



Spanish type clubhouse of Bel Air CC near Los Angeles. Tenth tee is at the right center. Photograph taken from the edge of abyss (seen in picture) that greedily guards the tenth green.

## Emphasis on Food

By D. Scott Chisholm

ONE of the most unusual country clubs on the West Coast is the Bel Air club some 12 miles distant from downtown Los Angeles and a few stiff brassie shots from Beverly Hills. It is ideally situated atop a prominent hill in the hoity-toity Bel Air suburb where a plain home must not cost less than twenty grand to build and twenty more to furnish and beautify externally. In short it is an exclusive club for the prominently rich, many of whom are pretty near tops in the motion picture industry.

The course, hilly in most parts, is the work of Thomas and Bell and rightfully boasts of perfect putting surfaces. Walter Hagen once said Bel Air's greens were the best in the country.

But I honestly believe that Bel Air's outstanding asset and attraction is its food. Nowhere in the Western country can one get better and finer meals than at

Bel Air. A dinner there is a meal never to be forgotten and the cause for it all is none other than the manager and his uncanny skill to do things right. Let me introduce to you my good Holland-born friend, Barney Van der Steen, Bel Air's manager for many years past and very likely a fixture for many years to come.

Barney's personality has made him just another member of the Bel Air family of 300. Trained in the finest food palaces of Europe, he is quite European in his mannerisms. He knows his place when mixing with his members in the locker-room and at the same time he's an idol of the ladies. They insist on Barney's advice in arranging their parties at the club because they know he's a past master in seeing nothing is left undone that ought to be done. If they want 200 additional chairs for a big event, Barney can supply them in a jiffy. If they wish 10 carloads of flowers for decoration purposes, Barney will see they are delivered and properly distributed to the best vantage points. And when they want some special dishes on their bills of fare, dishes from far off Arabia or nearby Mexico, Barney is always called upon for his suggestions. Now that you've met the great Barney, let's hear what he had to say to a few questions I fired at him while sitting in his back office in the store room of his club.

"Fred Ackerman is my boss. He's chairman of my department and I work very



Barney Van der Steen, whose motto, "Members first," is the key to his fine record at Bel Air.

close with him. I am not tied down in any way but I like to have a talk with him as often as possible. It is helpful to both of us. I never go downtown to purchase anything. I select my merchants and I stick to them just as long as they deliver to me what I order. They know that I know that their trucks run both ways and for that reason they dare not try to put anything over. I use the telephone for all my ordering, thus saving a great deal of time which I can give to my members.

#### Golf No Worry of His

"You ask me how I spend my time. Well, I do not know the first thing about golf—that's the professional's business. Joe Novak, our pro, knows his business perfectly. There's never a chance for us to conflict in any way. From 8 in the morning to noon I can be found at this desk every week day. I am open to see salesmen, if any happen to be around, from 9 to 12. Other interviews have to be made by appointment. That time after 12 is for those to whom I may have something to sell—a member who may want to put on a party or something of such like. A member who may want me to arrange a banquet at his or her home. I prefer to make such appointments after high noon unless we can come to arrangements satisfactory to both over the telephone. Mark you, I'm always ready to serve my members and my members always come first.

"After noon on each day I mingle with my members and try to give them the ultimate in service. I find it pays to move around as they sit down for luncheon and as they mingle around the locker-room both before and after their play around. Special attention in the way of tasty sandwiches attractively served in the locker-room while the boys are having a snifter or two, appeals tremendously to the majority of my members. They like

that personal touch which I am anxious to give to them because it makes everybody happy.

#### Office in Stockroom

"I prefer to have my office down here in the stockroom because I feel I must be right behind my business all the time—and here is my business among those provisions you are now gazing at. Yes, that's my reserve stock of Scotch whisky. It's the best money can buy and I make a great deal of sales to my members. I allow them a discount when they buy from me. I make a profit right there. I sell a great deal of whisky that way.

"I also send a great deal of food out to the homes of my members. There's big business and big profits in doing so and I'm ready at any hour of the day or night to give such service. I often arrange for barbecue parties for members and I always stand ready to supply orchestras, additional seating accommodations, transportation and any imaginable thing that pertains to any kind of a party. Of course I must charge well for such accommodations in order to keep those figures on the club books very much in the 'old black.' I don't know how red looks on a book.

"You ask me what is the greatest problem in club life. The fatal mistake many clubs make in their administration is allowing too many inexperienced executives dictate to those under them—those whose life's work is to do what they're engaged for. Rich sons of no experience are a source of trouble wherever they are given the least bit of executive authority and they, more than anybody else, are apt to cause disruption and discontent in club management. There is no room for inexperience in club management if the club hopes to carry on with success. I am very nappy at Bel Air and I know my efforts have been appreciated by my splendid and loyal membership. I wish for no finer job."

**1939 Seniors Event at Sarasota—1939**  
PGA Seniors championship will be played on the Bobby Jones GCse at Sarasota, Fla.; dates have not been decided upon.

This will be the third Seniors event, the first two having been played at Augusta, Ga. Jock Hutchison won at the first championship, and Fred McLeod won the individual title at the second playing of the event. All PGA professionals who have reached their 50th birthday are eligible for the competition.