



Find Service, Experience at Ski & Tennis Station

At Butler + Burke, the busiest season of the year – no surprise here – is the time leading up to the April 15 tax deadlines. What you might find surprising, however, is that specialty retailer Ski & Tennis Station has its own equivalent of “tax season,” with more than 80 percent of its retail sales surrounding the winter holidays.

While retail sales are strong during the holidays, the folks at Ski & Tennis Station have little down time during the rest of the year. They’re always looking at “what’s next” in terms of providing excellent customer service, forecasting trends for skiing and tennis, and purchasing the top-of-the-line merchandise customers have come to expect.

Founded in 1977 in Winston-Salem, Ski & Tennis Station is the standard bearer ski and tennis retailer in the Winston-Salem and Greensboro area, with stores at 119 South Stratford Road in Winston-Salem and 1410 Westover Terrace in Greensboro.

“We’ve become a local institution in terms of high-end winter and summer wear, and we’re awfully proud of that,” said Doug Roberts, who co-founded Ski & Tennis Station. “We have tried hard to keep our focus on excellent service by having knowledgeable, experienced staff. This business philosophy has worked well for us.”

Roberts has maintained many of his key staff for years. “We have some employees who have been with Ski & Tennis for 20 to 25 years,” he said. “Our clients have become devoted to our staff and trust them for their depth of expertise.”

At one time, Ski & Tennis Station was in an expansion mode, opening stores in Raleigh and Durham in the late 1980s. “However, it became difficult to transplant our personal expertise from a distance, so we closed the Triangle stores in 1992,” Roberts said. “Butler & Burke has been with us all the way – during periods of both growth, and in the case of the Triangle stores, retreat.”

Roberts said that Butler + Burke has been particularly helpful to Ski & Tennis Station because of the firm’s knowledge of retail strategies and the ability to draw from the experience of other clients that have similar retail needs and concerns.

Today, Ski & Tennis Station has approximately 10 full-time employees in the Triad stores and adds more seasonally. "Our employees spend a lot of time looking for trends in ski and tennis wear, equipment and accessories so that we can share our expertise with customers," added Roberts.

Among the premium brands that Ski & Tennis Station carries are K2, The North Face, Columbia, Solomon, Hardwear, Rossignol, Prince and Wilson. Ski & Tennis Station also has explored some Internet-based opportunities but for now remains committed to direct retailing in the Triad.

"We've been around a while in Winston-Salem and Greensboro, and we're here to stay," Roberts said. "It shows my age, but I remember some of the kids who came into our store to be fitted for skis at age 6 or so who now bring their own children to the store. That's gratifying to us to know that not only are we committed to our customers for the long-term, but they also are committed to us."