



This 16,000-square-foot home has nine full bathrooms and eight bedrooms. It's on the market for \$14.9 million. "The second you walk in the house ... you're in Europe," said co-agent Laura Stroud. PHOTOS BY BRUCE CAIN

European luxury on block

For just \$14.9M, Belle Meade home is yours

By Brad Schmitt
For The Tennessean

The stats alone are mind-boggling: 16,000 square feet, nine full bathrooms, eight bedrooms sitting on 2 acres, listed for a cool \$14.9 million.

Then there's the world-class architecture, outdoor pool, lush gardens, 10,000-bottle wine cellar, heated bathroom and outdoor balcony floors, and more.

The stunning Belle Meade property was even used for a Miranda Lambert photo shoot for this month's People magazine country issue.

"The second you walk in the house, you're not in Nashville, Tennessee," said co-agent Laura Stroud, "you're in Europe."

The house was built in the 2000s by businessman Keith Pitts and his socialite wife, Deby Pitts, who built it to move Keith Pitts' father in along with the couple's three pre-teen and teen children.

The elder Pitts needed a home that was handicapped accessible, and



The 10,000-bottle wine cellar is "magnificent," said owner Deby Pitts.

To see more photos of the home, visit Tennessean.com.

Deby Pitts said finding an existing one in Nashville proved difficult.

So she and her husband built their own.

"It was created out of our love for Keith's dad — and a desire to have a wine cellar that got out of control," Deby Pitts said, laughing.

Once she assembled a world-class architect/design/construction team, Deby Pitts said, the home became so much more.

"It's a magical, happy place," she said. "We expected to be here the rest of our lives."

But only six years later, Keith Pitts' company was acquired by another,

and as part of the deal, he must relocate to Dallas.

And so Nashville has one of its most opulent and expensive listings in real estate history.

To be sure, there are others. Socialite Sylvia Roberts has her Forest Hills home — which serves as country singer Rayna Jaymes' home on the ABC drama "Nashville" — listed for \$19 million.

And at those prices, the potential buyers pool is small. Very small.

So how do agents find buyers?

"We have to speak that language fluently," Stroud said of her and her

TO LEARN MORE

The home at 625 Westview Ave. in Belle Meade is on the market for \$14.9 million. For more information about it, call 615-330-5811 or email laura@frenchking.com.

real-estate selling partner, Lisa Wilson. "We have to be able to understand every facet, feature, bell and whistle, and make sure anyone who can afford it and has the taste to appreciate it knows it's available."

Back to that wine cellar.

"It's magnificent," Deby Pitts said simply.

"Made from redwood, the shelving is done in a way that looks like the inside of an ocean liner from the '30s with curved shelves and walls."

Her other favorite places: the upper terrace behind the salon, the library with Cuban mahogany wood, the master bathroom with floor-to-ceiling French vanilla marble, and the kitchen.

"I love the kitchen because that's where we live, the kitchen and breakfast room," Deby Pitts said.

"I have so many fond memories. We love to cook and we've had a lot of fun there."

? the simple answer

By Tony Gonzalez tgonzalez@tennessean.com



Nona Hall helps students with their homework after school at a new learning center for refugees — from Burma — in Smyrna. LARRY MCCORMACK / FILE / THE TENNESSEAN

Where have city's refugees come from?

I recently read a Tennessean feature about immigrants in Nashville, and an article about refugees trying to find housing in the city, and wondered: Which countries have refugees fled from to find safe new lives in Nashville?

Nashville has long been a major destination for refugees — defined as people approved by the U.S. government to move into America to escape persecution in their home countries. Less than 1 percent of endangered people worldwide get approval.

In the past two years in Tennessee, the most refugees have arrived from Bhutan, Burma, Iraq and Somalia, according to the state's Office for Refugees. To a lesser degree, refugees are arriving from Cuba, Eritrea and Sudan. Each year, refugees from about two dozen nations arrive in Nashville.

How many refugees live here?

As of 2012, there were about 57,869 refugees in Tennessee, which is less than 1 percent of the population. That number includes refugees approved to move here and estimates of births and deaths in refugee families. The number of refugees here has more than doubled since 1990, although the flow slowed dramatically in 2001 and again in recent years.

Davidson County takes in more than half of the entire state's incoming refugees.

What happens when they arrive?

The federal Refugee Resettlement Program, carried out by three nonprofits in Tennessee, helps refugees find housing, health care and employment, and it creates a path to citizenship after five years. They get cash assistance for their first eight months.

Resettlement agencies find rental housing, but it's not always easy. An agency such as Catholic Charities works with landlords, who must be willing to prepare an apartment before the refugee has actually arrived — providing keys in advance and waiting until the arrival to receive rent, said Kellye Branson, director of immigrant and refugee services. She said she also tries to find affordable apartments within one mile of a bus stop.

So where do they live?

Nashville's most diverse area is along Nolensville Pike, south of downtown. Branson and other experts said the area became an international enclave because of affordable housing and because newly arriving refugees prefer to live near others from their home countries. About 70 percent of incoming refugees are joining families already here.

Aren't there concerns about refugees using taxpayer money?

Yes, some state lawmakers asked for data about the contributions and taxpayer expenses related to refugees. The resulting report found that refugees contributed almost twice as much in tax revenues as they consumed in state-funded services in the past two decades.

Lawmakers still have questions about how state and federal dollars are being spent.

Got a question? Email us at local@tennessean.com and follow us on Twitter @TNSimpleAnswer.

Register by Monday for Williamson primary

By Jamie Page
jepage@tennessean.com

FRANKLIN — Monday is voter registration deadline for county primary elections across Middle Tennessee, including the Williamson County Republican primary, with more than 50 candidates set to appear on the ballot.

The May 6 primary includes 28 races, 12 of them contested, to seat multiple county commissioners, judges, a trustee, a public defender and other local posts.

The deadline to register to vote is 4:30 p.m. Monday at county election commissions state-

wide. Forms are available at the Tennessee Department of Safety's driver testing centers, the state Department of Human Services, the Williamson County Health Department, county libraries and any U.S. post office.

Only registration forms postmarked by Monday will be processed for the May election.

Anyone already registered in Williamson County may have his or her permanent voter registration records altered upon receipt of a written notification with the voter's signature by May 1, Deputy Election Administrator Chad Gray said.

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