



Max, Lucky, and Princess Lead the Pack of Dog Names

By [MATTHEW CHAYES](#) *Special to the Sun*: December 28, 2006

New Yorkers are more likely to see Max run than Spot. New statistics compiled by New York City's health department show that Max is the most popular dog name of 2005, followed by Lucky, Princess, and Rocky, and a mixed breed the most common canine variety.

On the day the department released its annual list of the top dog names, several experts said the names New Yorkers pick for their best friends mean a lot less to their four-legged companions than their human owners.

"The meaning of the names doesn't mean anything," a Brooklyn animal psychologist, Peter Borchelt, said yesterday, recalling how the moniker one client gave a dog — an unprintable scatological expletive — probably didn't offend the dog. "If you're trying to get the dog's attention," he said, "you keep it short and simple if possible." He said dog names are often chosen more to impress friends than the dogs themselves.

Still, he noted just could mean the difference between adoption and rejection at a shelter, the executive director of Animal Haven, Marcello Forte, said.

"Obviously a name like Bruiser or Killer isn't quite as attractive as Fluffy or Sparky," Mr. Forte, who suggests clients choose their new pets' names to help smooth the adoption, said. "There's a marketing aspect to it."

Even once a name is selected, it can "become an issue," such as in divorces when a man's best friend is named after that man, a local **pet lawyer**, [Rachel Hirschfeld, www.pettrustlawyer.com](#), said.

Naming a dog after one of the partners can make a dog unwanted if the relationship goes to the dog house, she said, or mean the dog needs to lose its a name to soothe the matrimonial pain.

"I've seen them go to a totally different name," [Ms. Hirschfeld](#), whose own dog is named Soupbone, said. Referring to the renamed dogs, she said: "Then they don't know who the heck they have to answer to."

She said the wife in a recent divorce changed the dog's name from, say, Dr. Smith, to Sundance, "because she just hated Dr. Smith."

Dr. Smith didn't make the city's list, but the most popular dog names of 2005 were (in order of popularity based on dogtag engravings) Max, Lucky, Princess, Rocky, Buddy, Coco, Daisy, Lucy, Lady, and Shadow. While only a fifth of dogs are licensed as required by law, the top-name statistics have remained fairly consistent over the past few years.

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