

Reality television shows have increased the awareness and interest in ballroom dancing

Ballroom



*Local residents of every age
are learning to ballroom dance*

Photo courtesy of Dance with Stars

Dancing KATY STYLE

Written by Noreen Stavinoha

“If your heart beats, you have rhythm,” says Kyle Cox, Manager of Katy’s Fred Astaire Dance Studio. That takes care of one excuse. Roman Mocharsky, the studio owner, adds with a chuckle, “And for the guys who say they have two left feet we have special shoes.”

In short, anyone can learn to dance if they have the desire and a good instructor. The motivation for learning to shine on the dance floor varies with the student. Cox recalls that for one particular couple, it was the mix of business and pleasure. The husband’s company held a social event every year where dancing was included, and they were always on the sidelines because they didn’t know how. After completing a course, everyone was watching them at the next event, and they had a lot more fun.

A DANCE FOR ALL OCCASIONS

Sometimes the occasion is more personal, like a wedding, or the desire to learn a particular kind of dance, or they are an older couple who danced years ago but have gotten away from it, and need a refresher course. Whatever the motive, dancing is fabulous exercise and a great hobby that a couple can enjoy together. Some couples stop by the studio after work several times a week to practice, and it becomes their way of shedding the stresses of the work day.

Already starting off on the right foot, engaged couple Andrea Hernandez and Phil Guerrero took their first ballroom class in June and say they liked the atmosphere immediately. “We don’t have a first song for our wedding reception, and we want to do something nice,” says Hernandez. “And they have wedding packages where you can have lessons a few months before the wedding.”

“Sometimes lesson night becomes a couple’s ‘date night,’” says Michael Blanco, the manager at Katy’s Dance with Stars. “They get a babysitter, have dinner, and come to dance. Or they take their lesson and then go do dinner. It’s a gratifying experience for us to help two people have a wonderful time for an hour or forty-five minutes.”

DANCE INTO SHAPE

While it isn’t advertised as a weight loss program, dancing regularly has been just that for some students, and continuing to dance after lessons are done keeps the weight off. Theresa Campos says she was hesitant to give dancing a whirl when her husband, Jose, suggested it. However, since January, Campos has not only lost 25 pounds and gained more self-esteem, but she says dance lessons impacted her job performance as well. “For me, it has actually helped me to do my job better—dancing is a great stress reliever,” says Campos.

Photo courtesy of Dance with Stars



Dance with Stars offers competitive dance options for kids

It isn't only couples who take lessons either. Single students are just as welcome as couples, so it's another place to meet people with a common interest and expand one's social circle.

COMPETITIVE DANCE

There are students who become so enthusiastic about dancing that they want more than socializing—they want to compete. When that happens, the instructors are more than happy to help them on that path too. Local, national, and world competitions for both amateur and professional dancers provide many possibilities for winning awards and satisfying that need for a competitive rush.

Dancing with Stars has one of the largest youth programs for competitive dancers in the area. Dance Houston, the annual city-wide dance festival, created an extra day just for the Katy youth last year.

“What you really can't describe to people is the feeling you get when you learn how to dance,” says Blanco. “More than anything, other than dance lessons, what we try to focus on here is the experience - you have an absolutely amazing experience.”

Studios in Katy teach kids as young as 3 years old



Photo courtesy of Dance with Stars

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Some students choose to further their training and enter competitions

Photo courtesy of Fred Astaire



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BALLROOM'S VAST APPEAL

Age is never a negative factor for prospective dance students. Dancing with Stars has students as young as three, and at Fred Astaire the youngest is five, and every number above that is eligible. And with both studios working hard to keep up with all the latest dance steps, there is never a reason to get bored with dance, no matter what your age.

Just as mixed martial arts became popular through television, ballroom dancing has regained its place in our culture since Dancing with the Stars highlighted this delightful entertainment in all its forms. More Americans are seeing themselves waltzing, mastering country swing, or stepping to one of the flirty Latin dances instead of sitting on the sidelines. So, strike up the band, maestro! Let's dance. **KM**

NOREEN STAVINOHA is a Katy resident who enjoys writing about interesting people.



Photo courtesy of Fred Astaire

Engaged couples can take classes to learn the steps to their first dance at their wedding

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Photo courtesy of Fred Astaire

For some, dancing serves as a stress reliever and weight loss program



Local studios often host dance parties for their students

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