

Key Largo jewelry maker finds her niche

BY JILL ZIMA BORSKI
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KEY LARGO — N.J. Design is a home-based and Internet business that offers custom jewelry and can help with gift ideas for the person who has almost everything.

Nancy Jo Doughty, a 26-year Key Largo resident, began making jewelry as a hobby. Then, she started selling items she made to friends.

Soon, a friend started bringing the jewelry to work with her, showing it to co-workers and bringing Doughty orders and checks.

That, plus working in a shoe store at Ocean Reef that also sold jewelry, prompted the nascent jewelry maker to think that she too could create such offerings.

So, Doughty set up a home work space and procured a wholesale number.

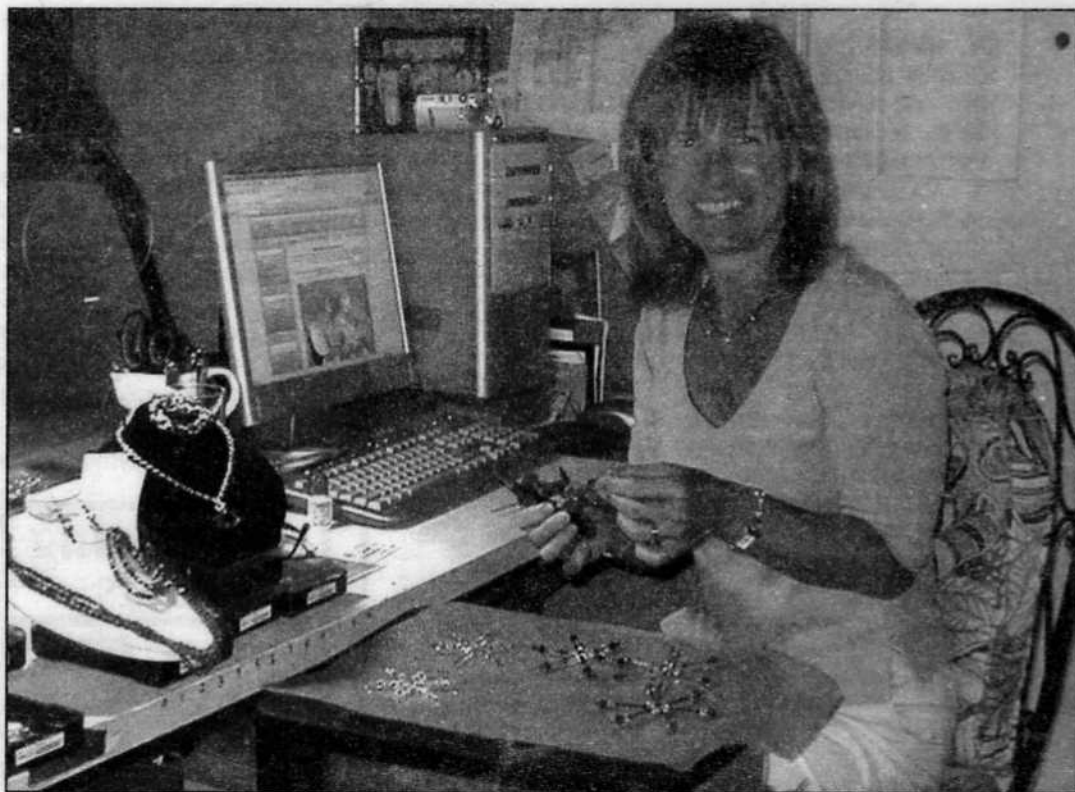
In business for three years now, she is happy to be able to work at home while raising her two children, ages 11 and 7.

Creating custom and one-of-a-kind pieces are N.J. Design's trademarks. When the creator finds a beautiful shell, stone or charm, it inspires her to make a work of art.

She also uses sparkling Swarovski crystals, natural pearl and coral, sterling silver and 14-karat gold in her pieces.

The designer capitalizes on ideas like taking a magnetic name tag from the workplace, and transforming it into magnetic brooches that won't harm delicate clothing fabrics, yet can be magnetically strong enough to wear on a jeans jacket or lapel.

Everything from upscale to "chunky and funky" — her Wilma Flintstone necklaces, as she calls them — are available in a price range of \$15 to \$300.



JILL ZIMA BORSKI/Contributed

Nancy Jo Doughty of Key Largo began a home business three years ago making custom and unique jewelry, and recently expanded her client base by creating a Web site.

Personalized jewelry with sports themes or names can be ordered, as well as seasonal pieces such as a charm bracelet representing the 12 days of Christmas.

Other charms such as a chef's hat, palm tree, beach chair with umbrella, dolphin or other sea creatures can be placed on a necklace, choker or bracelet.

Faith and salvation bracelets with religious significance, or personalized earrings and anklets can be gifts as well.

Doughty also makes decorative fan pulls and Christmas tree ornaments.

She has shown her designs at arts and craft shows from Marathon to Key Largo, and mentioned San Pedro's Art Under the Oaks in January as a beneficial experience, as well as her first show.

She also does home shows,

similar to Tupperware parties, and schedules appointments for convenient shopping.

Doughty loves being able to work at home and keep flexible hours to meet the needs of her family.

In five years, she hopes the business makes her financially secure. Toward that end, she recently established a Web site, www.njdesignkeylargo.com, where her jewelry can be displayed and bought online using

a credit card.

"I can't think of anything better," said Doughty of her hobby-turned-profession. "It's exciting to think it can work."

Uniquely Yours in Key Largo's Plaza 103 will carry Doughty's designs as of Oct. 1, and the owners of Shear Paradise will host an after-hours jewelry show at their salon Nov. 17.

business

OF THE WEEK

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Island Silver & Spice has women's, men's and children's resort wear, swim suits, a large jewelry selection with high-end Swiss watches and marine-theme pieces, tropical house wares, cards, toys and games, bedding and bath goods, and unique gifts.