

# LIFESTYLE *Fashion & Beauty*

For feedback, e-mail us at [lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph](mailto:lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph)  
 Website: [www.inquirer.net/lifestyle](http://www.inquirer.net/lifestyle)

## How to tie the knot of style

It takes 18 months to produce an Hermes scarf design. Each has an average of 27 colors. A typical one needs about 300 cocoons



ANDREW TADALAN



VALERIE de los Santos models "The Bow" style. INQSnap this page (not just the logo) to view more photos.

By Cheche V. Moral

THE  
RIDKIN

## New York architect: 'Editing is much harder than adding stuff'

### THE WORKING CLASS



Rina Silayan Go,  
Contributor

**B**ORN to a family whose primary business is construction, Liza Morales-Crespo said that at a very early age, she would accompany her father to job sites so that, growing up, she came to view these as playgrounds.

Fascinated with creating structures from scratch, she yielded to her natural inclinations and went to UP Diliman's College of Architecture, where she graduated cum laude. She then pursued a

NEW YORK/ F3



BRIGHT-PINK dress with studs, Sinequanone





Christmas comes early  
**Sale**



up to **70%** off  
September 13, 14 & 15

Per DTI-NCR permit no. A3-0990 series of 2013

# New York architect: 'Editing is much harder than adding stuff'

'If the structure and framework are beautiful, these will shine through,' says the Filipina who's done notable projects. Her style? Confidence and comfort derived from the perfect fit



STROLLING the streets of NYC

From page F1

Masters in Architecture and Urban Design at Columbia University, New York.

Morales-Crespo worked for Brennan Beer Gorman Architects in New York, handling projects such as the Waldorf Astoria, the St. Regis on 5th Avenue and the W Hotel on Union Square.

She was also the project architect for chef Thomas Keller's restaurant, Per Se.

"My almost painful attention to detail is what defines my projects," Morales-Crespo told me. "Losing sleep, making sure grout lines match, corners are detailed, aircon vents and compressors are hidden ultimately define my style. There is no such thing as being confined to a design aesthetic because designers evolve and grow."

Today she has become more discriminating in her work practices. "My focus on green and sustainable environments was awakened when my children were born."

She said it is her wish to be able to leave her grandchildren's children a safe and healthy world they can live in.

Morales-Crespo's work ethic is never compromised. "My parents instilled in us a strong work ethic. We were taught to value our integrity. When suppliers tempt you with material rewards for specifying their products, it is easy for me to say no, thank you. This is something easier said than done."

At work, she is known to be a perfectionist. "Contractors know that the finishing has to be perfect because I will ask them to do it over if it doesn't meet my standards."

An only girl, she was raised as one of the boys. This "no special treatment," she said, has come in handy. "The world of construction is male-dominated, but my mantra is 'Anything they can do, I can do better.'"

Liza holds office in Manila and New York. She has to visit her New York office every two months, working on design drawings for stores and major fashion retail brands.

"Time management has become difficult. My assistant schedules my meetings, presentations or site inspections around the drop-off and pickup times of my children in school," she said. "I value the 15 minutes of undivided attention I have to ask the kids how their day went."

### Everything is personal

Priding herself in being a control freak, Morales-Crespo entertains at home with the same attention to detail she applies at work. "I orchestrate the music playlist,



WHITE dress she usually wears to meetings and office presentations

### IN THE MALDIVES

choose the serving dishes with photos in the kitchen of clear plating instructions, with the timing of when the appetizers are brought out!" If her theme is Italian, so will the music and wine. If it is Japanese, the food and ambiance will follow the theme.

The same attention is given her wardrobe. "I love that the arm length is perfect and the hemline is where I want it. I am a minimalist in everything—dressing, decorating and designing. People don't realize that editing is much harder than adding stuff. If the structure and framework are beautiful, these will shine through."

There are no boundaries in Morales-Crespo's personal and work life. "A life without cause is a life without effect. If the project does not define me, I won't take it. I say no to clients who want a superficially 'green' building. Making a difference is my definition of fun. If I make a dent in reducing the country's carbon footprint, I'll die a happy woman."

Her daily wardrobe features clothes from Diane von Furstenberg and Donna Karan, whose designs are in sync with the needs of the working woman. The natural fabrics they use allow her to move with comfort and ease, important for a woman who is always on the go.

She relies on Burberry for her winter wardrobe and Ralph Lauren for timeless evening wear.

Someone once said confidence is the sexiest thing a woman can have. It is much sexier than any body part.

Morales-Crespo shares an insight: "The only way a woman can exude confidence is when she is comfortable in her clothes and with how they fit! Spend on altering your clothes so hemlines are where they need to be and cuffs are at the right length. Don't wear five-inch stilettos if you can't walk in them."



BLACK Grecian dress, BCBG Max Azria



LIME-GREEN dress with pockets, Karen Millen; floral-print pumps, Charles David



LIZA with hubby; below, wearing a plain white shirt and jeans

PHOTOGRAPHY  
PAM STA. CRUZ-BELLA  
STYLING LUIS CARLO SAN JUAN  
SHOT ON LOCATION  
OAKWOOD PREMIER, ORTIGAS