

MANSION

SPREAD SHEET | SANETTE TANAKA

THE MAGIC OF ‘CANDY CANE LANE’

Real-estate listings often use as a selling point the fact that some homes are in areas known for elaborate Christmas displays

FOR MOST OF THE YEAR, Vince Miller's address is on Northeast Park Road in Seattle. In December, he lives on ‘Candy Cane Lane.’

A few weeks before Christmas, Mr. Miller, 61 years old and a network engineer at T-Mobile, outlines his three-bedroom house with red-and-white lights, puts a wreath in the window and adds two large candy-cane ornaments to his front lawn. About 15 to 20 neighbors do the same to their homes in their own styles. Then he and his neighbors get together and set up a large holiday-themed carousel that surrounds a holly bush in the street's traffic circle.

The result? “People go absolutely nuts,” he says. “Taken individually, it's not a big deal. But taken together, it's a scene.”

Mr. Miller's street has earned the name Candy Cane Lane from real-estate agents and local residents to signal the local homeowners' devotion to creating elaborate holiday light displays. Some gain wide reputations, attracting hundreds of visitors at Christmastime.

Roughly 100 homes on the market

in the U.S. promoted their Candy Cane Lane status in listing descriptions in the past three years, with 44 of those listings located in the state of California, according to an analysis by real-estate listings company Zillow.

One of California's most festive locales is in Woodland Hills, a district in Los Angeles. The roughly four-street area is so well known that it has its own attraction page on ratings websites TripAdvisor and Yelp.

Caroline Lomeli, who lives in Northridge, about 8 miles north of Woodland Hills's Candy Cane Lane, makes an annual trip there with her two daughters. The houses “are definitely over the top,” she says. “Many of them spare no expense. I've seen Santa Claus on a motorcycle, lights up 50-foot palm trees, UCLA written on the roof of a home, lights covering every plant, bush—anything you can imagine. It's wild.”

Monique Bryher, broker associate with Pinnacle Estate Properties in Encino, Calif., says including the term “Candy Cane Lane” in the listing description is a positive. “For a lot of people, that's the draw of it. There's a

Sweetening a Deal	
A look at states with the most for-sale homes with a reference to ‘Candy Cane Lane’ in the listing description:	
State	Candy Cane Lane Homes
California	44
Missouri	11
Washington	7
Wisconsin	7
Arizona	5
Florida	4
Idaho	4
Indiana	4
Kansas	4
Oklahoma	3
Colorado	2
Nebraska	1
Maryland	1
Michigan	1
Texas	1



Chart source: Zillow; listings are from Jan. 1, 2011, to Nov. 8, 2013.

certain magic to Candy Cane Lane,” she says. “Plus, as a real-estate agent, you always want to do something that differentiates a neighborhood.” Homes in Candy Cane Lane sell for about \$600,000 to \$1.4 million, she adds.

In the summer, Joe Goldin, a real-estate agent at Rodeo Realty in Encino, Calif., sold a Candy Cane Lane property for \$700,000. He didn't put Candy Cane Lane in the listing. “Everyone knows about it,” he says.

Living on a Candy Cane Lane has its downsides. Mr. Miller, the Seattle resident, says putting up the same light display for 20 years can get tedious. His electricity bill is 10% higher in December compared with the rest of the year. And the traffic makes it difficult for him to come home or leave his house after sundown. The weekend before Christmas, it often takes him 40 minutes to drive just one block, he says.

Even so, Mr. Miller says it is worth it: “You watch the kids, and they just get a kick out of it,” he says. “They will stand at a window with their jaws open. That's what it's all about.”

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