

MANSION

SPREAD SHEET | SANETTE TANAKA

THE MIGHTY OAK, KING OF STREET NAMES

Thanks to a quirk of history, there are streets all over the country named after trees. A look at where tree-named streets proliferate, which trees rule and whether a tree-named street commands a premium in the resale market; just don't confuse tree-named with tree-lined



Amy Martin



Danielle Coats lives on West Peachtree Street, one of 90 streets in Atlanta with “peachtree” or “peach tree” in the name. But don’t be fooled—there are no peach trees in sight. The same holds true for many of the other “peachtree” streets in Atlanta, says Ms. Coats, a real-estate agent with Redfin. Streets with tree names, like elm and pine, are reminiscent of an idyllic version of suburban America. They are also highly popular, appearing in numerous towns and cities across the country. Spread Sheet asked real-estate website Trulia to

examine real-estate listings to determine where tree streets are likely to be found, and which tree names tend to be most often used. In the U.S., over 5% of current listings are on streets with tree names, according to Trulia’s analysis of 100 metro areas. In most of these areas, the median listing price for homes on tree streets is a notch above the overall median listing price, most likely because tree streets tend to be very busy and one minute you might be driving the children around or shopping or walking the dog or serving at the table,” says Mr. Johnstone, who currently does consulting and training of household staffs. Some clients want help but worry about their image. While one family is fine having a staff of eight, others worry about looking pretentious, says Ms. Kahn of The Help Company. Then there is living with the retinue. “People buy these big houses and then all of a sudden they’re living with a lot of people, so the privacy thing is interesting,” says Ms. Kahn. “I ask ‘Are you OK having a chef and a server in the kitchen?’ ” She predicts that open floor plans will eventually fall out of favor with wives who have nowhere to go in their own homes. A client called her once from a closet, since it was the only place she had privacy, Ms. Kahn says. Another just built a separate kitchen for the staff.

saturated with tree streets, followed by Tampa-St. Petersburg, Fla., and Memphis, Tenn. In its analysis, Trulia examined 52 tree names in listings, excluding foreclosures, from Jan. 1, 2011, to Sept. 26. Generally, tree streets are more common in warmer climates that are conducive to growing trees, Mr. Kolko says. They are less common in metros where many streets follow a numbered grid, like New York City, where roughly 2% of listings have a tree in the name (like Pine and Cherry streets). Still, tree-named streets shouldn’t be confused with tree-lined. Kimberly Bowden, a real-estate agent with C21 Beggin in Tampa, Fla., says tree-named streets don’t fetch a premium, but tree-lined streets do. Mr. Kolko explains: “Tree names could refer to

Branching Out		
The most commonly found tree street names amongst real-estate listings		
Tree Street	Median Listing Price Of Homes on Tree Street	Percentage of Listings
Oak	\$187,000	1.07%
Pine	\$175,000	0.57%
Maple	\$162,000	0.27%
Cedar	\$174,900	0.27%
Willow	\$185,000	0.22%
Elm	\$144,900	0.18%
Walnut	\$139,900	0.16%
Palm	\$155,000	0.15%
Laurel	\$198,000	0.15%
Cherry	\$169,900	0.13%

Source: Trulia

trees there today, trees that were there in the past, or trees that might be there in the future.” Chuck Geiger, a professor in the department of geography at Millersville University in Millersville, Pa., dates the popularity of tree streets back to William Penn, who planned the city of Philadelphia. “All the east-west streets are named after trees. All the north-south streets are named after numbers,” he says. Since then, many new streets have been added in Philadelphia and many have been renamed—but the naming trend had already branched out. “Once Philadelphia got established in the 1680s, almost every town founded after that was laid out the same way—in a grid, with tree street names,” Prof. Geiger says.

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The \$200,000 Butler

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butler who got his start at Buckingham Palace as a royal footman—someone who has training in the glass pantry, the silver pantry and the wine cellar, is trained as a professional valet and lays the table for breakfast, lunch and afternoon tea. He says the job has changed, reflecting modern life. “The houses can be very, very busy and one minute you might be driving the children around or shopping or walking the dog or serving at the table,” says Mr. Johnstone, who currently does consulting and training of household staffs. Some clients want help but worry about their image. While one family is fine having a staff of eight, others worry about looking pretentious, says Ms. Kahn of The Help Company. Then there is living with the retinue. “People buy these big houses and then all of a sudden they’re living with a lot of people, so the privacy thing is interesting,” says Ms. Kahn. “I ask ‘Are you OK having a chef and a server in the kitchen?’ ” She predicts that open floor plans will eventually fall out of favor with wives who have nowhere to go in their own homes. A client called her once from a closet, since it was the only place she had privacy, Ms. Kahn says. Another just built a separate kitchen for the staff.

Yet another client is putting up walls on the first floor of their new house. The care and maintenance of large homes isn’t a new challenge. The Duchess of Rutland in 2001 moved into Belvoir Castle in England, a property that her husband’s family has owned for almost a thousand years. Since then she has had a full-time job maintaining the more than 200-room home on approximately 16,000 acres. The duchess says she has had to look at the house in a “business way,” estimating that it costs half a million pounds (almost \$800,000 dollars) a year to live in the castle. So gone are the two chefs, the chauffeur and the four butlers she inherited. Now there is one butler and two part-time cleaners, though a bevy of volunteers help keep the house up as it’s now open to the public. She adds that in today’s world everyone has to multitask: “No one’s just a butler.” The founder of

clothing and accessories line Billionaire Mafia and star of the reality television show “Sin City Rules,” Lana Fuchs recently up-sized from a 9,200-square-foot home in Las Vegas to an 11,600-square-foot Tuscan-influenced home with two kitchens, a wine cellar and multiple bars as the family likes to entertain. She will be bringing her housekeeping staff of three (two live in) and is considering adding a fourth person. She will also be bringing with her the two animal trainers who come seven days a week to care for Prince Mikey, a white-faced capuchin monkey. Prince Mikey’s trainers work with him five to six hours a day during the week and three hours a day on weekends. Mrs. Fuchs says Prince Mikey had become “spoiled rotten,” especially compared with her college-age son and her high school-age daughter. The annual cost is in the six figures, but Mrs. Fuchs says it’s worth it. “For the first eight years, he had me trained to

serve him,” says Mrs. Fuchs, age 44. Among his new tricks, Prince Mikey now sits in a high chair and is learning to draw with crayons, says Mrs. Fuchs. Michael Bruno, the founder of Istdibs, a global online retail site for antiques, furniture and jewelry, has a 12,000-square-foot house in Tuxedo Park, N.Y., a boat house and two homes in Southampton, N.Y. His to-do list includes hand-washing the silver and certain sets of china. Glassware shouldn’t touch when stored lest it chip. Towels should be folded in even thirds, using the first towel as a guide so all the towels in a stack are the same width. “The pillows were never right on the bed,” he says. “They were straight up and down.” To help keep everything straight, Mr. Bruno invented a multilingual app called the House Pad that will launch in December. His two part-time housekeepers log in when they get to work—it texts Mr. Bruno that they’ve arrived and tracks their hours. The app includes an image library with notes by room. Mr. Bruno has photographed every tabletop and pillow so the staff knows how they should look. Now “my house is constantly flawless,” says Mr. Bruno. The only change he’s considering is possibly hiring a cook.

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Mr. Charles Carson (Jim Carter) of “Downton Abbey”
2. Rosey the Robot of “The Jetsons”
3. Hobson (John Gielgud) of “Arthur” and “Arthur 2”
4. Cecil Gaines (Forest Whitaker) in “Lee Daniels’ The Butler”
5. Alfred Pennyworth (Alan Napier) of the “Batman” TV series
6. Alice Nelson (Ann B. Davis) of “The Brady Bunch”