

The Crocodile Story

As told by Vince D. Draddy



"It all started as a favor for a friend of mine — doing a favor for a friend of his.

Bill Talbert asked me to take a look at a shirt with a crocodile crest from France. His friend, Bob Abdesalem, former French Davis Cup star, was having trouble selling it in the United States.

The shirt was well-worn when I first saw it. Bob Abdesalem was sporting it and probably had been for days, maybe for weeks. Yet, I could see the shirt had great potential for the American sportsman. It featured elegant ribbing on the sleeves and neck, no-bind seams and an unusual extra-long shirt-tail that wouldn't ride up! It was different and challenging."

Led by the vision of establishing the Great American Sport Shirt, Vince Draddy arranged to take on the shirt on an exclusive basis for the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean.

It took a while for the shirt to catch on at first. The public was not ready. Something superlative had to be done to prepare the public for this revolution in sport shirts. Vince Draddy pondered and finally "chose the champions" to show the way.

Mr. Draddy introduced the Chemise Lacoste to his professional golfer and golf celebrity friends, among them Mike Souchak, Julius Boros, Jim Ferree, Gardner Dickinson, Gay Brewer, Billy Farrell, Claude Harmon, Bob Rosburg, Ed Sullivan, the Duke of Windsor, Bob Hope and Bing Crosby. The public's interest was quickly aroused. "If the champs choose the crocodile shirt—it must be great." Demand spread. Sales zoomed. The crocodile shirt had its teeth in the American market.

To Vince Draddy this was not sufficient. "Everyone should be wearing these fabulous shirts." Mr. Draddy knew golfers like to have a variety of six or eight different colors in their wardrobe. He immediately introduced fifteen lively colors. The response broadened. Golf shops, finer men's shops, and department stores began ordering. The response was overwhelming and still is.

At this time we have a wide variety of items in the line. They are sold in golf pro shops, fine men's shops and major department stores everywhere. And the line continues to expand. The challenge was met.



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