

Today's club pro must put more time and effort into merchandising than ever before—for that's where he can really earn big money. No finer example of a successful and well-run pro shop is evident than the one Bob Klewin and his wife Maryellen have at the Tucson National Golf Club in Arizona.

Innovation is the key to their success. It moves merchandise faster for them and rings up countless additional sales.

One example of this inventiveness is their sales in non-golf clothes. They have built up these sales on the premise that many couples come from out of town to play golf there. Figuring couples often decide to stay overnight, Bob and Maryellen began stocking underwear, button-down shirts and socks for the men and undergarments and sports ensembles for the women. This has proved a wise decision.

Here are numerous other clever examples of "pure merchandising" that has put extra dollars in their cash register.

- Using the club's colors, Bob and Maryellen painted a tall stepladder green and displayed on each of the steps different styles and colors of men's golf shoes. In a different part of the shop they painted another stepladder orange for the display of ladies' golf shoes. A third display of golf shoes has matching socks draped over them.

- "We place our merchandise so that the most wanted items hit the prospective customer's eye first. We figure," says Maryellen, "the following order is about right for our operation; golf balls, golf gloves, tees, clubs, golf bags, shirts, shoes and then slacks.

- "We've definitely learned it is an advantage to feature women's hats in the far corner of the shop," she emphasizes. "Women like to try on hats in out-of-the-way places so that they can take their time, and perhaps avoid masculine stares. We also try to display them in ever-different ways. At present we're using the skeleton of a palo verde tree. I'm

great for novelty hats and I'm taking a lot of satisfaction from our steadily climbing sales of this item."

- They charge the players for tees so as to avoid the disturbing waste that often follows something given away free, and to make people respect the things they use. A sidelight of this is the goodwill created since the entire proceeds from the sales of tees is donated to boys' clubs.

The attitude of the two probably accounts for as many sales as their inventiveness. "Hardly a day goes by that we don't see a chance to make improvements," says Maryellen. Adds Bob, "Part of this is because, to a large degree, we let our members and guests tell us how to run our pro shop. It's not that we solicit lectures from them, but we do make every effort to listen to what they have to say while they are in the shop, especially when they talk to each other. We also watch their expressions as they wander around looking at the merchandise.

"If you make people feel welcome and happy about browsing, you've got it made insofar as sales appeal goes. People like to browse. We have several ways of encouraging it. We take an interest in the golf games of our members and guests who drop into the pro shop and do a little Monday morning quarterbacking about their games.

"Listening to Monday morning quarterbacking is also a good way to set up lessons in regard to some playing deficiency that plagued the player on the course that day."

The shop itself is also used in the Klewin's bag of merchandising tricks. The decor and atmosphere cries out "golf" in a variety of ways. There is a clock, for instance, on the wall with golf balls for numerals and flag pins at the quarter hours and hands shaped like golf clubs, for atmosphere. Color also helps convey the message. The lines of men's clothes have more color and flair, particularly in slacks and shirts, than ever before. And, strategically placed spotlights bring these colors out with

Is this any way to run a pro shop?

Bob Klewin and his wife, Maryellen, team up to produce inventive displays at Tucson National—but that's only half of it. They listen to suggestions by members; study trends; order goods early, and watch what's bought.

by Robert Joseph Allen

an almost mesmeric effect.

Even more along this line is the fact that they prominently display around the shop some of the finest and most expensive merchandise that money can buy. "It adds immense tone to the premises and we are always surprised by how much of it we sell each year," says Bob.

"Keeping classifications separate is another most important step in this theme and in merchandising golf items," he adds. "For even though it may be just one big room, a golf shop should be divided in effect by the way you display things. However, this doesn't rule out having at least one or two harmonized outfits (sweaters, slacks, shirt, shoes, belt, cap, etc.) prominently displayed as a unit here and there. This is a good opportunity to sell merchandise by color-coordinating.

Having a well-established resort and estate development as part of their golf club operation, gives the Klewins a class of customer who can usually spend more freely than the average country club member. The customers are used to the very best of service and quality, and this makes a difference in what they expect to find in the Tucson National shop when they come in to buy.

"When we first opened up," says Maryellen, "people came to 'the National' as they would to most resorts, dressed and ready to go. Now there are a lot of returnees every year who know that we are almost sure to have a wide-ranging stock of the things they like and/or need, so an increasing number of them wait and buy from us. Sometimes they write ahead and tell us what they want to have reserved for them when they arrive. We've developed this into quite a mail order business. Their desire to order their golf and sports togs from us in the winter months so they can be ahead of style for the summer keeps us always on the alert to be sure we get the new things first. So, we study the trends and order early. We watch what our customers buy

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You bet it is!

The two photos reveal the Klewin "know-how." The step-ladder, one of three strategically placed in pro shop, is painted in club's colors and is used to display shoes. Bottom photo shows unique hat rack—a palo verde tree. It was put in far corner of shop since women like to try on hats in out-of-way places.



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Does your course cheat?

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require putts longer than 20 yards in any direction. If they're larger, a player should rightfully use a pitching wedge to get to the cup.

Take a long, hard look at your traps. Are they doing the job golf meant them to do? A fairway trap so deep that it requires a sand wedge to get free is "gimmicky golf." These belong alongside greens and, here again, if a well-played shot doesn't get you on the green, something else is wrong that should be corrected.

"It takes more skill and imagination to design a course that's different, but in accordance with the rules, than it does to throw a palm tree in the middle of a trap," Mitchell points out.

Your course should always give a player a chance and a decision to make. A well-designed par-5 should employ a driver, a wood, and a short iron to the green. A player who flubs his drive should be able to make the green with two well-played woods. On "gimmicky" courses, a bad tee shot often leaves a golfer in a hopeless position. He might just as well pick up and forget the hole.

Are your par-5's designed fairly? Does your course have sharply bordered tees or other "gimmicky" situations? Golfing injustices such as these can be easily corrected. And, you can bet that your golfers will not only be aware of the improvements, they will also appreciate an "honest" course. □

Is this any way?

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or look at, and also ask them sometimes where they've been traveling and if they know about any new styles.

"We try to keep six months ahead of the usual spring opening of sports fashions. We are in this position due to the fact that our main season, December through March, is the winter season in most of the country. Therefore, we are selling goods during our season that shops in the north and east have to wait until spring to sell. In the spring, for example, I buy my merchandise for our winter season, and by September

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I usually have completed buying our merchandise for the following spring."

Since the winter season is the big time of the year in Tucson, with people coming from all over the world, often the display at Tuscon National is the first they see of the new styles.

One of the items Maryellen particularly wanted to talk about was golf skirts. "They are a real success and are here to stay, so we're stocking heavy on them in all colors and styles. The trend is away from shorts. I've been wearing short skirts around the shop and course the last two years, and lately I've been wearing them to many other places where informal dress is in good taste."

When style shows are held in the city of Tucson, the ladies often ask Maryellen to put on the portion of the show featuring sports clothes, while other dress shops will show the evening, afternoon and other type styles. This is a great advantage to her and makes their shop well-known in town for styles.

Everything a guest or member sees Maryellen wearing, can be bought at the shop. This also holds true for Bob and his assistants. (Two assistants help them with the buying. One, a college boy of 19, represents the taste of the university crowd, and the other, a young man of 29, represents the young marrieds).

The Klewins also consider novelty articles—conversation pieces and mementoes of their vacation in the West—as very important to their sales volume. "We stock numerous little novelty items," says Bob. "This season, for example, we went strongly into buying things with our club's attractive emblem engraved or sewn on them, such as neckties, and even drinking glasses. We also have personalized and hand-painted shirts, and jeweled shirts for the women.

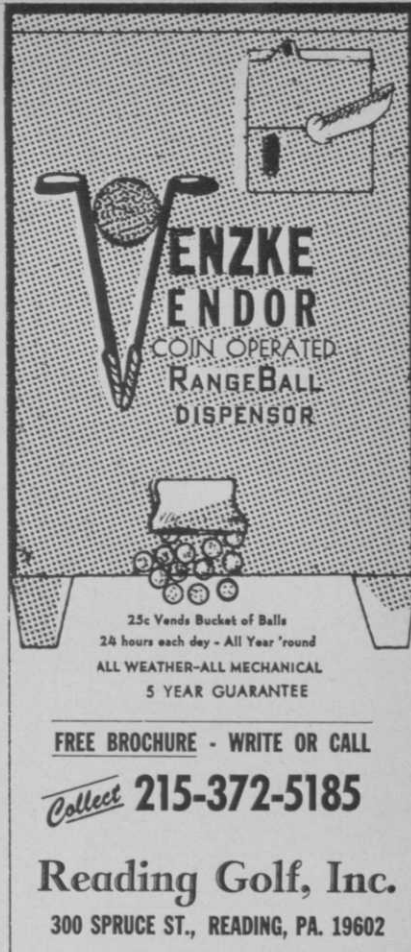
Bob had some additional observations on other ways he keeps up with the times in merchandising. "The companies we buy from have become very conscious of the tremendous business golf has become, and we study their ads

very carefully, especially about the things that are scheduled in the year ahead.

"And, it's a strange fact, but people on vacation quite often don't bring their golf clubs with them, which lets us make a nice income on rental sets. Instead of beat-up clubs, our for-hire clubs are good first-line sets, which often lead to interesting a player in buying a new set."

Bob is very proud of the fact that he and his wife are one of the original husband and wife teams in pro shop operation. And, it is very obvious by now why they have achieved their current success.

However, none of this may have come to being were it not for the arrangement under which they came to the Tucson National. The club gave them the chance they'd always wanted, a free hand to set up facilities for displaying merchandise and decorating the interior of their now famous shop just the way they wanted to. □



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