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Ismael Leyva, president of the international firm, Ismael Leyva Architects. (Courtesy Ismael Leyva Architects)

Ismael Leyva, the Mexican-American architect revamping NYC

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[Ismael Leyva](#) immigrated from his native Veracruz, Mexico, to New York City, 35 years ago — for love. He married his first wife — a New Yorker — whom he met while still in Mexico, and

he ended up staying. Cupid's arrow happened to add a stroke of luck to his career as well, because he says to be able to work in New York City is a dream come true for an architect.

"It's the place to be," says the 51-year-old, who never intended to leave his beloved Mexico and his family behind.

Leyva didn't even have the slightest clue that, years later, he would be one of the lead architects responsible for revamping the Empire City in 2013.

As the president of his own international architecture, interior design and urban planning firm, with offices in New York City and Central America, he has built numerous award-winning residential and commercial projects in NYC, including the luxury residences at the Time Warner Center, the Battery Maritime Building, and most recently, the Tribeca Royale.





(Courtesy Ismael Leyva Architects)

“Any project is a baby for me,” he says, looking at every building in his portfolio with caring and equal importance .

Currently, he says, he’s flying back and forth between New York and Costa Rica, where he is designing two towers.

“They will be the tallest buildings in Costa Rica — we just finished the first tower and we’re starting the second one,” says Leyva. “I’m also doing a 17-story office building in Mexico — my first building in Veracruz, where I am from — I’m very excited about it.”

Leyva says he considers his unique style to be modern and contemporary, but he's able to be flexible.

“We also adapt to what our clients' vision is,” says Leyva, who has also becoming an expert on designing for small urban spaces. “If they want a particular style, we can do it.”

He tries to be strict about being ecologically-friendly, however.

“It's important to me to conserve the planet and reuse and recycle materials,” says Leyva, adding it's surprisingly easy to find recycled wood and stone these days.

Destiny played out well for the father of four children who [resides in New York City](#).

“Since I was a small boy, I used to draw very well...I realized I wasn't going to make a good living as a painter, so I decided to use my skills in architecture,” says Leyva. I think I made the right choice now — I love it, it's in my blood.”

<http://nbclatino.com/2013/06/07/ismael-leyva-the-mexican-american-architect-revamping-nyc/#:ismaelleyva5-tribecaroyalecondo>