Conventional surnames have arrived with a splash as first names. They appeal to creative namers with their freshness, while their familiarity and familiarity and
heritage keep them down-to-earth. Creative-rustic: the perfect new-millennium combo. No wonder they’re just catching on now . . . right?

Actually, what we’re seeing today is only the latest wave of last-name crossovers. Starting at the turn of the last century, American parents flocked to classic surnames of English literature and aristocracy. Those parents, including many poor immigrants, had grand dreams for their sons. They wanted to send them into the world with sophisticated names ready to take their places in high society. Thus they turned to such historical icons as (John) Milton and (Sir Philip) Sidney. Unfortunately for poor Milt and Sid, the actual aristocrats continued to give their sons names like John and Philip, and the elegant image of their surnames quickly faded.

So how are the newly popular surnames different? The new favorites still lean on their British Isles heritage to conjure up a lifestyle, but that style is a far cry from the Oxbridge world of Milton and Sidney. Instead of nobility, we’re seeing hardy tradesmen: Coopers, Tanners, and Masons. And parents have turned away from England to focus on Irish and Scottish traditions: Riley, Mackenzie, Brennan. These new names are rugged and rakish—and they’re used for boys and girls.

Parents of boys delight in a new field of names with classically masculine features. The trade names in particular are brisk, direct, and stocked with hard consonants. For parents of girls, surnames present an opportunity to start afresh with lively names that carry no gender baggage.

So will these names escape the fate of Sid and Milt? Certainly, some portion of the new names will hold their ground over time to join the ranks of the perennials. Russell, for example, is an old surname that we now accept as a classic first name. Yet with any surgingly popular name group comes the risk of a “freshness date” that soon passes. To avoid a trendy name with a short shelf life, consider some of the similar but less popular alternatives below. Better yet, search your own family tree for surnames that might be revived. When a name’s significance is personal, it has roots that shifting fashions can’t sweep away.

**Trade Names**

- Archer
- Bailey
- Barker
- Baxter
- Bridger

- Bowman
- Bailiff, county officer
- Tanner or shepherd
- Baker
- Builder of bridges
Carter  Transporter of goods
Carver  Carver of wood or stone
Chancellor  Administrative officer
Chandler  Candle maker
Chapman  Merchant or peddler
Cooper  Barrel maker
Coster  Fruit seller or grower
Currier  Leather finisher
Cutler  Knife maker
Dexter  Dyer
Draper  Maker or seller of cloth
Farrier  Ironworker
Faulkner  Falconer
Fletcher  Arrow maker
Forester  Forest warden
Foster  Shearer
Gardner  Gardener
Garner  Keeper of the granary
Glover  Maker or seller of gloves
Gunner  Artillery operator
Harper  Harp player
Hooper  One who fits hoops on barrels
Hunter  Hunter
Jagger  Peddler
Keeler  Boat builder or pilot
Marshall  Tender of horses/military officer
Mason  Stonemason
Mercer  Fabric merchant
Miller  Miller of grain
Packer  Wool packer
Parker  Gamekeeper
Piper  Piper
Porter  Gatekeeper or load carrier
Potter  Pot maker
Ranger  Game warden
Ryder  Mounted soldier or messenger
Sadler  Saddle maker
Sailor  Sailor
Sawyer  One who saws wood
Slater  Slate roof maker
Smith Metalworker
Spencer Pantry servant
Sumner Court summoner
Tanner Preparer of hides for leather
Taylor Tailor
Thane Freeman or feudal baron
Thatcher Straw roof maker
Tillman Farmer
Tucker Dresser of cloth
Turner Lathe operator
Tyler Tile maker
Walker Dresser of cloth
Weaver Weaver
Webster Weaver
Wheeler Wheel maker
Wright Builder or machinist

BRITISH ISLES SURNAMES

Addison Bradford Carson Delaney Gannon
Ainsley Bradley Cassidy Dennison Garrick
Alden Brady Chauncey Dillon Garrison
Alton Brannon Clancy Dixon Gibson
Anderson Branson Clifton Donovan Grady
Arden Braxton Clinton Doyle Grant
Arley Brennan Cody Drake Grayson
Ashton Brigham Colby Easton Greer
Aubrey Brock Coleman Edgerton Griffith
Austin Broderick Colton Edison Hadley
Avery Brody Connolly Ellis Hailey
Baldwin Brogan Courtney Elton Hamilton
Bannon Bryant Dalton Emerson Hardy
Barclay Bryson Daly Everett Harlan
Barrett Buckley Darby Everly Harley
Barron Burke Darcy Finley Harmon
Barton Cabot Darnell Flynn Harris
Beck Callahan Darwin Ford Harrison
Beckett Campbell Davis Forrest Hartley
Bennett Carey Dawson Fraser Haskell
Berkeley Carlton Dayton Freeman Hayden
Latino/Latina

Luis. Juan. Jesus. Just look through the top-100 boys’ names in America, and you’ll see it plainly: Spanish names are American names, and they’re more popular than ever before.

When we talk about Latino names, of course, it’s not just a matter of Spanish. Families of Caribbean descent may have different tastes from Mexican-Americans or South Americans. Brazilians add Portuguese variations to the mix. Names of reverence, such as titles of the Virgin Mary (Guadalupe, Dolores), are popular choices. And pop