

2014 Merchandiser of the Year – Public

David Finocchiaro, PGA

Augustine Golf Club

Stafford, Virginia

As the Head PGA Professional at Augustine Golf Club and Raspberry Golf's merchandising manager for the four Virginia properties, David Finocchiaro, the 2014 Merchandiser of the Year – Public category, has a very full plate. He's pulled from his experiences with Marriott Corporation to not only elevate Raspberry's merchandising operations, but to also enhance the customer experience.

David Finocchiaro was born on December 31, 1968 in Cape May, New Jersey to Tony Finocchiaro and Barbara Chapman. Tony and Barbara have three children, David, and his two siblings, Tony and Gina. Following high school, David attended Richard Stockton College of New Jersey and graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Marine Biology. It was not until the age of 21 that David began playing golf.

In 1991, David took a job with the Marriott Corporation where he worked as a tennis professional at the Seaview Resort near Atlantic City, N.J. While working as the tennis professional, David met Pat Bennett who was the Golf Shop Manager. David credits Pat as the person who introduced him to golf in earnest. In 1993, David took his first golf-related job as an Outside Service Attendant at Seaview. David's passion for the game of golf continued to grow, and in 1994, he registered into the PGA's apprenticeship program.

For the next four years David gained valuable work experience that he would carry with him throughout his career. In 1999, David earned his PGA Membership. He acknowledges Pat Bennett, PGA, Darren Helfrick, PGA, and Rick Kline, PGA, as his mentors within the PGA. These three men had a huge impact on David's career in the golf industry. He states that they "helped shape my focus on the business, taught me what it was to truly be a golf professional, and had a huge impact on my retail operation practices."

David worked at the Marriott Westfield Golf Club in Clifton, Va. from 1998-2004. After spending 13 years with the Marriott Corporation, and working under three National Merchandisers of the Year – the late Kevin Hammock, PGA; Rick Kline, PGA; and Tony Austin, PGA – David took a job with Adidas Golf, from 2004 until 2008. In 2008, David moved back into golf operations becoming the Head PGA Professional at Dominion Valley Country Club. After two years at Dominion Valley, David joined the Raspberry Golf Management group. He served as the Head PGA Professional at Bull Run Golf Club in 2010 and then moved to Raspberry Falls Golf Club for the 2011 and 2012 seasons. In the Spring of 2013, David accepted his current position as Head PGA Professional at Augustine Golf Club in Stafford, Va.

In over 20 years in the golf industry, David has many accomplishments and awards. While working with Marriott, he was a part of several award-winning properties. Some of those awards include "Most Profitable Property" on four different occasions, Marriott Property of the Year on one occasion, and Golf Shop Operations Top 100 on seven different occasions.

David's influence at Raspberry Golf has been significant as well. He not only manages the direct operation at Augustine, but also oversees the entire merchandising operation of three other Virginia properties - Raspberry Falls, Bull Run, and Old Hickory. When he joined the staff at Augustine in 2013, he immediately laid out a promotional plan to liquidate old inventory and make way for new. These planned promotions were also utilized at the other Raspberry properties and proved to be

profitable. Demo Events at each property were also beneficial with equipment sales from all four events totaling \$44,000 by the fall of 2013. In addition, David's leadership at Augustine helped to increase sales in soft goods by 25% and hard goods by 40%. These increases contributed to a total retail sales increase of 50% over 2012.

Raspberry Golf's Purchasing Plan also has a positive impact on the bottom line of David's retail operation. The plan, similar to that of a Mill River plan, charges customers an up-front fee which gives them product pricing at 15% over the wholesale cost. Since the institution of this plan, the four Raspberry properties in Northern Virginia have experienced profit margins of 28% to 34%.

David attributes much of his success in golf to the people he worked with and learned from while at the Marriott Corporation. His focus is on providing experience, direction, and culture to his staff to ensure that they are delivering a memorable experience for guests at the facilities. To reward his staff, David has implemented a points system based on reaching budgeted sales and profit margin goals. If targets are reached, the staff receives a percentage of the sales that is paid out on a quarterly basis. David is very proud of this program and believes that rewarding good performance will guarantee a commitment from staff and contribute to increasing profit margins.

David is a resident of Bristow, Va. and has been happily married to his wife, Sheri, for 18 years. The Finocchiaros have a son, David, who is 9 years old.