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Why Hidden TVs Like Samsung's 'The Frame' Are Trending—and Which One to Buy

Discreet, almost invisible TVs—some look like mirrors, some roll away into a base—marry elevated aesthetics with superior viewing quality. But price is a big factor.

By **Sarah Karnasiewicz** | Sept. 17, 2021

When you fall on the extreme ends of the TV-consumer spectrum—either a hard-core gamer or a stubborn Luddite—choosing a set is straightforward: You go all in even if it dominates the room, or you get nothing at all. But what if, like most of us, you're somewhere in the middle?



As far as off-the-rack fixes go, few are less obtrusive than the Frame— Samsung's "lifestyle" TV designed to look just like a picture hanging on the wall. But if even a faux Modigliani is too much visual clutter for you, the Frame might not go far enough.

The good news: There are alternatives. Namely, a handful of ultra-discreet sets that offer a peek at what the future of "invisible" A/V might hold. The bad news: For now, at least, they'll cost you more (sometimes, a lot more). Are they worth the splurge? We spoke with tech experts, interior designers, and savvy homeowners to find out more about the Frame and its rivals.

An Option Worth Reflecting On

The basic concept of "mirror" TVs hasn't changed in decades: They're essentially a one-way mirror with a TV monitor pushed right up against the glass. When turned off, they look just like an ordinary looking glass. But until

recently, aesthetics trumped viewing quality, with images often marred by distortion or an unsightly green glow. Contemporary models like the **Reflectel Signature Series Mirror TV** (from \$6,900, reflectel.com) change that. The key to Reflectel's picture quality, says **CEO Elizabeth Goldfeder**, is using optical-quality glass, so the image comes through clear and crisp.

When it comes to the guts of their TVs, Reflectel allows clients or A/V integrators to choose the display of their choice. (LG, Samsung, and Sony are the most common.) For entry level buyers, the Reflectel "Signature Series," which uses in-stock frame components, starts around \$7,000. For those interested in more bespoke designs, **Ms. Goldfeder** will build and install a custom mirror and frame apparatus, which allows for greater flexibility, but comes at a steep price increase. (Depending on the materials and the TV size, they can range to \$27,000.)

Verdict: A super-luxe, design-led option for someone with particular tastes or a space with very specific aesthetic needs—but not a one-size-fits-all fix.



Mirror TVs, like the Reflectel Landscape, look just like ordinary mirrors when not in use.

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