

meet THIS BUSINESS

Butting Out the Competition

Valley Couple Turns Club Cover Industry Upside Down

Ben Norris

Danny and Alice Scott love to golf. They love it because it brings friends together with strangers and creates lush landscapes with the excitement of sport because it's a game of precision and skill, and because, they say, taking the game seriously doesn't necessarily mean taking yourself seriously.

Butthead Covers is what happens when a company gets serious about a silly idea, like golf club head covers modeled as the posterior of stuffed animals. Theirs, "Edgar Allan Poe," a raven's rear for the literary golfer, or "Pierre's Derriere" for the wedding-writer French Poodle fan.

"Everyone's got a favorite animal," says co-creator Danny Scott, sitting just a few yards from the putting green in his backyard. "It's great to see someone with a cover that fits their personality."

The idea was conceived during a golf outing in North Carolina in the summer of 2003. Alice Scott explains. She and her husband decided to take a break from the road when a golf course caught Alice's eye.

While they were playing the back nine, a stranger with whom they had never teamed up as part of a foursome made a peculiar observation about one of Alice's club covers, an old reindeer head with its antlers hanging down

over the eyes.

"That thing looks like a turkey's butt," the golfer remarked. The foursome joked about the cover for the rest of the game, but after leaving the course, the Scotts wondered if there might just be a good idea in the joke.

"We thought, nobody's ever done upside down covers before," Danny says. Danny secured the Web site www.buttheadcovers.com shortly after returning to Phoenix, while the business remained in the talking stages. Four months later, Alice sat in front of her sewing machine, attaching together the prototypes, a brown furry behind.

Their son Mike began working on new ideas and designs, picking new animals and colors, and keeping the Web site up to date.



Within months, the business started catching on.

"When we started telling my son [Austin Butthead Covers], he just rolled his eyes," Alice says with a chuckle. "But after talking for awhile, he called it the first good idea I've had."

Soon Mike's graphic vision had given birth to such creations as "Dartford Duck," who's webbed orange legs point straight up from the bottom half of his bright yellow body. Naturally, there's a "Hare in One," which firmly inscribes Thumper's bottom half, complete with cotton tail, a tuft of white fur on the stomach and pink paw bottoms.

As silly as the idea may sound, Danny and Alice aren't afraid to get downright meticulous about their product. The home office is full of miniature rears, still too green to suit the couple. Sketch the rat had been re-sewn numerous times before Alice decided on the right shade of fur.

"We're making constant changes," Alice says of the product, displaying the new Panda butt cover. "We are very fussy about our designs."

There's no doubt that the Scotts' eye for perfection is paying off. On the wall in

the office of Butthead Covers' headquarters, or headquarters if you prefer, is the PGA Merchandise Award for best new accessory, an award that helped kick the product into international distribution.

"We had nine distributors in Canada vying for our product," Danny says, now standing next to a ramp in his office, pointing out dozens of thumbtacks, which represent different states where the product is being sold. "We've also got distributors in New Zealand and Mexico."

It's the local golfers however, who have really taken a shine to covers like "Tilden's Reticular," the bottom half of a cow, and "Turkial Pursant," the turkey's behind responsible for "jump-starting Butthead Covers."

"It looked like a zoo going by on the course," says Lenora Noel, merchandising assistant for the Ahern Foundation. "I saw at least 90 golfers with the covers in their bags."

A recent event for which Danny and Alice donated Butthead covers to golfers helped to raise over \$320,000 for the Soyournier Center in downtown Phoenix. The couple also works closely with other charities, promising at least \$50 from every sale to local communities. The covers sell for around \$25.

"We're working on setting up some fundraisers with schools," Danny says. "There are lots of ideas for continuous putting."

The Scotts recently delivered a shipment to Superstition Mountain Golf Course, where the LPGA was playing the Seaway International Golf pro Lorena Ochoa, who led the qualifying round, spotted the new Baboon cover on her driver.

John Gandy, director of golf at the Shalimar Country Club, says the Butthead Covers sold in the pro shop have received a very good response.

"I think they're great," Gandy says. "They poke fun at traditionalists. Golf's supposed to be fun." ■

