

Brent Green

A tour-de-force behind Greystone's new gardens opens up about his inspiration

By Victoria Charters

When The City of Beverly Hills commissioned landscape designer Brent Green of Green Art Landscape Design to help update a part of the renowned Greystone Mansion's gardens, Green created what he calls "a garden for all seasons," using foliage and blooms like an artist uses the colors on his palette.



Green's interest in seasonal vegetation stems from his love of his home of Southern California. "Here in Southern California, we have one of the best climates in the country," he says. "I'm inspired by the fact that I have the opportunity to transition the interior space outside, to create outdoor rooms for people, year round."

Intuitively, Green's portion of the revamped grounds at Greystone are divided into four sections for four seasons. In the Spring Garden, the focus is pastel plantings of foxglove and snapdragons. The Summer Garden boasts a bubbly, cobalt blue fountain and a garden table and chairs to suggest the lazy days of basking in the summer sun. Green populates the winter space with greens and whites, using evergreens to evoke a winter landscape; the Fall Garden uses sunflowers and black-eyed Susans to create washes of color.

"My signature is graceful things. I love elegant trees that blow in the breeze," says Green, a fan of foliage from a young age. "I've always loved plants, which is weird. I was teased quite a bit for it as a kid."

Prior to Greystone, Green was perhaps most famed for the 15-foot-wide "living staircase" at the Sharon and Ozzy Osborne Mansion in Beverly Hills. Says Green, "I designed that staircase specifically for that house. It's actually built of concrete. I laid in an irrigation system and, once the concrete was poured, I went in with a jackhammer and broke out the tread of the stairs to create beds for planting." The effect is that of an old ruin or mood staircase. To match Sharon Osborne's love of an English-style, flowing garden—where different plants grow at different times of the year—the "living staircase" plantings are changed with seasons.



Top Left: Brent Green, landscape designer.

Top Right: The warm and brilliant hues of the Fall Garden, Greystone Mansion.

Above: Ornamental kale, white cyclamen and emerald evergreens create a crisp and elegant feel in the Winter Garden, Greystone Mansion. Images courtesy Green Art Landscape Design.

"I do primarily residential, so I like to use a full palette to evoke the architectural style of the home and match the personality of my clients," says Green. Gardens can be enhanced by strategic plantings to achieve a private yard or block unwanted views. ■