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IN THE INTEREST OF
PRESERVING AND
RESTORING THE
MODEST AMERICAN
20TH CENTURY HOME,
THE BUNGALOW,
AND THE RICH LIFESTYLE
THAT IT AFFORDS

AMERICAN BUNGALOW

RESTORATION
ACCESSORIES
HISTORY
FURNISHINGS
EVENTS
ARTS AND CRAFTS
UPGRADING
PHILOSOPHY
GARDENS
PROJECTS
LANDSCAPING



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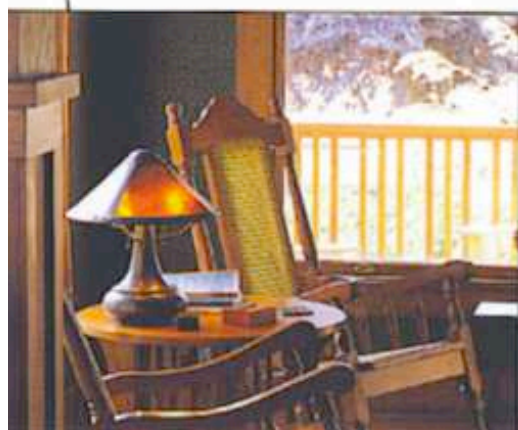
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Photograph by Alexander Vertikoff



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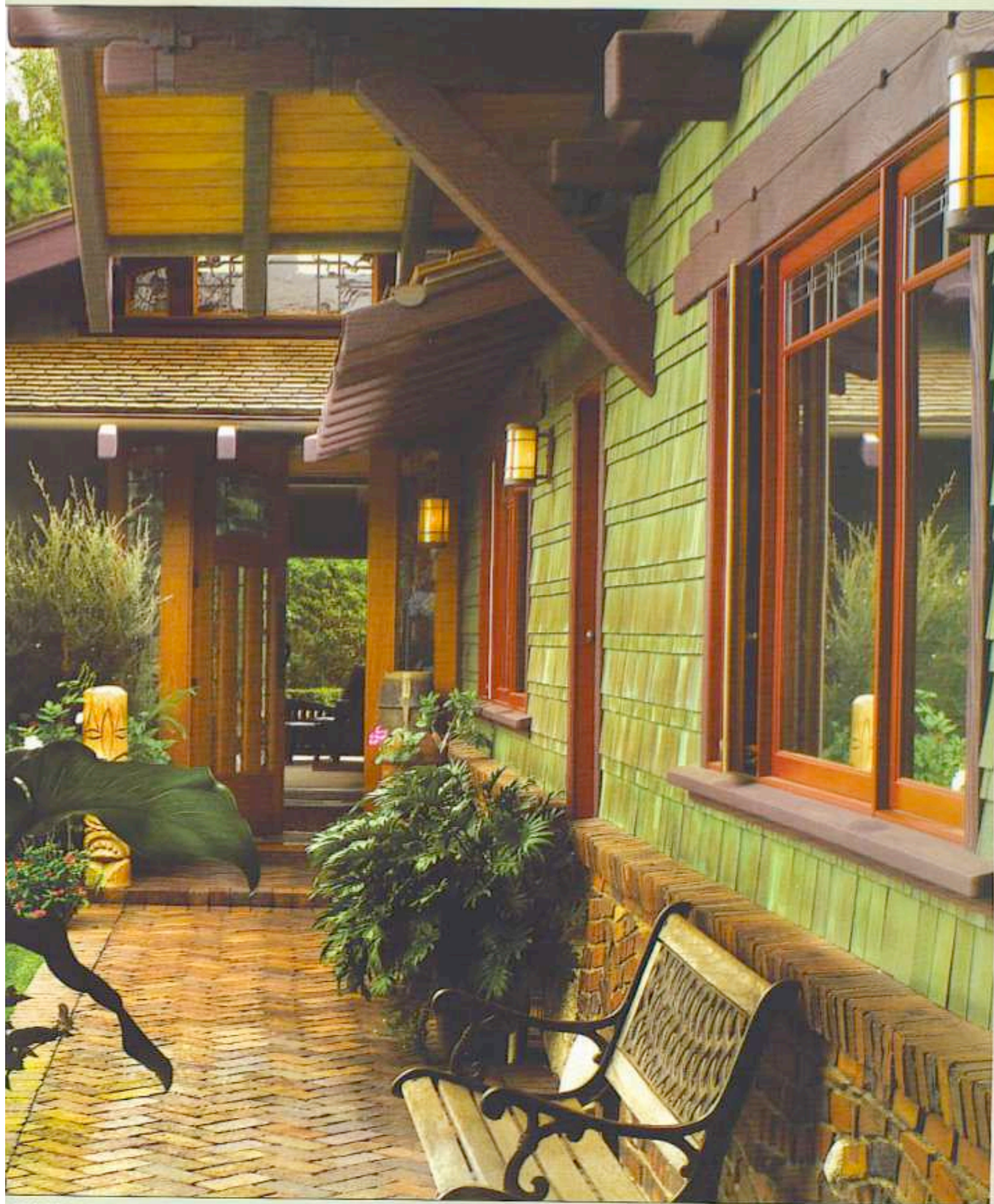
BY R. A. LOVKA

SOMETIMES WHEN YOU break the rules, you end up revealing their essence.

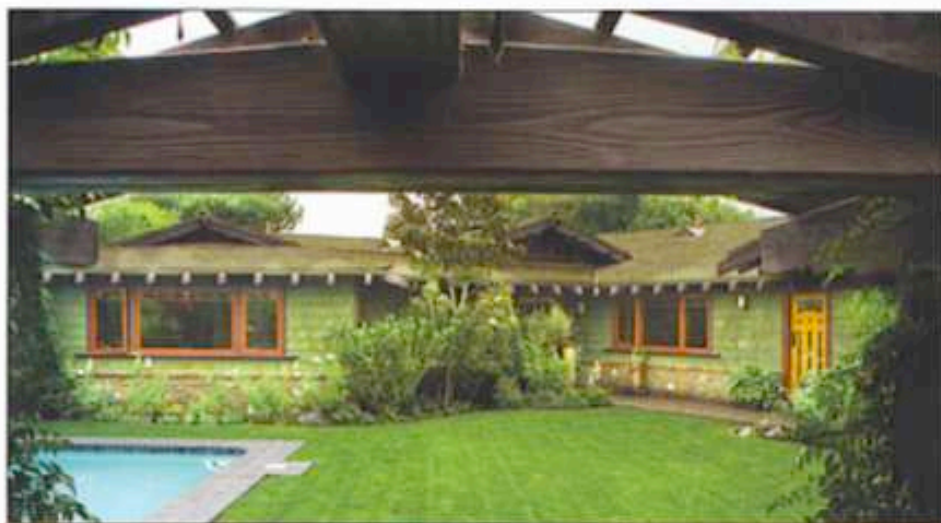
Nick and Ruth Clemence are not so much dedicated rule breakers as they are a couple who share a passion for art, architecture and design that they have applied to several home makeovers in the Laguna, Huntington and Newport Beach areas since moving to Southern California in 1984. Inspired by designs from the Arts and Crafts and Prairie School eras, they, like many others, have sought to adapt those designs to accommodate both their collection of artwork from other eras and their lives in a very different age ... even when they might seem to be breaking the "rules" of a period reconstruction.

A Craftsman Revival for a California Lifestyle

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALEXANDER VERTIKOFF



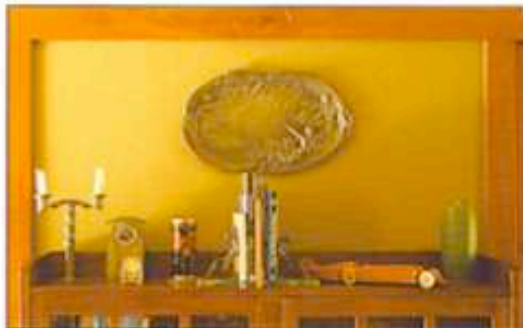
THE OUTER ENTRY LEADS TO THIS PLANT-LADEN ENTRY COURT, WITH THE DOOR OPEN TO THE SKYLIT FOYER OF THE HOUSE. THE LEADED GLASS ABOVE THE FOYER, LIKE THE PANELS IN THE DOORS, WAS DESIGNED BY THEODORE ELLISON.



By doing so, says heritage interior designer Su Bacon, who is known for her work in the Arts and Crafts tradition, they may actually be getting to the root of what the Arts and Crafts revival is truly all about.

"In the Arts and Crafts period, most people didn't buy a Craftsman home and then bring in only Craftsman furnishings and decorations," Bacon says. "They had pieces that had belonged to relatives, and there was always some overlapping among styles that came into play, so over time people typically had Victorian, Art Nouveau and Art Deco mixed in with Arts and Crafts and Craftsman elements. It was more eclectic than strict, just as the 'revival' interpretation has been—as most revivals have been, for that matter.

"The Arts and Crafts movement was not about rules. When you look at pottery, from Van Briggles and Fulper to Door, where are the rules? There really aren't any. The same goes for glasswork. And when you look at woodworking from Mackintosh to Stickley, you aren't seeing 'rules,' you're seeing wonderful expressions of forms that are both artistic and utilitarian."



Nick Clemence is a New Zealand-born engineer and designer who has divided his time and energies between automobiles—collecting, restoring and reselling classic European sports cars from his restoration facility in Costa Mesa, California—and houses: redesigning and building a series of Southern California homes, one of which, a "full-blown Frank Lloyd Wright Prairie Style" in Nick's words, won a 1999 award for best new construction from the Laguna Beach Architectural Guild.

Ruth is a champion cyclist and mother of the couple's four children. In 2005 and 2006 she captured the "Cycle To The Sun," a 36-mile extreme-cycling event on the island of Maui in which contestants climb from the seaside town of Paia to the top of Mt. Haleakala.





THE CLEMENCE HOME OVERLOOKS DOWNTOWN NEWPORT BEACH AND THE HARBOR'S BACK BAY FROM A TERRACED LOT LANDSCAPED WITH GARDENS AND MATURE TREES.



Bacon has worked with the couple on two of their projects, including their current home, a Newport Beach Craftsman with Art Deco and Art Nouveau interior influences. The house sits on a terraced lot beside the back bay. Down a slope, near the edge of the water, junipers and pines hug the landscape. Beneath and among them are hideaways where their children can play and explore, yet still remain safely in their own backyard.

The house has the kinds of well-defined, almost formal spaces that Nick has long admired in homes designed by Charles and Henry Greene.

"I especially like the way the Greene brothers approached space," he says. "Their homes are compartmentalized. You have a formal dining

room, a definitive living room, a separate kitchen. That's what we wanted to do here."

They called on architect Mark Abel, who had worked closely with them on the award-winning Prairie Style home and was now heading his own firm, and contractor Rob Curtis, who also had experience with Craftsman-style projects. Bacon, consulting on interiors, kitchen design, fabrics and colors, completed the team.

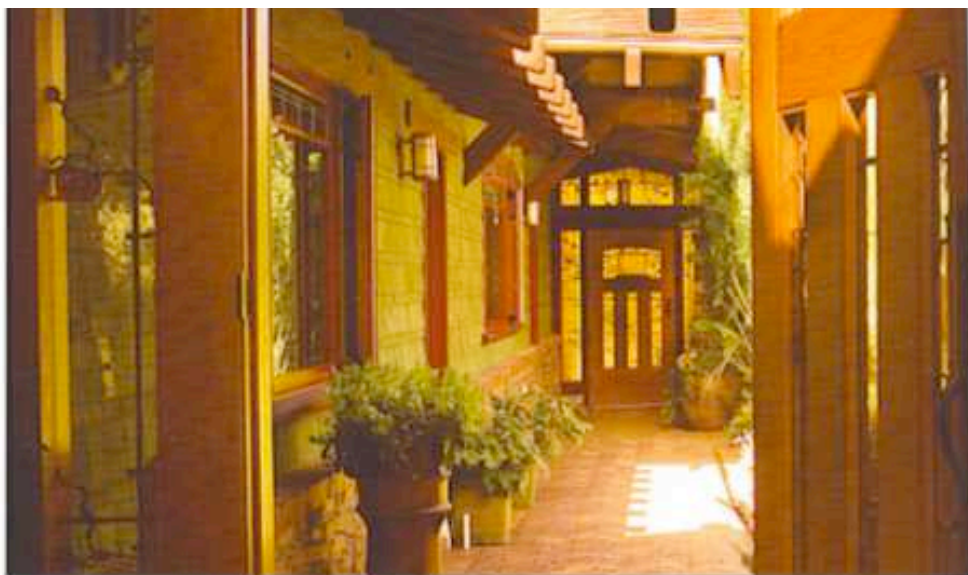
The result is a light-filled home in which Craftsman tradition coexists with a contemporary California lifestyle.



THE "MODERN CRAFTSMAN" KITCHEN (OPPOSITE) PAYS HOMAGE BOTH TO GREENE & GREENE AND TO C. R. MACINTOSH, WHOSE DESIGNS INSPIRED SU BACON'S TULIP ACCENT IN THE GLASS OF THE TEAK CABINET DOORS. THE DINING ROOM (BELOW) IS ILLUMINATED BY LIGHT PASSING THROUGH A LARGE AQUARIUM FROM THE HOME'S FOYER.



The front exterior wall and entryway pilasters are built of clinker bricks accented with cream-colored fieldstone and used veneer brick. The deep-set outer entry door, made of teak with geometric and floral art-glass lights by Theodore Ellison, is framed by side panels and a transom, also made by Ellison. That door



opens onto a garden courtyard, facing a companion doorway on the opposite side that opens into the house's foyer.

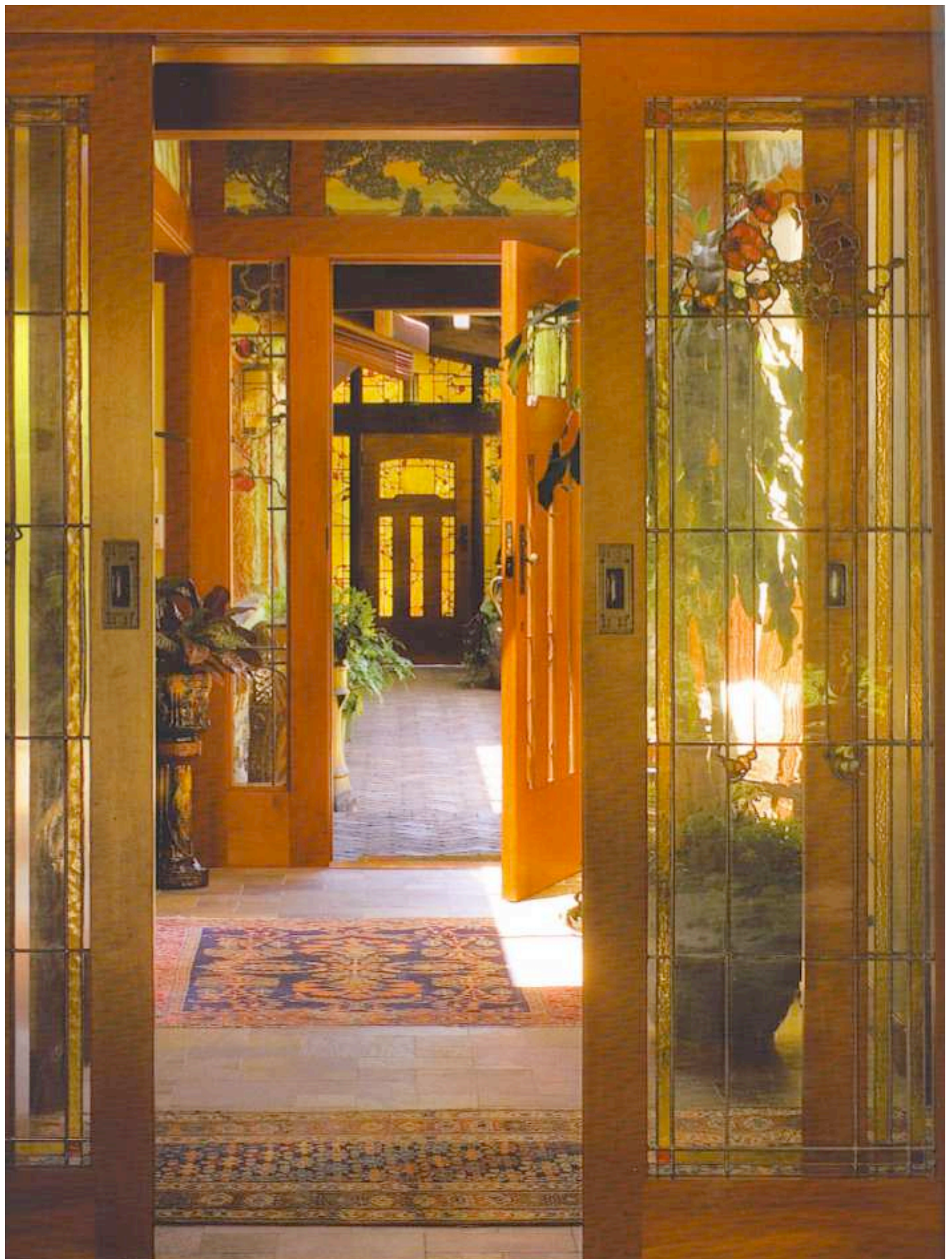
Throughout the home, stacked strapped beams blend function and form, and period lighting and wall friezes set the dominant Arts and Crafts tone, along with pieces from the Clemences' collection of tapes-

tries and rugs, pewter, Tiffany glass and furniture—primarily Stickley and Roycroft settles, bookcases and sideboards.

The four bedrooms are also designed and furnished in the Craftsman tradition but accented with other, sometimes more contemporary elements. Transoms contain floral and landscape art glass designed

THE HOME IS FILLED WITH AN ECLECTIC MIX OF ARTS AND CRAFTS AND ART NOUVEAU FURNISHINGS—AND WITH A MENAGERIE OF THE CHILDREN'S STUFFED ANIMALS. MORE THEODORE ELLISON LEADED GLASS ADORNS INTERIOR SLIDING DOORS.







Resources

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NICK CLEMENCE DESIGNED THE GREEN TILE SURROUND OF THE FIREPLACE, EMBEDDED WITH A FLORAL MOTIF COMPOSED OF COPPER STRIPS. THE GREENE & GREENE-LIKE ABUNDANCE OF ELLISON LEADED GLASS IN THE HOME IS EVIDENT IN A VIEW FROM THE LIVING ROOM, THROUGH THE FOYER AND ACROSS THE ENTRY COURT TO THE MAIN FRONT DOOR.

by Santa Barbara craftsman Brian McNally, and picture rails border the rooms, but each room is also personalized, with distinct themes for each of the children's rooms and Louis Icart's Art Nouveau paintings decorating the master bedroom suite.

For the living room, Nick designed a fireplace with a copper-and-tile surround inspired by one in the Greenes' Blacker House. Two-inch-wide copper strips arranged in a

brown and gold floral motif are embedded in the green tile surround.

That motif is repeated in the tile of the "modern country Craftsman" kitchen, where teak cabinetry predominates, with mahogany used for trim, bordering and accents. In designing the kitchen cabinets, Bacon embellished the glass doors with a teak tulip accent inspired by C. R. Mackintosh.

"A house should say who lives in it," Bacon says. "I think it's perfectly appropriate for people to bring their passion, their experience, their personal statements and preferences into their Craftsman-inspired remodeling. This house speaks for Nick and Ruth and their children, and in doing so it breathes life into our notions of what an Arts and Crafts revival home can feel like." ■