



Excellent lighting, both interior and exterior, add to the richness of Tropicana's pro shop.



Milt Ross

"... give them the run of the place."

Tropicana Technique

Milt Ross Uses 'Discoveries' to Waylay Golfers

Literature that comes out of Las Vegas by way of the new Tropicana CC there, describes the setting as the "World's most spectacular golf course." "Spectacular" is an apt word since Tropicana is an exciting splash of greenery rising out of the sighing desert sands that engulf it on all sides. But possibly "stately" would be more fitting and something of a refreshing change from that shopworn Las Vegas superlative. However, a publicist would think twice before using it for fear of scaring away patrons who



Good taste is the dominant theme at Tropicana, not only in the operation of the pro shop but the club as a whole. Shop is a study in rich paneling, combined with artistic use of felt on walls, to give Olde English atmosphere.



won't settle for anything less than "spectacular."

At any rate, Tropicana's colonial-style clubhouse is stately and so is everything else about it. The golf shop, in particular, fits this description, having as Pro Milt Ross expresses it, an atmosphere of "Ye Olde London Shoppe". That there is an air of sedateness and comfort here is borne out by the photos on these pages. At the same time, the clutter and disarray usually associated with an old English emporium, certainly isn't in evidence in Ross' shop. In fact, it is just the opposite.

Subdued, Antique Effect

The walls of the Tropicana shop are a harmony of green felt and sand colored panelling. This is in keeping with the subdued decor of the place. But with the light that streams in from a long bank of windows on one side and the illumination from two large candelabra style ceiling lamps and matching sidelights, the walls don't give the appearance of being in any way somber, but seem to come alive. The spike-proof carpeting in Las Vegas' newest pro shop is basically green, with floral designs in beige and lighter green. White orlon drapes extend from ceiling to floor. Rather massive type English display cabinets, counters and furniture complete the antique theme.

Tropicana's shop was planned this way as a kind of relief from the pastel and adobe that typifies the desert scene. Being located at a resort course, it also was built for browsing. Merchandise isn't arranged in any departmentalized fashion, but is kind of strewn about with calculated design of having the golfer suddenly come across or "discover" it, as Ross puts it. The way that golf bags are displayed, for example, (see photos) illustrates what Milt tries to do.

Got Late Start

The Tropicana shopmaster is a onetime San Francisco amateur star who decided rather late in life to get into pro golf. In the 12 years that he has been in the business, he has divided his time in working at Shawnee-on-Delaware and as Howard Capps' assistant at the Desert Inn CC, also in Las Vegas. Both are resort courses. Milt took over his present post less than a year ago and opened the new shop last September.

Ross takes a good deal of pride in the fact that his sales of playing equipment

exceed those of soft goods. He feels that his method of casually deploying bags and clubs in what amounts to rather unexpected places throughout the shop has a lot to do with the way in which his total sales volume is divided. But he isn't above giving a good deal of credit to his assistants, Mark Marquess and Charles Tawes, and his woman factotum, June Ross, for the fine sales record the shop has compiled in its first six months of operation. "These three," says Ross, "are very capable salespeople. They have the knack of selling without pushing people to buy."

This Phrase Is Out

The latter remark, incidentally, pretty well sums up Ross' ideas about pro shop selling. He believes in letting customers wander around and poke their noses into all merchandise without having someone constantly breathing down their necks. "That phrase, 'May I help you'," says the Tropicana pro, "has discouraged more people from buying than any ever invented."

The Las Vegas shop's average inventory is around \$20,000. It controls the golf car operation at the club, renting out the vehicles at a rate of \$8 per 18 holes. Its storage and cleaning rates are \$2.00 per month. So far, Ross hasn't had to make any large outlays for advertising, although the club and the hotel with which it is connected, both have sizable ad budgets. Milt, however, does go in for a considerable amount of local promotion. He and his assistants often appear on a TV show that is aired every week in L. V. The three men also devote a good deal of time to promoting a weekly Ladies Day program for the city's women golfers. Group lessons always are given on these occasions.

Ross' bookkeeping and inventory system was installed by an accountant and doesn't vary much from the usual pro shop procedure. Inventory is checked through a daily record setup. But there isn't a single item bought from suppliers without a purchase order being made out to cover it. This is the one rule of the shop.

Construction of The Tropicana CC course was started late in 1960 and completed last Sept. The course covers about 106 acres, extends to nearly 6,500 yards, and has a par of 70. It is extensively landscaped with olive, fir and palm trees and has two lagoons that serve as hazards on five holes.