

HANGING AROUND ROME

Over the years, the way people decorate their homes and offices has changed. During that time, *Hanging Around Rome* has continued to evolve along with its clientele.

Custom framing has always been the focus of the business located at 1205 Dean Avenue. Now, though, people are bringing in different items to be framed.

"The industry has changed," said *Hanging Around Rome* owner **Beverly Burnes**. "When I first started, having lots of posters on the wall was a big part of interior decorating. We have seen a gradual change to fine paintings, family memorabilia, portraits and personal photographs. Now, what people want to put on their wall needs to mean something more than just a print that fills space."

Burnes purchased King Picture Frames 18 years ago, then changed the name to *Hanging Around Rome* the following year. Since then, her clientele's everyday lifestyle changes have played a part in how they decorate.

"People are entertaining at home now more than in the past," Burnes said. "They want their home to be a reflection of themselves. Now things are more customized than in the past. People want to display Aunt Susie's painting or a nice oil painting.

"We frame a lot of keepsakes relating to travel, and we do a lot of shadow box work, too," Burnes continued. "We'll see customers wanting to display a christening dress or limited edition sports memorabilia in shadow boxes."

The changing landscape of her business has Burnes continually looking to update her services. "We have to keep looking for new items, such as moldings or custom framing ideas. We are constantly looking for new moldings to fit our customers' needs."



Tippy Hackett (left) and other customers at *Hanging Around Rome* are considered friends to Nancy Self (right) and shop owner Beverly Burnes.

But more than just frames have been added to *Hanging Around Rome's* inventory through the years. The shop has taken on the feel of a gallery, with original artwork and pottery on display.

"The walls show all original artwork in order to give local artists a venue to sell their work," Burnes said. "The pottery has been added in the past two years. These have really helped bring in new clientele. A lot of our earlier customer base is interested in pottery, but it brought in some people who had never been here before."

Once they're in, the customers tend to come back. A lot.

"Most of our customers have become friends," Burnes said. "Customer service is one of the biggest reasons for our longevity. Also, we have a central location that is easy for anyone in Rome to get to, and easy parking access, which helps when customers have

big mirrors or artwork to bring in."

While her customer base reaches into outlying areas such as Cartersville, Cedartown, Atlanta and Northwest Alabama, Rome is still the primary focus of Burnes' business. For Burnes, *Hanging Around Rome's* membership in the Greater Rome Chamber of Commerce has been valuable.

"We get a lot of exposure from being a Chamber member," Burnes said. "In a town of this size, it really makes us feel more a part of the community, and more in tune with the other local businesses. That's part of what makes Rome a great place to live – the small-town feel."

And with all of the customers, er, friends, Burnes and her staff have made over the past 18 years, it's easy to believe there will be plenty more great years that they will be *Hanging Around Rome*. ■