



CLASSY & SASSY

"I'M SEEING PEOPLE COME IN HERE AND RELIEVE STRESS AND LAUGH AND FEEL CONFIDENT AND HAVE A BLAST. THAT'S THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF ANY WORKOUT, TO FEEL GOOD."

BY MAYA GOLDEN | PHOTOS BY ANDREW D. BROSIG

Bass pumps and Peggy Lee's iconic voice blares boldly from stereo speakers.

*Never know how much I love you
Never know how much I care*

Lee's 1956 hit "Fever" is just the right soundtrack for Shannon Reynolds' choreography. The fitness instructor stands before the mirrored wall in the All About Dance studio in Tyler, Texas demonstrating the moves for a new style of workout that incorporates burlesque techniques.

Reynolds has proudly named the workout The New Classy Sassy.

"I wanted to bring something different," Reynolds says. "I think that when people hear burlesque they attribute it to something very negative and it's not. I tell my class all the time, it's like putting on a show. You're an actor and you're stepping onto a stage."

Reynolds is quick to point out the fitness aspect of her class. "That's why I said it's a classy sassy. It isn't in a derogatory manner. I'm always going back to it's tasteful, it's fun, it's challenging. We're not taking off clothing, everyone is dressed appropriately. We're in a studio. It's a very safe environment."

The proof is in the pudding or really in the aching muscles after each class. Those searching for a different type of workout will find the classes physically challenging. Achieving the steps practices cardiovascular exercise, core muscle training and requires stretching and moderate flexibility.

WORKOUT

"It is a workout," Katrina Starling, a local nurse says. "It's a leg workout. It's an arm workout, it's whole-body workout, head to toe. It's fun and fitness."

"I'm sore for like a week, which is not a bad thing," says respiratory therapist Bethany Parker. "I really didn't have a workout plan and this has encouraged me to be more active and be more fit."

She developed the idea for the Classy Sassy class after attending a Zumba convention in Orlando, Florida. Burlesque influence was offered as one of the workout dance styles. When she returned to East Texas, her announcement to clients that

she was starting a class quickly sparked interest.

"I thought why not (try it)," says 27-year-old Megan Pritchard. "I didn't think I'd ever like Zumba. It took her three years to get me to try and come to Zumba and I ended up loving it. So with this, I decided not to wait three years."

Reynolds' enthusiasm and unique approach has attracted a diverse group of clients. She has taught Zumba in East Texas for four years. The workout style morphs Latin dance with an intense full-body workout. She also instructs kickboxing and Crossfit.

Business professionals, college students, nurses and stay-at-home moms have all signed up for the classes.

Kelly Woolridge, a CPA in Tyler, was one of Reynolds' first clients to enroll. The 50-year-old says for her, the joy of the workout is that she does not have to battle the mental reservations she has with traditional workouts.

ENJOYABLE

"It's been very enjoyable," Woolridge says. "We love it. It is different. You use different muscles. You get the same old, same old around here and you get bored. When you are standing there dancing you aren't thinking, 'Oh my, do I have to do another 15 pushups or jumping jacks or am I going to have to run over there?'"

Reynolds has realized the need to offer more classes.

"I'm really falling in love with the format because I'm seeing people who think they can't do choreography and be that detailed, pick it up and learn it and be able to dance it confidently," Reynolds says. "You can do that in Zumba, we definitely see that, but it's just moving a different way."

A product of Reynolds' classes has been the camaraderie built between the women taking the classes and the self-confidence it builds in each woman.

"I'm seeing people come in here and relieve stress and laugh and feel confident and have a blast," Reynolds says. "That's the ultimate goal of any workout, to feel good." ■

For more information on Shannon Reynolds' classes, you can contact her at (469) 867-5722.