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ISSUE 2 VOL 13 2019

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By Lance Wallach, Nationally Known Tax Expert & Financial Planner



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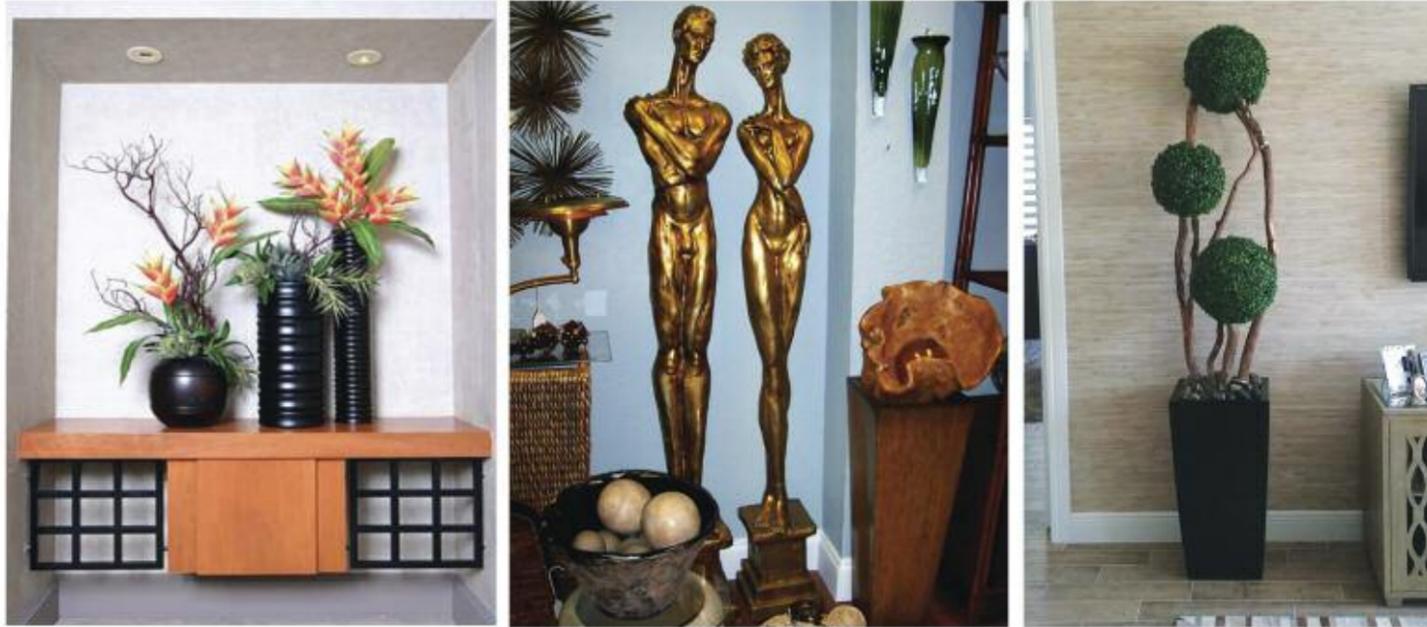
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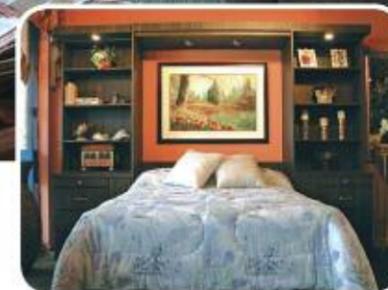


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ART AS THE FOCUS OF DESIGN

A seamless fusion of two disciplines generates residential harmony and perfect function. Harry Martinez & Arielle Meyer, Studio33 Interiors, Fort Lauderdale

When the client first conceived of owning his own penthouse apartment home in Wilton Manors, Florida, he already knew he was in love with this diverse community and the transformation it has experienced in the last 15 years. To realize his dreams he not only had to find the right space but figure out a way to express his lifestyle, taking advantage of a maximum view of the neighborhood's main street. A host to parades and various events throughout the year, the main boulevard is also the hub of its vibrant nightlife.

The apartment had a challenging drawback from the starting point; a long awkward hallway that was uneventful and ended with a view of a closed kitchen. The rest of the apartment was ordinary and lacked style and function. Back of the house functions such as the electric panel, an air conditioner closet and the laundry room were painfully visible from the living room. Something was definitely missing. This is where the Principals Harry Martinez and Arielle Meyer of Studio33 stepped in. Having worked on a previous beach front apartment, the good fit between client and designer essential to achieve successful design had already been established. The charismatic duo was ready for the challenge.

Using a palette of grays and ebony, the designer's strategically located concealed doors, so that the living room becomes a sophisticated and dramatic entertainment space. "We use the discipline of design and fine art always together and not only as decoration" says Meyer, "but to realize the functional and architectural requirements of space" says Meyer.

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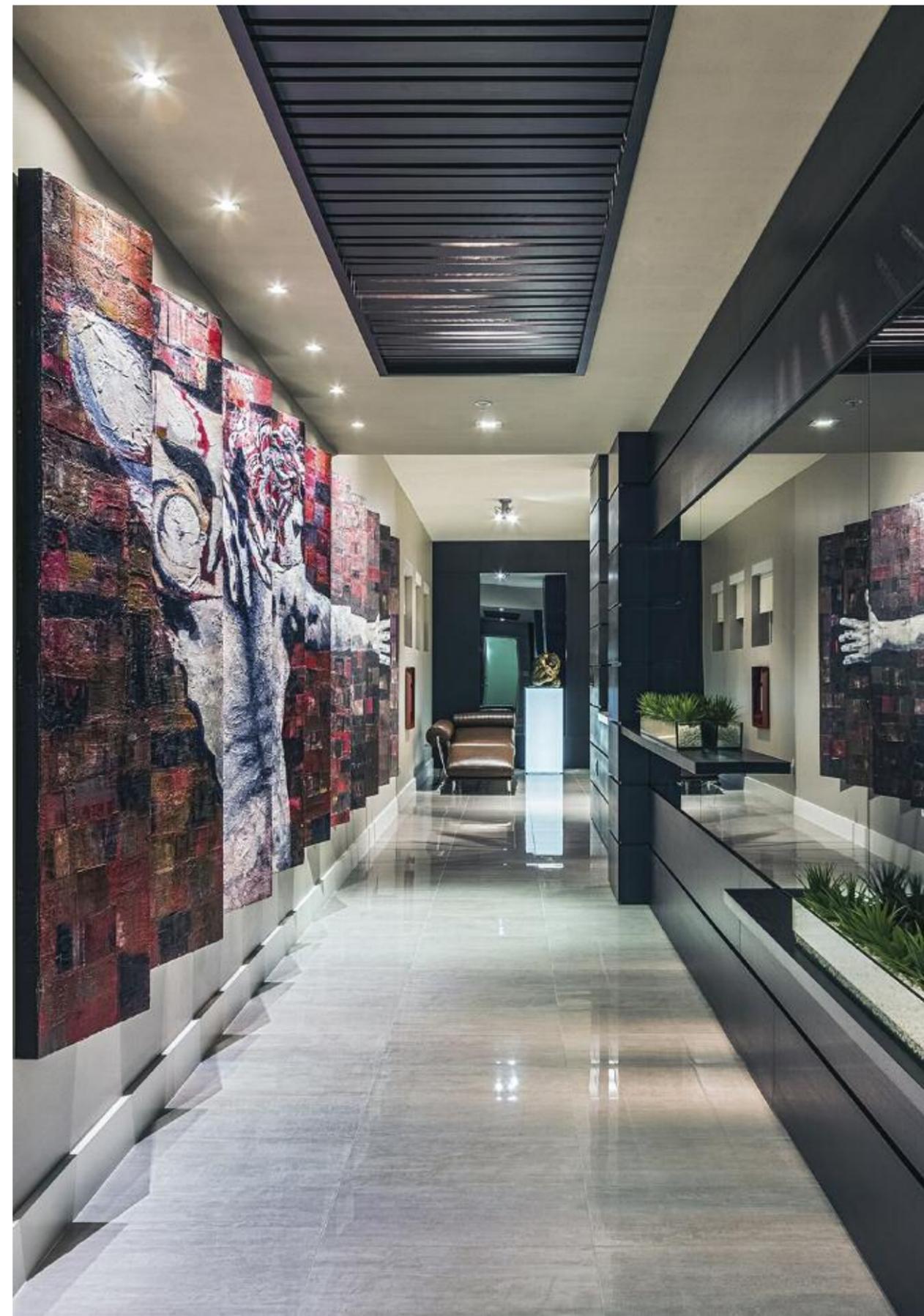


In the living room, geometric accent pillows are set on a warm gray linen sofa designed by Studio33. Comfortable swivel chairs float upon a soft gray textured area rug. A custom millwork ceiling soffit in white with black slots houses recessed spot LEDs are strategically directed towards a red lacquer painting, by Harry Martinez.

(Right page) The solution to the hallway involved the fusion of art and architecture” says Martinez. Not only a designer but also an artist, Martinez specializes in the medium of encaustic, a wax and resin technique that uses a hot palette and is also a painting technique dating back to the Greeks and Romans. By placing a large mirror with floating consoles on one side of hallway the artist created a colossal 10 panel installation strategically angled to be reflected in the mirror immediately upon opening the door.

Geometric accent pillows are set on a warm gray linen sofa.

The solution to the hallway involved the fusion of art and architecture” says Martinez.





The master bedroom uses a soothing palette of grays.

The master bedroom uses a soothing palette of grays. A rhythmic ensemble is created by a series of photographs composed of architectural building details in black and white. A dark brown leather upholstered bench creates warmth and appeal. Martinez and Meyer painted the stencil detail in the column furthering the custom feeling of the space. “We loved using stenciling in a different and more contemporary way”, says Meyer. Together with the stenciling, the designers used a vertical textured wall covering bringing a subtle verticality to the room while simultaneously creating a focal wall and perfect backdrop for the king size bed.

The master bathroom creates the experience of pure luxury. By cleverly floating a dark ebony console with a white stone top of statuary polished marble, Martinez and Meyer bring sense of amplitude to an otherwise ordinary space. The mirror on mirror adds a polished touch to the scheme. The client is able to relax in a spa-like elegant atmosphere.

(For a complete listing of all sources used in this project, please visit www.florida-decor.com and click on SOURCES FOR FEATURE ARTICLE - THE END -



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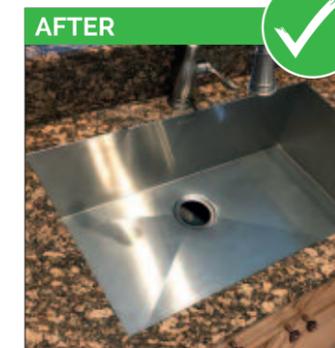
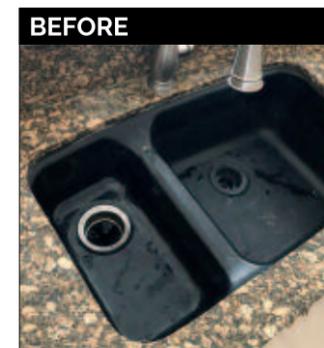
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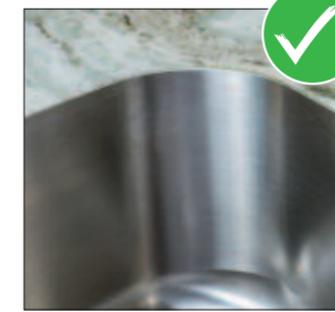
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IRS Secrets You Should Know

BY LANCE WALLACH

The IRS has learned that small businesses give them the best results on audits with the least effort on their part. The IRS has decided to go where they think the cheating is taking place. Unfortunately, they think that you and your small business are not paying your fair share.

AUDITS for high-income people will also be increasing. What is below applies to many high-income people, even retired people. Most accountants are basically tax collectors for the IRS. They tell you what to pay but usually don't help you substantially reduce your taxes. Hopefully, after you read this article, they will not get any more of your money.

The IRS has increased audits of small businesses by fifty (50) percent, so you need to learn how to better protect yourself. **Most of what is in the next three paragraphs is what you should NOT do.** Have a lot of zeroes after the numbers on the return. Amend the return. Take a low salary while operating as an S corporation or as a sole proprietor. Have unreported income, especially in cash. Live in an expensive house, or otherwise in visible opulence, while taking a low salary. That way, people can wonder how you can afford that house, car, etc. Let me clarify the statement in the preceding paragraph about having a lot of zeroes after numbers on a tax return. I do not mean high figures, since you must report income truthfully, of course. What I mean is that numbers that are too round lead IRS agents to think "estimate", and this leads to unnecessary attention and scrutiny.

Make sure that your retirement plan is never updated as the law changes. Hire independent contractors, illegals, etc. Make use of an abusive tax shelter and/or listed transaction as a vehicle to reduce taxes. Seriously, you may be surprised to learn that many popular retirement and life insurance employee benefit plans fall into these categories.

If you are in a listed transaction, accountants now must report your participation to the IRS or face potential monetary fines and penalties in six figures, up to \$100,000. Accountants and other tax return preparers also face increased penalties and scrutiny if clients take questionable tax positions or deductions. The upshot of all of this is that your activities, even if you are unaware that they are questionable, are increasingly likely to attract the Service's attention, making you a likely audit target.

Even now, there are still creative ways to reduce taxes and, for good measure, insurance costs. You might try renting a captive insurance company, which often greatly reduces both taxes and insurance premiums. Life insurance costs can be reduced through the use of a technique known as the insurance swapout process. Do you want to obtain insurance without a cash outlay? Use non-recourse loans. And, you can turn your life insurance into cash that you can use, without dying, by use of a life settlement.

These are just some techniques that, by applying just a few of them to your business, you could save thousands or even more. Above all, and more on this later, it is most important to find an accountant who acts as your tax protector instead of an IRS collection agent. Most accountants seem to simply return your tax return with instructions about how much to pay and where to send it. Only if pressed will they even be bothered to try to explain anything. You have to do better than that.

Returning for the moment to possible money and tax-saving techniques, consider operating as a C corporation, which makes many otherwise non-deductible expenses deductible. Consider using a VEBA, 412(e)(3) plan or K plan to keep more of your own money in your pocket. Health savings accounts, captive insurance companies and life insurance swapouts can all reduce taxes and insurance costs.

There is probably not a business owner anywhere who does not think he pays too much in taxes. Most, in reality, actually do. Accountants have to "play it safe" nowadays, which does not reduce your tax bill. On typical returns, tax preparers' work is often subject to "interpretations" of the tax laws. Recent law changes may force preparers hoping to lower a client's tax

bill to be less aggressive with respect to these interpretations, or else they may risk substantially increased penalties. If a client insists on taking an aggressive deduction, the preparer, hoping to protect himself from sanctions, may include a form explaining the circumstances. This may protect the preparer while triggering an audit of the client.

This understandably angers taxpayers who feel strongly about particular deductions. And these penalties do not apply to taxpayers preparing their own returns. But, of course, notwithstanding this, the more complex a return is, the more foolhardy it is to prepare it without professional assistance. But the bottom line is that your accountant is reluctant to be aggressive anymore, and is less likely to give you the benefit of the doubt on tax deductions. For example, if a client is participating in what is known as a "listed transaction", both the taxpayer and the accountant must file with the IRS, alerting the Service to the taxpayer's participation. A simple failure to file, for whatever reason, can result in a penalty of up to \$100,000, as can incomplete, inaccurate, and misleading filings. These penalties apply to both the client and the accountant. All of this filing, of course, may well trigger an audit. So what does the prudent business owner do? He can forget about the deduction, prepare his own return, or he can retain an accountant who is not afraid to fight with the IRS. Unfortunately, all of these options are difficult. The Internal Revenue Code is complex, and very few accountants understand most of it. And the IRS has recently made the accountant into a policeman. Most accountants are honest and knowledgeable, but are forced to be cautious. They try to do what is best for their clients, but the IRS has recently made that almost impossible. Also, every year, the tax laws are changed to one extent or another, and accountants are constantly challenged to remain current, knowledgeable, and proficient. In light of all this, you may want to test your accountant's knowledge. Consider asking him the following questions:

1. Why have I not been using a 412(e)(3) plan or a captive insurance company to reduce my taxes and other expenses?
2. Why have not I been using a VEBA to reduce my health insurance costs?
3. Am I a good candidate for a K or double K to reduce taxes presently and provide for a secure retirement?
4. What strategies are you familiar with whereby I can legally deduct the cost of my life insurance?
5. Why have not you given me a copy of the IRS industry specialization report (which can be obtained free from the IRS) which shows the items that the IRS will be looking at in my business, both with respect to who will be audited and what will be looked at in an audit, and will provide me with a lot of other useful information?
6. Am I currently using any strategies that the IRS considers abusive? You may be disappointed, but you should not be surprised, if you discover that your accountant knows little or nothing with respect to the answers to these questions.

The point is that, under no circumstances, should you be forced to lie down and take the abuse and malpractice that most salespeople pin on you. Get your financial and business affairs in order, and, if necessary, take some action! Take some serious action! The information provided herein is not intended as legal, accounting, financial or any other type of advice for any specific individual or other entity. You should contact an appropriate professional for any such advice.

Lance Wallach, National Society of Accountants Speaker of the Year and member of the AICPA faculty of teaching professionals, is a frequent speaker on retirement plans, abusive tax shelters, financial, international tax, and estate planning. He writes about 412(i), 419, Section 79, FBAR and captive insurance plans. He writes for more than 50 publications, is quoted regularly in the press and has been featured on television and radio financial talk shows including NBC, National Public Radio's "All Things Considered" and others. Lance has written numerous books including "Protecting Clients from Fraud, Incompetence and Scams," Contact him at 516.938.5007, wallachine@gmail.com or visit www.taxadvisorexpert.com.



TRANSFORMING A 70s HOME INTO A MODERN PALACE

DESIGNER Toby Zack Designs, Plantation, Fl.

Recreating variations with existing themes is as much a part of Toby Zack Designs as is designing new homes. When she stepped foot into this majestic residence, it was love at first sight. Classic modern architecture made Zack's vision for the home crystal clear; transform this 1970's home into something classic and modern while keeping the original distinct architectural characteristics.

This 7,000 to 8,000 sq ft home is owned by a relatively young couple who also owns an apartment in New York City. Toby said working with this couple was fabulous, "they have a clear understanding about design and they listened to my views, understood my sense of design, and trusted me". The first transformation of the residence came when architect Peter Bliztein



opened up the ceiling in the main living area. The imposing skylight is perhaps the most dramatic focal point of the home setting the stage for virtually everything that was to follow. Bliztein also incorporated features into the fireplace as well as other architectural details throughout the home. Other than that, Zack was left to her own design ideas.

-THE END-

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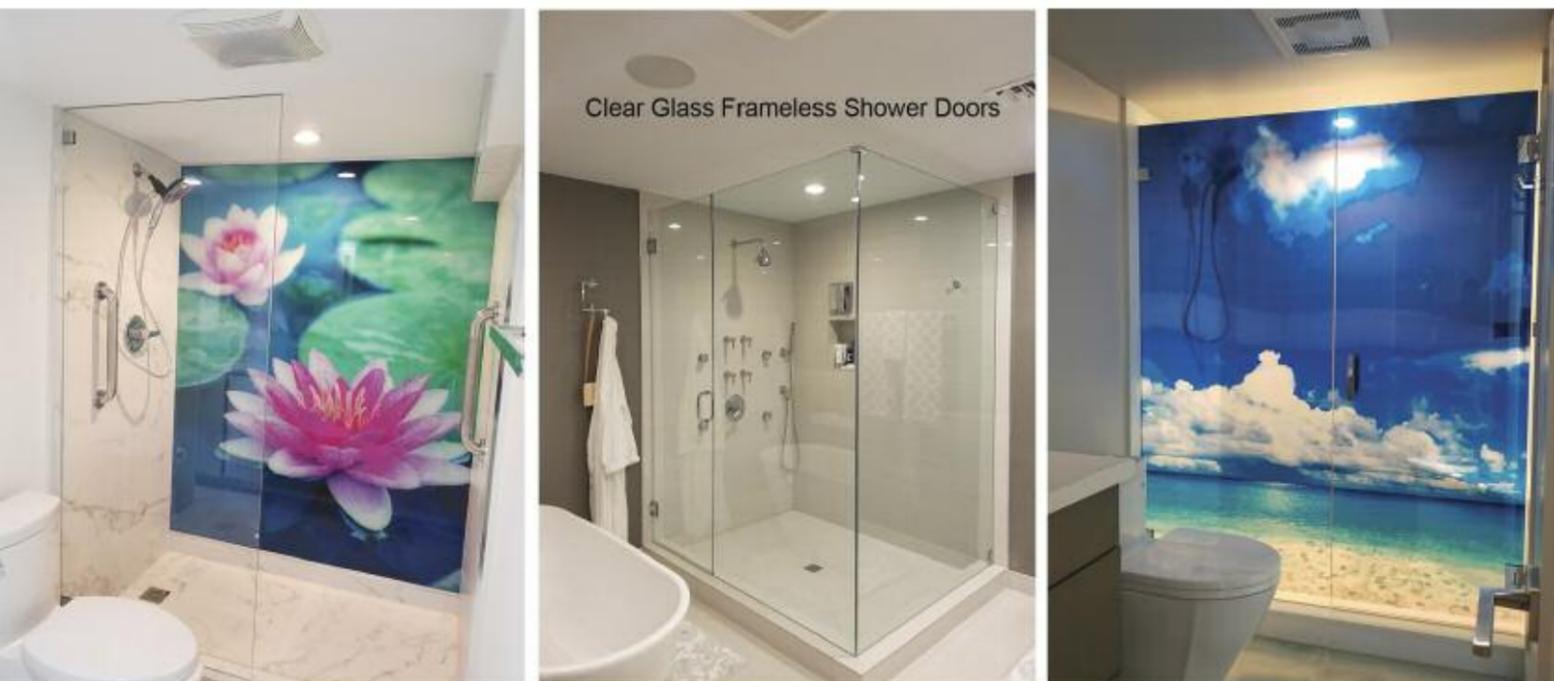
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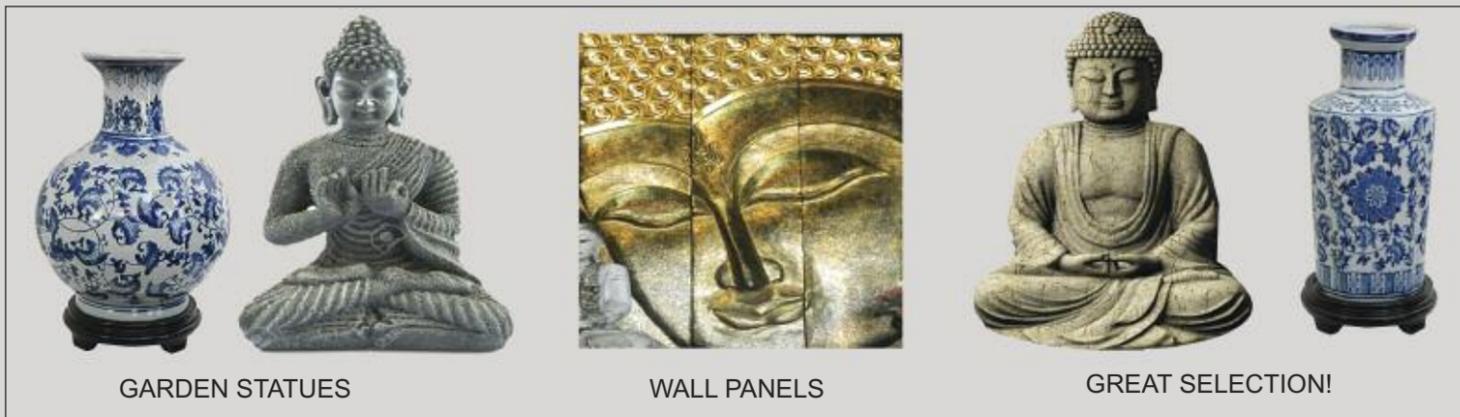


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