

# Guest Rooms Good Business for Fraser's Club

By CHARLES PRICE

**G**UEST rooms for the convenience of visitors are a source of profit far beyond that of room rental net income, says Leo Fraser, owner-manager of the Atlantic City CC, Northfield, N. J. Leo, one of the most progressive individuals in the golf business, has found this out from his own happy experiences.

The problem: accommodations for 40 or more people, at no cost to the members, financed under a manageable mortgage. The solution: a 24-room annex, self-supporting, completed at a cash outlay of only \$20,000.

Atlantic City CC is about as close to average as any club. It has a membership of 300, most of whom are in the middle-income bracket. It has its small share of wealthy, free-spending members, offset by a coterie of others who do little more than pay their dues, only \$180 a year. Physical assets are an 18-hole course, a 9-hole pitch and putt course, two putting clocks, a practice field, parking facilities for 150 cars, and a modest 55 year-old clubhouse consisting of a ballroom, dining-room, restaurant, kitchen, bar, cocktail lounge, meeting room, offices, locker room and a built-in pro shop. There are no tennis courts or swimming pools.

It was this average status above which Fraser aspired to bring the club. The community could not support a larger, more expensive club. It could just about support the one they already had. New revenue, then, would have to come from guests of the members. Hence, Fraser's 24-room annex.

## Building, Furnished, Cost \$80,000

Fraser negotiated a \$60,000 loan from the banks and added \$20,000 of his own. He put \$55,000 of it into a two-story, neo-colonial structure consisting of 24 rooms.

The building is constructed of cinder block covered with white clapboard with stained cedar-board sidings under each window. It has a flat roof, outfitted with a sprinkler system, with a one-inch pitch every six inches. The over-all structure, including portichieres, is 82 x 54 x 22 ft. Each of the 24 rooms is 13 x 15 ft.



Leo Fraser (R), pres., Atlantic City (N. J.) CC in the pro shop of the club where he started — and now owns — and Frank Westcott, pro.

One corner room serves as a heating plant and maintenance room. The other 23 each have a private bath. Fourteen rooms, in the remaining downstairs and upstairs corners, can be turned into suites. An additional \$25,000 was put into furnishings, air conditioning, landscaping, and finishing touches to the basic structure. Total cost: \$80,000.

The annex received its first occupant April 3rd, 1953, and has not been empty since. Guests have registered from almost every state in the country as well as England, Cuba, and Canada.

Rentals have more than exceeded payments to the bank and the over-all profit of the club's corporation has showed a marked increase each month over the previous year.

In comfort and decor the Atlantic City annex will compare with the accommodations of almost any club in the country despite its relative low cost. Each room is decorated differently, a la Greebrier, and was carried out by Fraser's wife, Doris, who has since been asked to decorate several hotels. Every room has a bath of colored ceramic tile with contrasting fixtures. The floors are covered with wall-to-wall cotton carpeting. There are wide



This bell, which was rung in the 1900s to warn of the departure of the last streetcar from the Atlantic City CC, now is at the club entrance.

closets, and two windows (four in the corner rooms) in each room, which are fitted with storm windows and built-in screens.

One side of the building faces a putting clock and the pitch and putt course, which are lighted at night, and the other side faces the bay and Atlantic City's skyline.

#### Bucks Resort Competition

Fraser hit on the notion of decorating every room differently in order to buck the stiff competition of nearby Atlantic City.

The resort has some of the finest hotels in the world with facilities for 70,000 people. By comparison: Cleveland has only 4,000 rooms, Baltimore just 2000. Consequently, Fraser sank an average of \$875 worth of furnishings into each room.

Every room has matching draperies and bed spreads, twin beds, three chairs, a large and a medium-sized bureau, formica-finished coffee and end tables, a bridge table, a radio, a baggage rack, lamps, pictures, mirrors, wooden coat hangers, water pitchers, over-size towels, bath mats, tub mats, decorative shower

curtains, individually wrapped drinking glasses, shoe bags, shoe cleaners, shoe horns, a bottle opener, Kleenex, a memo pad, a scorecard, and a telephone.

Fraser has discovered that maintenance costs have been less than he had anticipated. Country club people simply take better care of things than the average hotel guest. As a result, he has needed only one maid. He estimates his hot-water heating bill at \$500 yearly.

#### Figures Costs Smartly

In building the bare structure for \$55,000, Fraser saved expenses by placing all baths back to back and side by side, so that basic plumbing serves four baths instead of only one. This brought his cost per unit to \$2300, including wallpaper, different in each room. Added to this is the aforementioned \$875 for furnishings per unit and roughly \$5000 for landscaping and minor embellishments.

Fraser maintains the same rates all four seasons, although Atlantic City is known chiefly as a summer resort. He charges \$8 for members (many of whom are from out of town) for a single room, \$10 for double. For guests of members, the rates are two dollars per person higher.

Most of his business has come as a result of professionals arranging visits of their members.

To further promote his annex, Fraser holds several tournaments a year which attract out-of-town amateurs. Every Fall he offers the facilities of the club to the Philadelphia PGA, of which he is vice-president, for their annual meeting, throwing in a \$1200 pro-amateur event for good measure. Fraser catches Pinehurst and Florida vacationers from the north. "Play Golf Year Round" is his slogan, and he plugs it in all his ads and on his stationery.

#### Pro's Picture of Teamwork of Department Heads

By JAMES D. FOGERTY

Sunset Country Club, Sappington, Mo.  
(At GCSA convention)

**M**Y JOB as professional at a first class country club requires me to work at least twelve hours a day and six days per week, but it usually is a seven day week. I know nothing about grass, the various types, or how good turf can be produced, and I assure you — I am not interested in knowing all about grass — because we have a first class golf course superintendent



The course-view side of the Atlantic City CC clubhouse.