



Helen L. Montoya / Conexión

Juan Fernandez owns CVF homes, which specializes in restoring old, run-down houses in the Southtown area. He also is a green builder.

business spotlight

Building a greener S.A.

Fernandez is renovating with a conscience

BY ERIN EGGERS

Juan Manuel Fernandez didn't move to San Antonio to build homes, but that has become his business and his passion.

The Mexico City-native has a knack for looking at delapidated houses in the historic neighborhoods of

Lavaca and King William, and remodeling them into clean, energy-efficient homes with both modern and historic details. "We're looking for houses that have potential but are in very bad shape," says Fernandez, the owner and in-field developer for CVF (Casas Verdes Fernandez) Homes. "The idea is not to flip them, but to restore them. In doing that, we want to make them really energy efficient as well."

CVF Homes has remodeled or built 12 homes, and is working on five more. Fernandez hopes to have three of those finished by the end of the year. All three will be pre-wired for an electric vehicle and have a spot to install solar panels.

Throughout the process, a team of approximately 20 contractors works on each home. Fernandez plans the construction, supervises workers, and buys every-

thing from cabinets to appliances.

A mechanical engineer by training, Fernandez and his wife moved to San Antonio in 2003 for a retail venture that still hasn't taken off. The economy wasn't ripe for their idea, Fernandez says, declining to give any details.

He had to search for other ways to pay the bills. In 2005, he was driving by a run-down house for sale in Lavaca, and it caught his

interest. The price was low enough that he took a gamble.

"I bought it, remodeled it, and it went well. I thought I'd try it again," says Fernandez, who has stayed in the Southtown area because of its proximity to downtown.

Fernandez says he's learned more about green building with each home he's restored, working closely with the city's Build SA Green program.

EN BREVE

CVF Homes

- 210-601-9582
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- cvfhomes.com

Energy-saving tips

- Use weather stripping to seal air leaks around windows and doors.
- Use compact fluorescent lights or LED lights.
- Keep thermostat programmed and replace air conditioner filter periodically.
- Install a solar film or blind in west-facing windows.
- Plant a tree for future shade around your home.

Last month, a home designed by local architect Beto Isunza that Fernandez built from the ground up was awarded emerald level certification to the National Green Building Standard. It is the highest environmental rating a home can receive from the National Association of Home Builders Research Center, described as the foremost green rating system for residential construction in the United States.

It was the 11th home in the state — and 79th in the nation — to earn the certification. The three-bedroom home in Lavaca has a solar roof, efficient floor plan and a gray water recycling system, which pumps water from the shower, sink and AC condensation line to all the toilets in the home.

Green building has become important in his work, he says, "because you're building a better product. Also, there's a consciousness to giving back to the city and to doing something good that will stay there."

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