

[Hakone Gardens](#)  
21000 Big Basin Way  
*Saratoga, CA*



Hakone Estate and Gardens is an 18-acre Asian and Japanese retreat nestled in the hills above Saratoga, California, overlooking Silicon Valley. In 1915 Oliver and Isabel Stine purchased 18 acres of Saratoga hillside to build a summer retreat and created Hakone during the years 1917-1929. The creation of Hakone reflected a personal passion for Japanese culture and was fueled by displays at San Francisco's 1915 Pan-Pacific Exhibition. The gardens were named after Fuji-Hakone National Park, one of Mrs. Stine's favorite places in Japan. Hakone's buildings and landscaping were created by master artisans from Japan brought to America by Mrs. Stine and followed traditional building methods and aesthetic principles. The compound features buildings and decorative landscape elements such as wisteria pavilions, lanterns, moon bridges, temple gates, a worshipping stone, and meandering pathways. Hakone's tea gardens, bamboo gardens, zen garden and hill and pond garden have been called "the only true Japanese Garden in America."

## An Official Project of Save America's Treasures

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### Historic Significance

Hakone Gardens and Retreat Center is composed of 18-acres of magnificent beauty nestled in the rolling hills which overlook Silicon Valley. This cultural jewel includes the oldest Japanese residential gardens in the Western Hemisphere. Founded before America's entry into World War I, Hakone is considered one of the



premier Japanese-style Gardens, of the Edo Period (circa 1603-1867), internationally. The result is one of the finest water and botanical gardens outside of Japan, complete with waterfalls; koi ponds and verdant groves of bamboo forest, manicured Japanese Black Pines, Irises, and Laceleaf Maples, wisteria arbors and cherry blossoms.

Named after the mountainous hot springs resort near Mount Fuji, San Francisco arts patron Isabel Stine sought to reproduce the peaceful simplicity she found in Japan when she created Hakone Gardens in 1915. Hakone has been called the only true Japanese gardens in the United States-- a recreation of a typical 17<sup>th</sup> century estate garden, where the characteristic Japanese organic architecture does not interrupt the tranquility of nature. Japanese architects, artisans, and gardeners (including a gardener descended from a family of imperial gardeners) were hired to achieve and maintain this authenticity of design. Situated at the edge of Silicon Valley, Hakone is a community treasure of both national and international significance, offering a tranquil environment for solace and meditation as well as authentic tea rituals, festivals, classes, and historic events.

One of the first west coast performances of Pucini's "Madame Butterfly" was performed at Hakone in 1924 by the San Francisco Opera. In 2001, Hakone was selected by the Japanese Government to serve as one of the official sites to host the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the historic Peace Treaty between Japan, the United States and 46 other nations, which officially ended the Second World War. Several Japanese Ambassadors to the United States were present along with dancers, artists and performers

from throughout China, Korea and Japan. Hakone also hosted the 35<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister of Japan, the honorable Morihito Hosakawa, who is also Lord of Mushashi Province, in a cultural celebration which featured the bonding ties of the Japanese and American cultures. In 2004, the Hakone Foundation, along with the Consul General of Japan in San Francisco, hosted a weekend of cultural programs and seminars to mark the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Treaty of Peace and Amity between the United States and Japan; negotiated by Commodore Perry.

### **A Priority of Save America's Treasures at the National Trust**

In recognition of its significance, in 2002 [Save America's Treasures at the National Trust](#) selected Hakone Gardens to be one of 24 projects for its Restore America partnership with HGTV and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Hakone was awarded a \$68,000 grant for its participation in this effort. The following year, it was used by Fox as the film site for the triple Oscar winning movie: "*Memoirs of a Geisha*." In 2006 Hakone received a \$5,000 grant when it vied with 24 other historic sites from the Bay Area for funding from [Partners In Preservation](#), an exciting partnership between American Express and The National Trust for Historic Preservation.

### **A Unique Restoration Story**

The [Hakone Foundation](#) has launched a broad multi-million project to enhance and renovate these historic gardens. There are a number of renowned structures on Hakone's 18-acre site. The Cultural Exchange Center (CEC), one of the only buildings of its kind, was designed and built by Kiyoshi Yasui, a 14<sup>th</sup> generation architect to the Imperial Dynasty. The CEC was assembled in Kyoto, using traditional Japanese building materials and methods, shipped to Saratoga, and reassembled at Hakone. It includes both a museum and a replica of an 18<sup>th</sup> Century tea merchant's residence and shop.

Most importantly, Hakone hopes to continue to serve as a hemispheric bridge, across the Pacific, between the civilizations of Asia and the Americas. Located in one of the most culturally diverse communities in the world, Silicon Valley, Hakone is a cultural gem which will continue to serve as an international venue for our emerging global culture.