be displayed in an out-of-the-way spot due to shortcomings in the club architect's plans. For this reason Sunset Ridge twist may tip off to other professionals and club officials an answer to a serious problem.

### Pays Pro to Take Part in C. of C. Affairs

ONE OF OUR pro pals makes a pertinent suggestion to his comrades in the average-sized and smaller communities. Says he:

"I have found that it has paid me a lot to be a member of the Chamber of Commerce in my city, to attend all of its meetings and take interest in the general business of the town. It has helped me to get a better idea of the way business should be run and to let the important men of