

championship Shih-Tzu dogs she raises. On the day we talked, she spoke so lovingly about the current litter of puppies that it was hard not to head for the car to go visit them in person.

Julie also wears the hat of designer, creating rug patterns by using her powers of description to have her ideas translated into drawings done by Debbie Peterson, and in a pinch, Bev Cremer. She says she loves being creative and enjoys everything about wool, fabrics, and colors but thinks she doesn't have an eye for color, so she credits the talents of Emma Lou Lais and Rhonda Manley of Black Sheep Wool Designs and Maggie Bonanomi from Simply Butternut in Lexington, MO, and works closely with Bev Cremer to pull the palettes together. Julie also has high praise for her decorator, Mary Beth McParden, whom she says makes Among Friends come alive with her incredible windows and displays. Like Julie, Mary Beth wears more than one hat; she also stays on top of inventory.

It's interesting to note that although Julie listens to others often, sometimes she does the opposite of what she's been advised. For example, she was

**You'll find something interesting
in every corner of the store.**

told not to sell small projects, but she felt that the only way a new rug hooker could learn and feel comfortable was by making a small project that would require a minimal investment in both time

and money. Her instincts proved correct and the 5' x 7" kits are best sellers, popular with experienced rug hookers as well as those who are getting started.

Because Among Friends is located in an area frequented by tourists, Julie realized that she needed a web site so visitors who came to meet her in person could continue to shop via the Internet and so that those who wanted to shop but could not visit would be able to do so. The site, designed by Lisa Las Vegas, launched in 2004.

Deciding on a title for a designer profile often takes a long time. The title for this one, "Smart Energy," came to me within seconds of meeting Julie



Patterns, penny rugs, fabrics, flannels and so much more!

Burns on the phone. It feels like the perfect description. She listens to and values her customers, she's passionate about what she does, she works hard, and is grateful at the same time for the luck that has come her way. She's one smart cookie, taking a risk now and then to be her own boss, combining the things she learned as a creative child with the things she learned as a single mother to become the person she is today. ♡

Visit Among Friends at www.amongfriendswoolydesigns.com Julie also designs patterns for The Wool Street Journal, a publication for hookers, www.woolstreetjournal.com.

Just one of many rug hooked designs created by Julie.

