

OWNER: Litsa Spanos ■ **LOCATION:** Cincinnati, Ohio ■ **WEB SITE:** www.adcfineart.com

Awarded to the gallery/frameshop showing the best profit margins for 2005 in each income category

Tom Cruise and Litsa Spanos have something in common: They're both into risky business. Spanos, president of Art Design Consultants, Inc., attributes the bulk of her success by constantly pushing "to try new things, and many of them are risky. They take money, effort and time. Sometimes you win and sometimes you lose," she says.

Spanos is certainly on a winning streak. After landing on the general DECOR Top 100

ket. She's also puts local marketing at the forefront of her business strategy. "I've been concentrating on reaching existing customers through promotions, different parties, art exhibits," she explains. "I really like to do something different to catch their attention, such as create really unique invitations." She also sends out quarterly newsletters and partners with people in similar industries—University of Cincinnati officials recently hired her to curate

ADC, Art Design Consultants, Inc.



Litsa Spanos, president of Art Design Consultants, Inc.

(Left photo) Caitlin McCamey, gallery coordinator, stands amongst the art in the company's gallery. A 3,000-square-foot contemporary art gallery is adjacent to the company's equally large frameshop. The gallery has been a driving force in the company's profitability.

Art & Framing Retailers Award list two years ago, she's taking home a top prize this year for her entrepreneurship, vision and a few risky decisions that have helped her shop increase revenue by 118 percent between 2004 and 2005. It's the most profitable one-year leap since the business opened 13 years ago.

In the seven years since she's operated her retail store (she previously focused on selling directly to corporate clients from her basement), she's expanded the space seven times. She credits the most recent addition, a 3,000-square-foot contemporary art gallery adjoining the equally large frameshop, as a driving force in her profitability.

"Today, being a custom framer and art dealer go hand-in-hand," she says. "Customers come in to get custom framing, and then they look at the new gallery space, and inevitably they are impressed. We've had a lot of impulse buys on the spot."

In addition to expanding the business physically, Spanos has taken great strides in increasing national awareness of her store by attending DECOR Expo shows in New York and Atlanta, as well as going to High Point and the Las Vegas Furniture Mar-

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Although marketing can be costly, Spanos cleverly invested in a color copier instead of having promotional material printed by professionals. It also helps that her gallery coordinator doubles as a graphic designer.

Keeping with her profit philosophy of "increasing revenue while decreasing expenses," she also buys framing supplies in bulk and has plenty of room to store them in her 8,000-square-foot framing facility.

But the top priority for Spanos is the customer. She keeps clients coming back for more with an incredible selection of more than 1,000 frames and a can-do attitude toward their needs. "We'll do anything for a customer," she admits. "We might hand-deliver a piece that won't fit in their car or find a special frame we don't carry. We even write 'thank-you' notes and make follow-up phone calls. Anything to make sure they are 100-percent satisfied every time."

JUDGES' COMMENTS:

"The extensive application submitted, along with the wide array of pictures and examples of profitability, made it a winner. Most importantly, the company demonstrated steady growth, and they reduced expenses."

TIP:
"Keep yourself and your business in front of your customer at all times. Constantly remind them of what you are doing, and try to find new customers."

