

Mary Ramirez is CHRIS RYAN HOMES

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*Luxurious Energy Efficient
Custom Home for Sale*



Even though Mary Ramirez of Chris Ryan Homes, LLC much prefers to be outdoors, she graciously sat with me long enough for a very interesting interview about her life as an award-winning, woman home builder in the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas. We visited at the lovely dining table in one of her newest, beautiful model homes in Edinburg, Texas. This particular house is one of Mary's smaller projects in the long list of homes she has designed and built during the past two decades. She builds houses in a very broad variety of styles and sizes, as you can begin to see from the homes depicted in these photos.

During the first minutes of the interview Mary was adamant about giving credit where she feels credit is due. She talked about her appreciation for the support she has benefitted from through her family. She gives special credit to her Dad, who was a carpenter during Mary's younger life and who continues to be a source of inspirational strength to her. Her Dad built small frame homes for a living. Before she was on her own, Mary watched him perform his homebuilding skills as he carefully framed out the construction of many homes. Mary's five brothers had dreams and interests for their own lives that did not include building houses, so Mary received the benefits of being her Dad's apprentice. As early as her high school days, she began learning about financing and payment plans and helped in the good family business.



The very first home that Mary built was a mere 1,200 square foot, three bedroom, two bath house and she had it sold even before its construction was complete! Before beginning the project she had taken out a little loan for the home building and asked her Dad if he would help her with the construction project. He happily supervised. It was the first house of many for Mary. It was not easy for Mary to choose and persevere in a career that is mostly thought of as a male domain, but she has done it cleverly and succeeded very well! When she first officially began her business, she coined its name by combining the first names of her two sons, Christopher and Ryan. She still gets requests from new customers who make their first call and ask to speak to Chris Ryan of Chris Ryan Homes.

After many, many home projects, jump ahead to 2019 and she can confidently say that all the local building supply people and bankers know her. She has formed reliable crews, now, compared to her earlier struggles of finding reliable skilled people. This development provides more time. She devotes it to maintaining her high standard momentum. She does demand the best from them. Limiting herself to only four or five home building projects in one year, does not decrease her workload, especially since price tags for those homes begin at \$250,000. Requests for her excellent quality homes have come from Harlingen and beyond, but being close to her family is important to Mary. So, she saves the driving miles and keeps her busy building circle limited to the McAllen and Edinburg areas.



On one of Mary's regular work days, during the stages of when her workers are handling material deliveries, pouring concrete, framing, sawing and hammering, sheetrock hanging, trimming, painting, sanding, plumbing and roofing, she goes to the worksite in the mornings after working out at the gym. Upon arriving, she confers with her husband who arrives earlier and then the day's inspection begins. Mary does not hire General Contractors. She IS the General! A big part of Mary's continued success comes from her personal requirement for having extremely high construction standards, especially when it comes to the quality of the outdoor walls and the whole house air systems. This makes a tremendous difference in the eventual homeowners comfort level!

The exterior walls in Mary's new homes have foam insulation in the attic as well as in between the framing uprights—which are wider than most other homes' because she uses two by six width—producing a larger area of insulation fill, giving increased protection from the Valley's extremely hot climate. Additionally, to be sure the indoor climate in her houses are capable of fine tuning, she chooses and has installed the type of central air systems that have excellent humidity controls. She wants to be sure that every detail of her homebuilding is done right, especially the structural integrity that she learned from her father.

Sometimes getting critiques from Mary has its effect on her workers but she said they do not usually complain because they always get paid on time. One day a long time crew member told her that some of the guys had given the boss, Mary, the nickname “Sourpatch”. She said he explained the origin being like the sour patch candy. “You are all grumpy and critical at first, but then when we fix it and finish it up, you are sweet with compliments.” She accepted this very good-naturedly. When the houses are declared complete, they can all be proud of the top quality job to which they have contributed.



After all details of a home’s construction have been approved personally by Mary and she deems the house officially finished, it is time for her favorite part of her work: the decorating! When that day arrives, Mary says she tells her partner in the business, her husband, “I’m going SHOPPING!”. That’s when Mary really has fun as she chooses fine furniture and decor items for the ample spaces she has built.

The Light House Lighting Center pg 44
with locations in Port Isabel and McAllen
is the source for both the functional and elegant,
decorative lighting within these gorgeous living spaces.

**The Light House
Lighting Center**



Her artistic talents have extended into fashion design also. An avid fisherwoman, Mary reached a point in her active life when outdoor excursions on the water were lacking a certain flair for her. She didn’t want to wear just any old clothes when the family went out fishing. So she designed her own line of women’s clothing for outdoor wear named Laguna Lifestyle. Prior to beginning her fashion foray, Mary had already developed ten acres of land in San Juan, Texas, into Miranda Estates—a residential subdivision which is named after her daughter, Miranda. Adjacent to this fine home development Mary also built a commercial business complex called Miranda Plaza. So when the time arrived for Laguna Lifestyle to have a storefront of its own, Mary was well prepared in more ways than one. Her fishing apparel storefront is presently located in the Miranda Plaza, providing another venue for Mary’s talents.



Matt's Building Materials pg 22
continues to prove their great service to Valley home
builders in this very fine home by Chris Ryan Homes.

Laguna Lifestyle is a great place for other women who love fishing, like Mary does, to find clothes to look good in—while they are doing what they love. At Laguna Lifestyle and elsewhere, many women customers are pleased to find out that there is a local woman homebuilder who understands what the female mind envisions when they are imagining a new home.



Mary knows the importance of a great kitchen and she believes that it is the main area where people spend the most time gathering while at home. Her heart-of-the-home kitchen designs are lovely reflections of this conviction towards great design and building. She prefers the Mediterranean and French styles of architecture and adds a modern flair to every one of her house designs that she uses. When I asked Mary if she plans to continue with her home building business she gave me a resounding yes. “I have one more child to put through college before I can quit!”. So, it seems there might still be time for some of you readers to call Mary and get on her list for contracting with her to build your own great home in the Rio Grande Valley.

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