

# Milton • Means Business

## Clarke's Golf still driving in the customers

Full-scale business celebrating  
10 years of service in Milton

By **STEPHANIE THIESSEN**

The Champion

Pick any winter day and you're likely to find at least a few senior citizens avidly discussing their golf games at Clarke's Golf Centre on Thompson Road.

"Seniors like to spend their winters here," said Bill Clarke, co-owner of Clarke's Golf, laughing. "They have coffee here and lie about their golf games."

It's this sense of comfort customers feel once they step into Clarke's Golf that sets it apart from other similar businesses, Mr. Clarke said.

"Service is number one. Prices are the same everywhere. It's mainly our service and personalities here (that attract people)."

This year, Bill Clarke and his wife, Mary, are celebrating the 10th anniversary of Clarke's Golf, located at 18 Thompson Rd. The business is multi-pronged, selling golf equipment, doing repairs, giving lessons and even operating a promotional marketing house for the past six years.

"It's a good combination," Mr. Clarke said. "We started as a golf retail, teaching and repair facility. Customers were saying, do you do logoed balls? Can you also do shirts?"

Never one to disappoint customers, the company now customizes everything from clothing to pens.

Clarke's Golf has two instructors who teach indoors in the winter and at various area golf courses in the spring, summer and fall.

The business is a family one, with Mary running the shop and Mr. Clarke handling corporate business. Their daughter also works there, as did their son before he left for university.

One of the reasons Clarke's Golf has been successful is that many customers come from outside Milton. But Mr. Clarke said he still credits Miltonians for being the key to his success, since they're the ones who have told those in surrounding areas about Clarke's Golf.

"The number one thing that keeps us going is our Milton customers bringing customers from other places. It wouldn't take long to fit everybody in Milton with clubs."

Mr. Clarke has lived in Milton all his life. He started out giving golf lessons in Oakville, but the lack of work in winter meant he was at home "twiddling" his thumbs, he said.

He decided to start a club repair business from home — just for the winter, so he thought.

"Once I started, I couldn't go back," he said. "It was busy from that day on."

The work is fairly steady throughout the year, he said. When winter approaches and lessons are over, the store becomes busy as people shop for Christmas. In January, when the holiday season is over, corporate sales pick up.

"The different aspects keep us busy at different times. It's a good



Bill and Mary Clarke of Clarke's Golf are celebrating their 10th anniversary of service in Milton. The full-scale business offers year-round service to golfers of all ages and skill levels.

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

flow."

Strangely enough, Mr. Clarke said he and his wife don't have time to golf as much as they'd like to. He said many people mistakenly think he plays golf all the time.

As for the promotional products side of things, Clarke's Golf is a member of the Promotional Products Association of Canada. Many orders for customized products come through Clarke's Golf's Web site.

Mr. Clarke said he acts as a middleman. If an order comes in for

48 dozen golf balls with logos, Mr. Clarke said he buys the balls from the supplier and then sends the artwork to the appropriate companies.

"The public can't go to suppliers and purchase directly," he explained.

More revenue is earned from corporate business than retail. But as far as manpower is concerned, it takes more work to run the retail side of things, Mr. Clarke said.

In the future, Mr. Clarke said he expects to be doing even more corporate business as well as retail sales.

"We've been very successful for the past 10 years with no (population) growth. So with growth, we'll get even more sales."

For more information, visit [www.clarkesgolf.com](http://www.clarkesgolf.com) or call (905) 878-1818.

Stephanie Thiessen can be reached at [sthiessen@miltoncanadianchampion.com](mailto:sthiessen@miltoncanadianchampion.com).

\$100 gets you 3 chances to win a Mattamy WideLot™ Dream Home worth over

# \$440,000

...or one of 1,794 other prizes!

3 TICKETS FOR \$100/1 FOR \$40

TICKETS AND TIME ARE RUNNING OUT... CALL TODAY! 1-877-883-3300

OR: 416-883-3300



PROCEEDS HELPING FAMILIES IN YOUR COMMUNITY