

BUILDING savvy

MAGAZINE

***Emerald Luxury Homes—
Builder of the
2006 SAVVY Idea Home***

Dina Lima



SAVVY Idea Home Showcases the Latest in Homebuilding Concepts

By Beverly Smirnis

*“Beauty is More Than Good Looks,”
is the theme of Building SAVVY
Magazine®’s Idea Home in
Mansfield’s Kings Mill neighborhood*



The home's more modest square footage illustrates a significant trend among homebuyers—the desire for more efficient space, where every room in the house is used every day.

“Space efficiency has become a major goal in home design. As buyers become more aware of rising utility bills and take a position of higher responsibility toward the use of resources, I believe our market may see home sizes decline,” explained Dina. *“Many buyers opt for a bit less space so they can have more luxurious amenities and still stay in budget.”*

Dina's active participation in industry education classes provided significant insight to the home's floor plan. In fact, after attending classes at last year's Sunbelt Builders Show, she made some subtle but intelligent revisions to the home's original floor plan design—including moving the laundry room from its traditional location near the garage to a location more central to the bedrooms, and rethinking the kitchen/family living area by adding a computer center and several other design elements to promote family togetherness. Her Certified Graduate Builder and Certified Aging in Place Specialist designations also came into play in the home's energy planning and application of universal design principles. Her fluency in Spanish proved to be a major asset on the jobsite. Dina recently also became one of the founding members of the Green Building Committee of the Green Building Initiative program of the Dallas HBA.

“While most parade and showcase homes focus primarily on finishing products and interior design ideas, the goal of the SAVVY Idea Home is to educate the homebuilding industry as well as the homebuying public about new and advanced ways to build a home,” said Steve Smirnis, publisher of Building SAVVY Magazine. *“Our position is that superior construction strength, energy efficiency, air quality, green building, and universal design are equally as important as a home's style and finish-out. We also hoped to illustrate that a custom built home can have all these things without being the largest, highest priced home in the marketplace.”*

The 3,500 square foot home has served as a “construction laboratory,” where observers have viewed each step of the home's unique construction—from its engineered foundation to its insulated concrete block structural perimeter walls and Mansfield's first unvented attic space. Builder Dina Lima of Emerald Luxury Homes, Inc. and the architectural firm of RC3D, Inc. designed the home and selected all materials with a goal of achieving the highest ratings in energy efficiency and green building guidelines.





Photos By Till Hezel, Hezel Photography



The fact that the focus is not just on aesthetic beauty is not to say however, that the home is anything short of fabulous in its architectural style inside and out or its amenities. The Tuscan style home, designed by RC3D, Inc., features a front courtyard/outdoor living room complete with a welcoming fireplace and fountain. Its central wine room and library/study are designed to be adaptable to the taste and lifestyle of the buyer—these rooms could be used as very formal areas or more casual areas. Though many plans eliminate formal areas entirely, all parties involved in designing the SAVVY Idea Home felt it extremely important to have a “formal” dining room, although it was finished in a less formal and more rustic style in keeping with the Tuscan design of the home. The upstairs room in the home can be made into a gameroom, office, or private living quarters. It is prewired for home theater and plumbed to add a kitchenette.

The exterior is finished in authentic stucco, which was applied directly over the concrete block perimeter walls. A new easy-to-handle natural stone product faces the tower and water table; this product saves cost, eliminates cumbersome handling and simplifies labor by eliminating the need for an extended brick ledge. A product made of crushed limestone, which is sprayed on to look like real stone, was used as an accent on the outdoor and indoor fireplaces and on the home’s barrel ceiling in the entry. Venetian plaster walls, domed ceilings, top quality cabinetry, rustic lighting and hardware, travertine flooring, granite, gourmet appliances and specialty plumbing fixtures are just a few of the featured interior products.

“The home was sold before we ever really advertised or marketed it,” commented Steve Smirnis. “The buyers named the quality of all the finishes (in particular the quality of the cabinetry and the use of natural stone products on countertops and floors), and the home’s energy efficiency as primary reasons they fell in love with the home and bought it. The quick sale and the comments received prove to all involved that buyers do recognize and pay a bit more for superior quality design, construction and materials.”

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