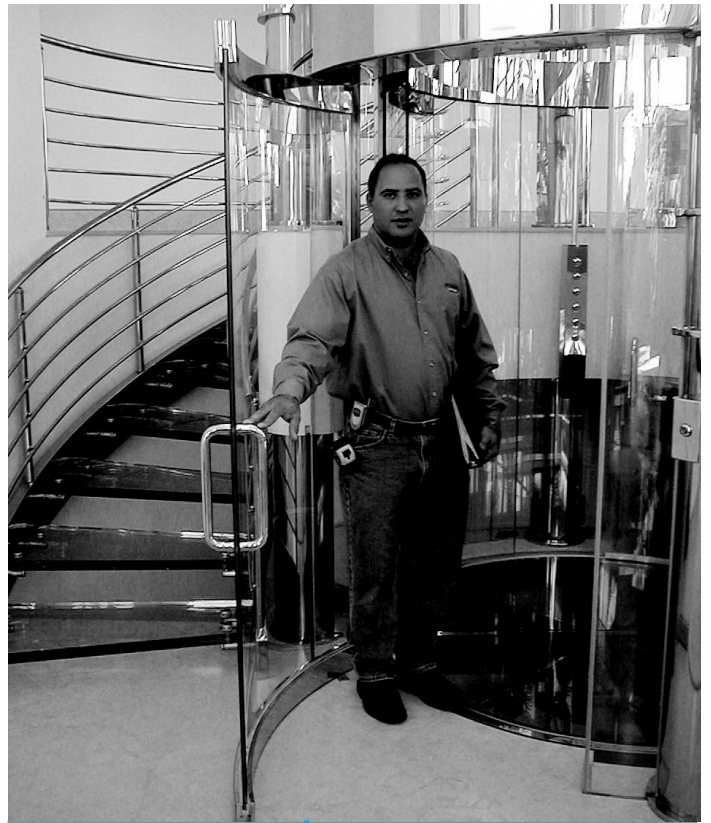


Rene Valdes

Visualizes
in three
dimensions



Rene Valdes, a project manager with Faour Glass Technologies in Tampa, has been working with glass since he immigrated to the United States when he was 12 years old.

His father, Raymond Valdes, came to the United States in 1968 when Valdes was 3 months old. The plan was for Valdes, his two sisters and mother to join his father in the United States, but before they could make the arrangements Fidel Castro closed the borders and prevented Cubans from leaving the country.

In 1980, Valdes and his mother joined his father in Tampa, where his father started a small business, Mily Glass, making glass flowerpots. Raymond Valdes instilled in his son an interest in glass and taught him to pay attention to small details—a skill that has come in handy with his work at Faour Glass.

“My father built machinery in

Cuba,” Valdes says, “so he was a very detailed person. When you build machinery, you have to visualize things in your mind.”

That attention to detail helped Valdes visualize what he was creating, and eventually, he taught himself to visualize in three dimensions. That skill came in handy last year when Faour Glass took on its largest and most complicated project to build an all glass and concrete home on the Gulf of Mexico.

“The creativity Rene employed to conceal all the metal in a concrete home with no right angles and compound curves is impressive,” says Angelo Rivera, vice president of Faour Glass.

The project called for 24-foot-high glass walls with no frames, Valdes says. Basically, everything is supported by glass and square metal fittings that hold the system together, he says.

“I actually built it in my mind as we put it together,” Valdes says.

Education: 1989, attended Hillsboro Community College, Tampa

Career: 1998–present, project manager; 1993–98 lead installer; 1991–93, installer; 1991–89, glass cutter, Faour Glass Technologies, Tampa; 1988, foreman, Loyal Industries, Tampa; 1987, glass cutter, Mily Glass, Tampa

Personal: Age, 36; born, Havana; married, wife Kathy, twin sons and two daughters

Diversions: Playing with his kids

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