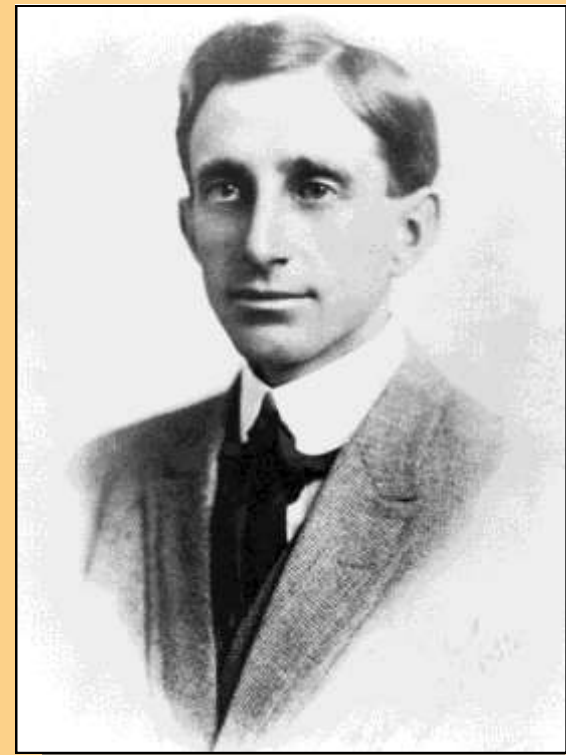


Alcázar Garden - Balboa Park

Richard Smith Requa

1881 - 1941



Richard Smith Requa was an American architect, largely known for his work in San Diego, California. Requa was the Master Architect for the California Pacific International Exposition held in Balboa Park in 1935-36. He improved and extended many of the already existing buildings from the 1915 Panama-California Exposition, as well as created new facilities including the Old Globe Theater.

His own designs were predominantly in the Spanish Revival architectural style, occasionally blending them with American Craftsman influences, working to preserve San Diego's Spanish-influenced history. His firm, Requa and Jackson, were the architects of choice in San Diego during the 1920s, dominating the area with their "Southern California Style" that blended Mediterranean and Mission stylings.

He became very interested in the historical heritage of the Colonial style of Old Mexico, the Pueblos of the Southwest and the Moorish features from Spain and North Africa. In 1926 and 1928 Requa made extended trips to Spain and the Mediterranean area to study the architectural details and garden effects, filming and photographing them for further study here at home.

In 1925 Requa designed the Del Mar Castle, for Ruth and Marston Harding, on the cliffs that today overlook the fairgrounds.



The Del Mar Castle—Photo by Russel Ray

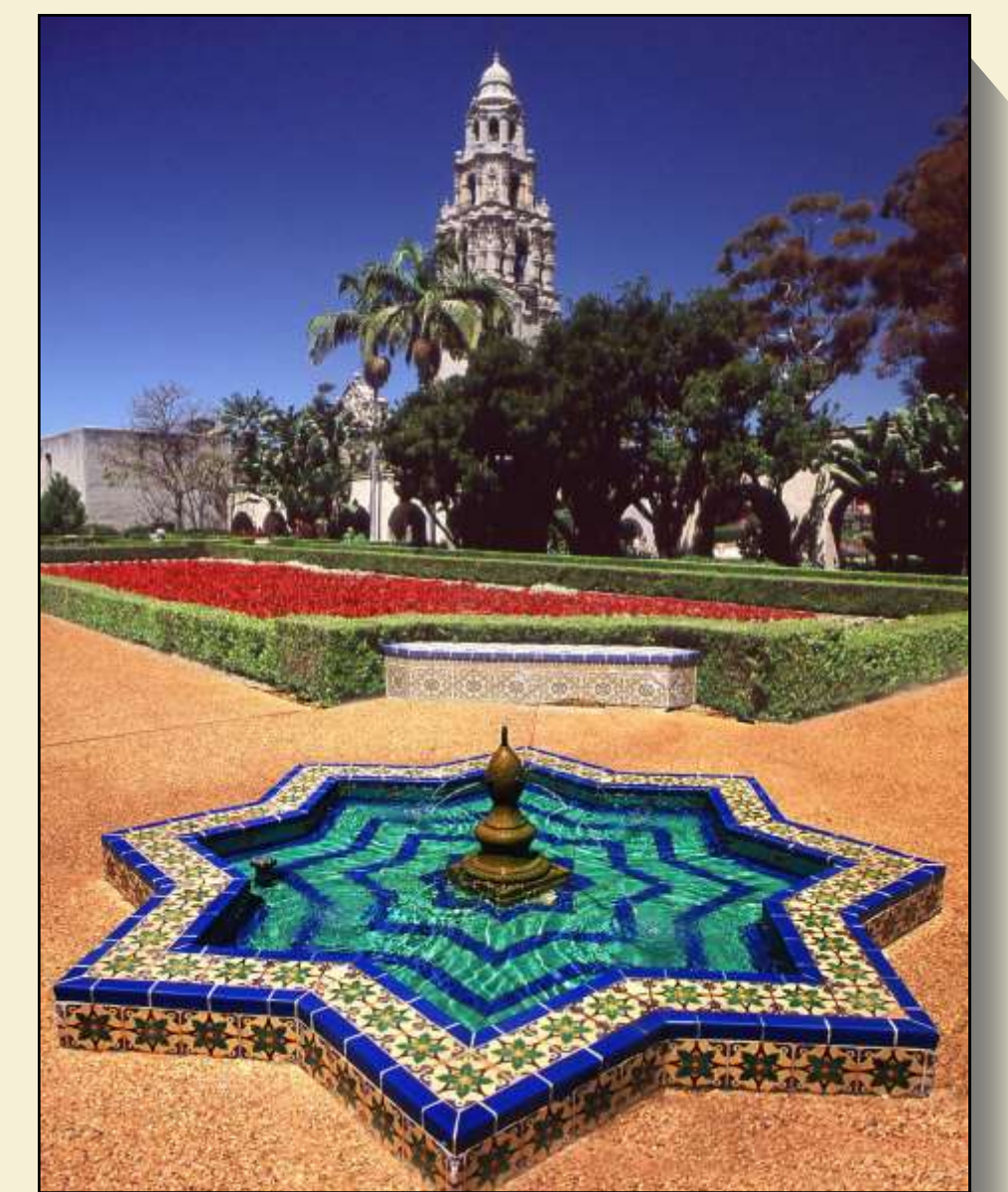


During the 1915 Panama-California Exhibition, this garden was originally named Los Jardines de Montezuma (Montezuma Garden). In 1935, architect Richard Requa modified the garden by adding two delightful water fountains and eight tile benches. The garden was renamed Alcázar because its design is patterned after the courtyard gardens of Alcázar Palace in Seville, Spain.

It is known for its ornate fountains, exquisite turquoise blue, yellow, and green Moorish tiles and shady pergola. The two water fountains were made with distinctive green, yellow, and turquoise tiles. This formal garden, bordered by boxwood hedges, is planted with 7,000 annuals for a vibrant display of color throughout the year. You will find flowers of different varieties and colors: chrysanthemums, delphiniums, pansies, begonias, calendula, dahlias and poppies.

Seventy years later, the Moorish tiles were beginning to show their age. Tiles were cracked, chipped, and had chunks missing. In 2008, the garden was reconstructed to replicate the 1935 design by San Diego architect Richard Requa. During the restoration they found that moisture had seeped through, as tiles are porous and grout isn't perfect. With \$50,000 in donations, the Committee of One Hundred, a nonprofit group dedicated to the park's Spanish Colonial architecture, replaced the damaged tiles and renovated the water fountains to their original grace and glory. The group commissioned 1,800 tiles that replicate the originals. They expect this renovation will last 20 years or so, but bought extra tiles for future patch work.

The giant Indian Laurel Fig, *Ficus microcarpa*, just outside the Alcázar garden, just outside the Alcazar garden, provides considerable shade. It was likely planted for the 1915 Panama-California Exposition.



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