

# Master Builder, Abenicio Salazar, Recognizing his Achievements through the Recovery of his Work

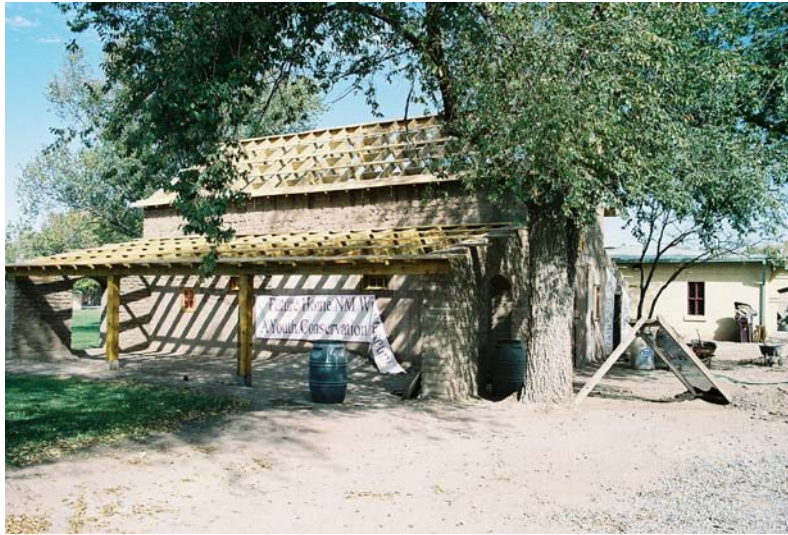
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The Town of Bernalillo is fortunate to have had the presence of one of the best known adobe masons in the state. His works from the early 1900's are major contributors to the present day Bernalillo Historic District and the fabric of the community. The Historic District lies on the north end of Bernalillo's Mainstreet. The ongoing revitalization of this important history district through the rehabilitation of some of his most important buildings, as well as the addition of new retail and residential neighborhoods have complemented and livened the town. The importance of a recently implemented Mainstreet Overlay Ordinance has assisted in this revitalization. Perhaps the most important effort to rehabilitate this district has been through Sandoval County, but most importantly the effortless work by the Town of Bernalillo in their Youth Training Projects, which have contributed to salvaging of important historic properties.

Sandoval County recently purchased several buildings, which include the Historic *Convento* Building and the well known *Zocalo* Building, originally built as the Our Lady of Sorrows School in 1922. This well known building is the largest of Abenicio Salazar's adobe buildings. The County has rehabilitated these buildings, which includes the addition of a new elevator in the *Zocalo* building, as well as a small *plazuela* for events. The *Convento* now serves as an event and visitor center to Bernalillo. However, the most rewarding projects were those rehabilitated by the Town of Bernalillo.

The Town of Bernalillo is host to the oldest wine festival in the State of New Mexico. Bernalillo has created the now well known Wine Festival Grounds. This park is complemented by several historic structures. Two of these structures have served as training centers to professionals, as well as the local youth. The smallest of these structures, the *Convento* Well House, was a dilapidated adobe structure with no roof and eroding walls. This contributing structure to the *Convento* Building across the street was site to the *Taller Internacional de Conservacion y Restauracion de Arquitectura de Tierra* (International Workshop for the Conservation and Restoration of Earthen Architecture) TICRAT in 2006. During the workshop many local professionals and community members shared their knowledge and work with Mexican experts in adobe restoration. Soon after the completion of the workshop the Town of Bernalillo and partners, such as Cornerstones Community Partnerships successfully organized a youth training project. Through a grant from the Youth Conservation Corp YCC, Cornerstones and Bernalillo hired local youth to implement the rehabilitation of the Sena Barn. The Sena Barn, another of Abenicio's buildings built with *Terrones* (Sod Blocks) popular in the Middle Rio Grande Region

at the end of the 1800's and early 1900's. The local youth enrolled in the program are trained in the art of earthen architecture restoration, carpentry and the building trades. The program allows for them to obtain their GED studies or college education. The fruits of this uninterrupted youth program has allowed for the once dilapidated burnt Sena Barn to be the future New Mexico Wine Museum.



*Sena Barn during the Youth Training Rehabilitation Project.*



*Sena Barn after rehabilitation, house of the new Bernalillo Wine Museum.*

The rehabilitation of these historic properties and recently modern additions to the Abenicio Salazar Historic District has begun a revitalization of this area of Bernalillo. Besides the salvaging of dilapidated earthen structures, the town has successfully trained their future builders and most importantly has continued with a millenary tradition whose “*adobero extraordinaire*”, Abenicio Salazar was able to imprint upon Bernalillo.

