

people: FOCUS

Joe and Pam DAVIS

The couple that golfs together, stays together

For some people golf is a game, played as a hobby or perhaps with some passion. For others, golf is a lifestyle that dominates their waking hours and permeates every aspect of their lives. For Joe and Pam Davis of Long Cove, golf is even more than that. “Golf is more than just a shared hobby for us,” said Pam with a smile. “It’s like a glue that holds our marriage together.”

The Davises have always made time for the sport they love, even during their years in New Canaan, Connecticut when Joe was a busy Wall Street executive, and Pam was raising four sons. Relaxing with a round of golf or socializing with friends on the course or at the club was not enough for them. In time, each would reach a competitive level of play and make contributions to the sport that would improve play for others.

Like many other avid golfers facing retirement, the Davises were looking for a place to enjoy warm weather, beautiful fairways, and challenging greens on which to carve out a lifestyle based on the game they love. They had vacationed on the island with friends, and Joe was familiar with several local courses from playing in the Society of Seniors Golf Tournament.

“I’m a late bloomer when it comes to playing well,” Joe said. “I had developed a game when I was younger, and I loved to practice. But it wasn’t until I was a senior that I became competitive.” The Davises had joined the prestigious Winged Foot Golf Club in New York when they relocated east from Michigan. By 1988, he qualified for the U.S. Senior Open, a feat he repeated in 1989. He’s qualified five times as a United States Senior Amateur and was the Metropolitan Golf Association of New York Senior Champion in 1990.

It was while playing with the son-in-law of a friend that he developed an offshoot of his golf hobby that today keeps him as busy as his game – making golf clubs. “I asked him a few questions about the Persimmons head he had. It turned out that he had made it. I thought that’s something worthwhile to do, and I started from there.”

The hobby that started in his basement 25 years ago continues today. Joe gets requests for his custom-made clubs from all over the country. He is self-taught: he read a few books, walked himself through the process, and learned essentially by doing. He has only attended one club-making school. His clubs are in demand by those in the know; he has earned the moniker “The Doctor of Distance.”

“In today’s world, everyone wants to hit the ball farther, so I make more drivers than anything else,” he said. He also makes irons, woods, and putters designed for each golfer based on their size, the speed of their swing, and their level of expertise. The entire lower level of his home has been given over to a workshop with equipment, inventory, and gadgets used in the making of clubs. Each set of clubs he makes is made to order,



PHOTOS BY ROB KAUFFMAN



and he doesn’t advertise.

Like her husband, Pam is also a competitive golfer. She is on the Long Cove Women’s Golf Team that won the Lowcountry Women’s Golf Association Division Championship last year. She has a position on the

Winged Foot Women’s team when she returns to Connecticut in the summer. Also like her husband, she turned her hand to a creative endeavor.

Pam was the designer of the Rainswetter, a waterproof sweater knitted with yarn treated with a proprietary water-repellent, causing water to roll right off the sweater. Pam had always been a sewing enthusiast. Her sister had sent her a swatch of the yarn, and the wheels started turning. “I played golf in all types of weather – cold, rain, and wind,” she said. She knew first hand the challenge of finding outerwear that allowed for freedom of movement and comfort while protecting the golfer from the elements.

What began as a cottage industry in 1990 soon blossomed into a phenomenon with coast-to-coast sales and a significant presence at golf tournaments, golf clubs, and in golf magazines. This stay-at-home mom soon found herself co-owner of the Rainswetter Company, fielding individual orders of up to 600 pieces from Golf Digest and orders from Augusta National.

“There was only one major club that I can think of that didn’t sell them,” Joe said of his wife’s success.

“It was a good run,” said Pam. In 2002, she sold the company and her design remains a must-have item for serious golfers and other outdoor enthusiasts today.

For the “Doctor of Distance” and designer of the Rainswetter, golf is a shared passion and lifestyle. More importantly as Pam said, “It’s a lot of fun.” – Teresa Colvin