

Bill Moses renovated the neglected home's exterior using composite roof shingles, recycled-denim insulation and salvaged-glass windows.

Greene (& Green)

Historic Craftsman homes are built to respond to climate and site. This California renovation marries this traditional wisdom with modern technology.



LYNN ALLEY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL SHOPENN

It may have been kismet that brought Wall Street-investment-banker-turned-entrepreneur Bill Moses and his historic, naturally sustainable Ojai, California, home together more than 10 years ago. Bill fell in love with sleepy Ojai when he visited friends there in 1993. A collector of Craftsman-style furniture and art, Bill found his personal Shangri-La in Casa Barranca, a neglected American Craftsman masterpiece on 52 acres in the Ojai Valley—a place that Indian philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti called “the most beautiful place on earth.” Committed to preserving the house’s history as well as its connectedness with nature, Bill was the perfect candidate to renovate the California classic.



Adirondack chairs at the end of a garden path are perfect for watching the sun rise over the Ojai Valley.

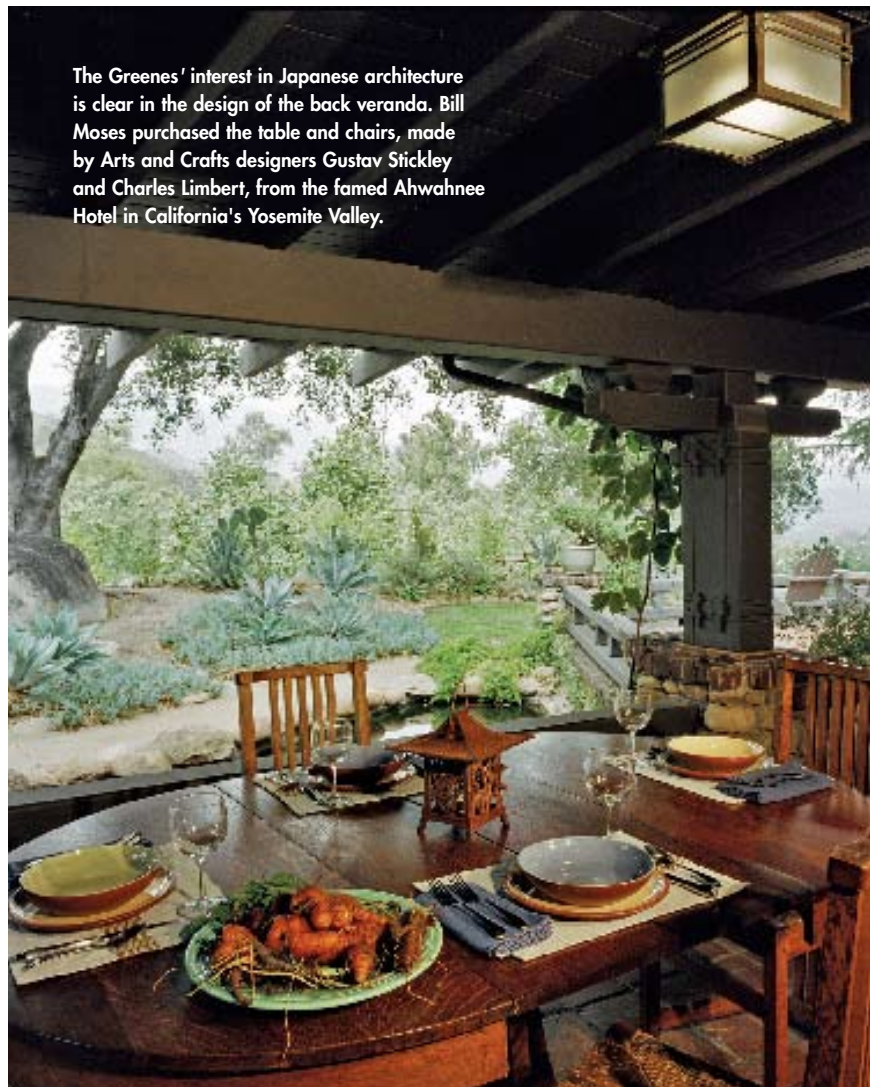
A TASTE OF SHANGRI-LA

Bill Moses offers Casa Barranca several times a year for local nonprofit groups and charities. "As steward, it's my responsibility to share this historic piece of old California architecture," he says.

Occasionally Bill rents the property to practitioners engaged in yoga, meditation and the healing and creative arts. For information, call (805) 646-7114 or visit www.CasaBarranca.com.



In 2002, Bill added the Craftsman-style yoga studio as a place where family and community could gather. Used mainly for yoga and meditation, Bill says he throws down a carpet for dancing or social gatherings.



The Greens' interest in Japanese architecture is clear in the design of the back veranda. Bill Moses purchased the table and chairs, made by Arts and Crafts designers Gustav Stickley and Charles Limbert, from the famed Ahwahnee Hotel in California's Yosemite Valley.

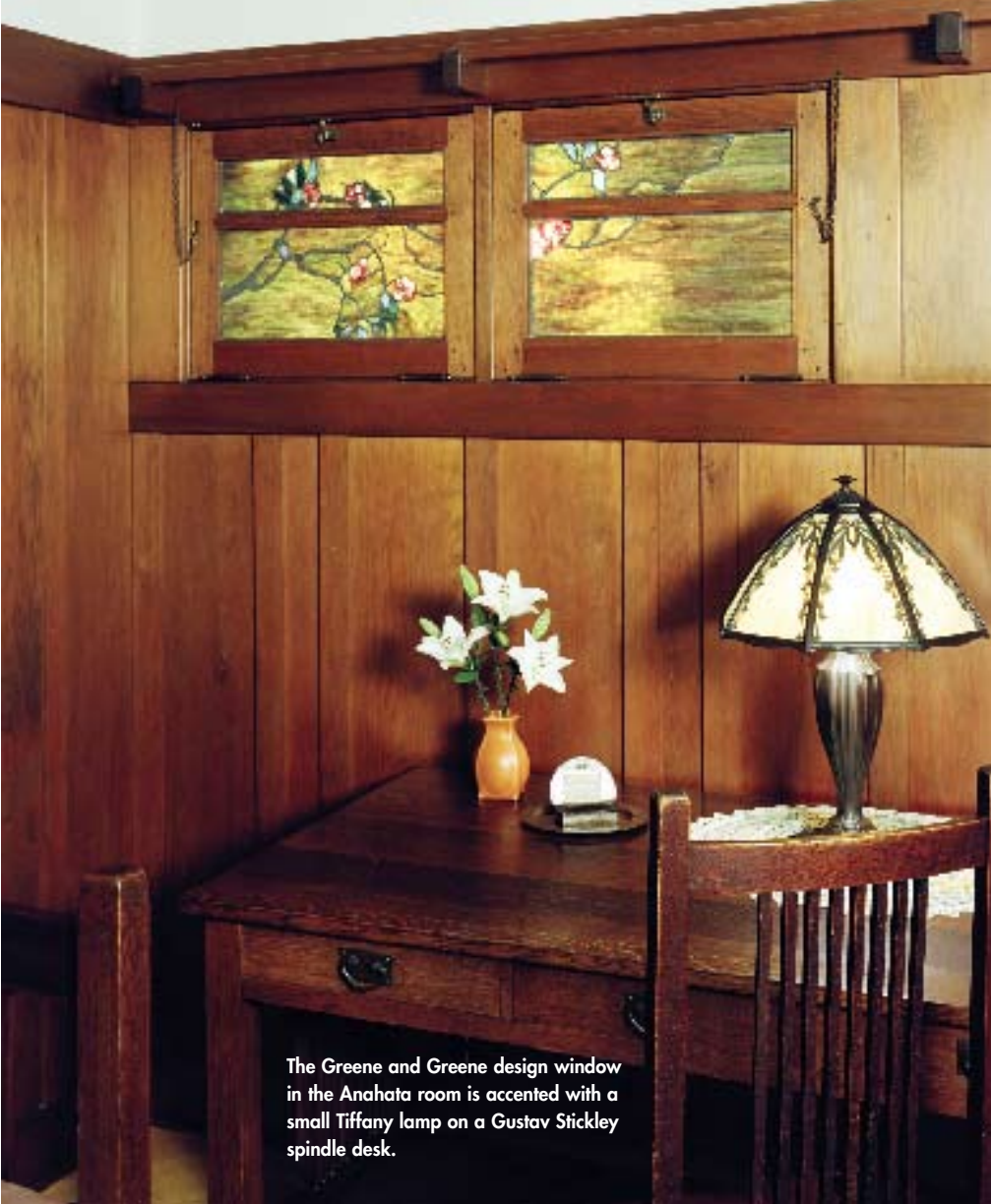
Casa Barranca has an important place in California's architectural history. Standard Oil baron Charles Pratt commissioned the house in 1907 and Pasadena-based architects Charles and Henry Greene designed it. Registered as a National Historic Landmark, the estate is one of five remaining distinguished Craftsman bungalows the Greens designed.

"In the spring of 1908, the Greens were asked to develop a series of sketches for a winter residence in the resort town of Nordhoff, in the idyllic Ojai Valley," writes Edward Bosley in *Greene and Greene* (Phaidon Press, 2000). Bosley is the curator of the Gamble House, another famed Greene and Greene Craftsman bungalow in Pasadena. "The principal defining characteristic

of the property was a steep ravine, or *barranca*, that runs from the foot of the Topa Topa Mountains to the valley below, and gave the house its name."

"I had heard of the Greene and Greene bungalows, but I had never seen one until I walked onto the property," Bill says. "The integration of the house with the land around it initially captured my attention. The house overlooks the Ojai Valley and wraps around an old oak tree and a boulder where Chumash Native American artifacts rest."

The home's finely crafted interior bewitched Bill as well. "Being in this house with its wood and attention to detail is uplifting," he says. "When the light comes through, my wife, Eliza, and I can see all the devotion that went into creating this house 100 years ago."



The Greene and Greene design window in the Anahata room is accented with a small Tiffany lamp on a Gustav Stickley spindle desk.

THE GOOD STUFF

- :: House sited on a ridge with a microclimate that doesn't frost and that's generally 10 degrees milder than the Ojai Valley below
- :: East-west orientation that keeps the house cooler in summer
- :: Heat supplied by solar electricity and fireplaces
- :: Basement that requires no heating or cooling to store wine
- :: Natural vegetation—native sages and various cacti, oaks, manzanita and toyon—used in landscaping
- :: Reliance on cross breezes and long eaves for cooling in summer heat
- :: Renewable, farm-grown wood in remodeling
- :: Stone from the land for hearths, fireplaces and walkways
- :: Water from artesian springs on property

BELOW: With glass doors and windows on both sides, the great room is where the family spends time together, especially in winter. "Sitting in the great room is like sitting in a treehouse," Bill says.

21st-century green

Because the house had suffered from years of neglect, Bill had his work cut out for him. He insulated the home with recycled-denim insulation and chose renewable or reused resources whenever possible. "We used farmed Port Orford cedar and alder wood, and we sourced old glass for the windows," Bill says.

In addition to restoring the original building, Bill added a stunning Craftsman-style yoga studio and a separate, outdoor *kiva*—a circular Native American ritual room used for spiritual ceremonies—to the property. "We built the fireplace hearth with clinker bricks left over from the Pratt era," he says. "The stones for the kiva and chimney come from our land and are stacked with the same sensitivity that Charles Greene would have employed."





In 1998, Bill Moses remodeled the Casa Barranca kitchen after studying the Gamble house, another Greene & Greene bungalow in Pasadena. The kitchen had originally been remodeled in the 1950s with red Formica counter-tops and painted cabinetry.



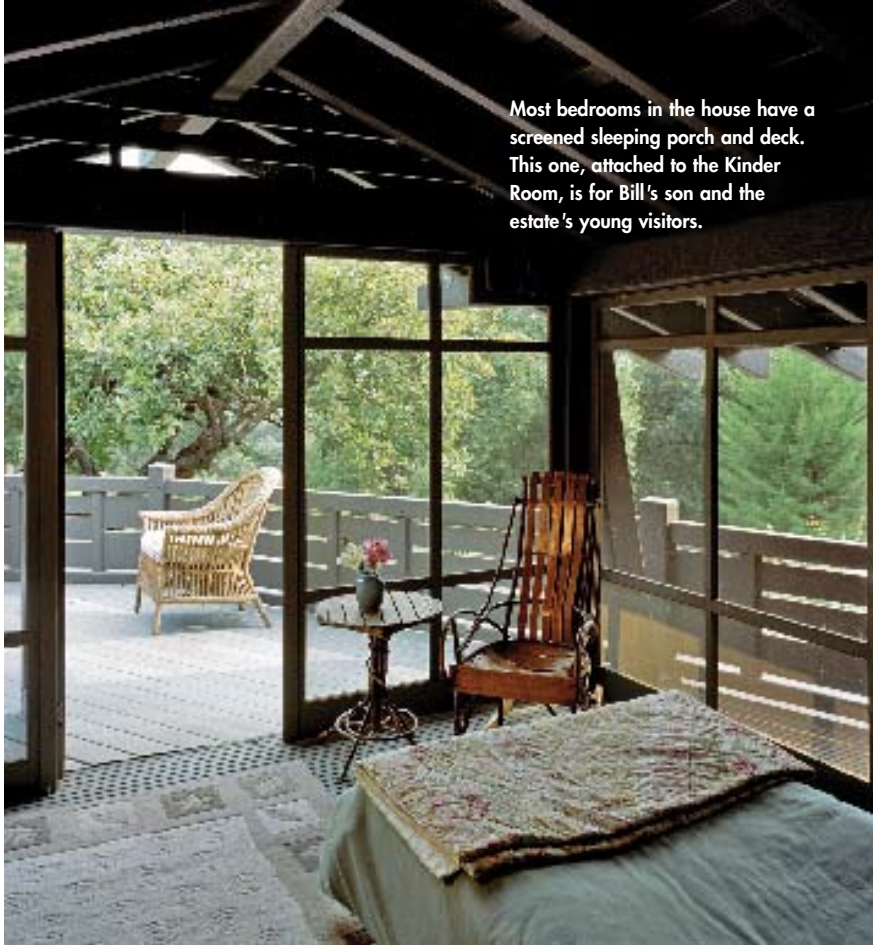
Bill takes his morning calls and coffee at a small table in the warm kitchen overlooking the organic orchard and Ojai Valley below.

Although the two-story bungalow's original design is naturally conducive to energy conservation, Bill upped the ante by powering the majority of his estate with 45 Sharp photovoltaic solar panels of 165 watts each. "We generate electricity and feed it back to the community via the existing electrical grid," he says. "In summertime, our electricity bills are zero. For the most part, we're fairly independent except for occasional electric bills in winter." A separate solar-powered pump draws water from the property's artesian springs.

Because the bungalow was built before air conditioning, its design works with, rather than against, the climate. "The home is just a single room wide, so when you open a window, the breeze

blows right through the room, cooling it off," Bill says. "The deep eaves cast a long shadow over the house, which keeps us cool—it's like having a giant umbrella over us. On a 98-degree Ojai day, the home remains at 78 degrees," he says. "I close the windows in the morning, and I open them at night so the house breathes with the rhythm of the day."

In winter, Bill and Eliza build fires in the bedroom fireplaces with wood and trimmings from trees on their property. "We have forced-air heat, but we almost never use it," Bill says. "The fireplaces were designed with a shallow back, which kicks heat out into the room. On top of the hearth is a metal header. When the fire gets hot, heat radiates off the metal into the room."



Most bedrooms in the house have a screened sleeping porch and deck. This one, attached to the Kinder Room, is for Bill's son and the estate's young visitors.

A CONVERSATION WITH THE HOMEOWNERS

What do you love most about this house?

BILL MOSES: The way it makes me feel nurtured when I'm in it.

ELIZA MOSES: I love the feeling that nature creates—the wood, the light coming in and the sounds from outside.

What's your favorite room?

BILL: The upstairs master bedroom because of its vaulted ceilings and views of the valley. I like the great room as well, especially in winter when we sit around the fireplace. Both sides of the room have doors, so you feel like you're in a treehouse, especially when it rains.

ELIZA: I love sleeping upstairs at night. We dance around the whole house during the course of the day.

If you'd been around when the Greenes designed this home, what would you have done differently?

BILL: I've pretty much restored the house in keeping with its architectural integrity. If I'd been here with the Greenes, I would have put an open-hearth brick oven in the kitchen and decorative stained glass on the front doors, while leaving the back doors clear and open with regular glass.


ELIZA: I would make the closets bigger—they're really small. I also would have built an extra bathroom upstairs.

Food, wine and yoga

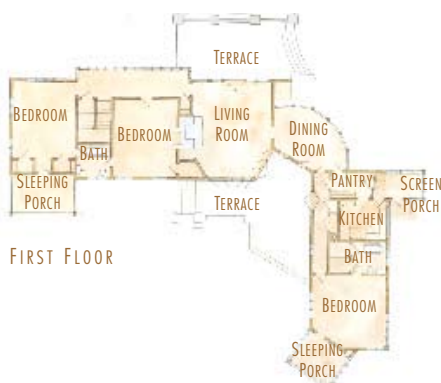
An organic kitchen garden, an orchard and a small vineyard surround the home. Bill became enamored of winemaking while he was a student in Aix-en-Provence, France, and now he handcrafts small lots of artisanal wine for family and limited commercial distribution. "When I came across two 100-year-old subterranean water cisterns, I figured they'd make a great cave for my wines," he says. In 2004, Casa Barranca Winery became the first certified organic winery in California's Central Coast region.

"The premise of the Casa Barranca vineyards is to have organic and biodynamic farming provide a true expression

of *terroir*—the sense of place embodied in the wine," Bill says. "We preserve the land's vitality and attend to our wine with the same attention to detail the Greenes lavished on the home."

Bill also added a structure that would never have occurred to the Greene brothers in 1908: the exquisitely designed Arts and Crafts-style yoga studio located just down the path from the house. From time to time he opens the studio and estate to highly regarded yoga and meditation practitioners for retreats. "My passion is to share this organic and sustainable sanctuary with the community," Bill says. 

TO FIND ITEMS USED IN THIS HOUSE, SEE PAGE 95



The Moses family: Eliza, baby Alex, Will and Bill.