

“Our American Adventure” – Alan Birchall & Jacqui

At last found time to put pen to paper so to speak.... Our feet haven't touched the ground since arriving back from the **5th Annual Tampa Bay Linedance Classic** where we had an AMAZZZZZZING time, and met lots of wonderful people. It really was a fantastic opportunity for Jacqui and I and we enjoyed every single minute of it.

There were 3 Full days of workshops (4 running simultaneously in different rooms from 9am each day) with choreographers and instructors teaching their dances. A bit different to our weekends where we teach a total of maybe 4 or 5 dances over a whole weekend!!! There was a good clear schedule and every dance was pre-viewed the day before so dancers could select which workshops they wanted to attend, and make a note of when they could fit in a bite to eat!!! We seemed to find that Mid-night was the quietest time!!!!!! ☺

The Black & White Ball on Saturday night was great fun with a lovely meal before the Show, the finale of this being a tribute to Arline Winerman (the organiser) as this was her last year, she handed over the 'crown' to Jennifer and Jason who I'm sure will continue to take this event from strength to strength. Arline told us she will still be there enjoying herself! Neville Fitzgerald & Amy Christian Sohn sang "Hello Arline" while we danced "Hello Dolly" in a circle around Arline; I think she was expecting a strip-a-gram!!!! Pre-show we all took part in Ira's SBS (Shuffle Boogie Soul) Flash Mob; it looked great with everyone wearing black & white!!

Jacqui and I took part in the show too, performing our first 'serious' dance routine – A night club two-step seamlessly running into a waltz, to "Angels" by Robbie Williams and "Edge Of Desire" by John Mayer, with a little bit of 'mime' to start. We bought the DVD so we could re-live the experience! It really is a great memento, and of course we get to see what our 'routine' looked like!! ☺ Not bad for a first attempt... WE DID IT!!!

Our workshops, pre-views & re-caps went really well, receiving instant complimentary feed-back. I taught **Edge Of Desire, This Could Be..., Sign Your Name, Minimal and Calpe Rock**. We even managed to get to some of the other workshops, so have some 'new' dances for our classes! The hardest thing is deciding which to teach first!!

We enjoyed the After Party (what a lovely idea) meeting up with some of the great people involved with this event, we even had time to talk..... eat.....drink....&... dance 'Edge of Desire' with John Robinson... 'His way' ask anyone who was there, but we'll remember it every time we see those black & white biscuits!!!!!! "OREO's"

After the event we picked up a hire car, and got talked into an up-grade at a discounted price!!! (We'd flown American Airlines... we were English... it was quiet... very late at night...etc...etc) it was my dream car a CAMARO!!!! It even 'found' us in the car park!!!! Luckily our 'Tom Tom' kept reminding me to drive on the 'right' side of the road!!!

Now the Holiday – first we went to Busch Gardens & I got to do all the Roller Coasters which is something I really enjoy, some I got to go on twice which was brilliant!!! Jacqui tried one ride but decided they definitely weren't for her!!!

Then off to Orlando, after first going over to Guyton's house at Palm Coast - where we met up once again with Natalie, Craig, Donna and Dj Louis St. George. We all went out for an Italian meal before heading down back to Orlando and a hotel right opposite Universal Studios – that was the next stop!!! With there being 2 parks here I decided we'd do the studio side of things with fewer roller coasters!!!! Which Jacqui thoroughly enjoyed especially E.T. Men In Black, Twister and Shrek 4D.

Thursday saw us heading over to Indian Rocks, Clearwater, so we could take in a beach and just laze for the last day, watch the sunset and unwind ready for the journey home the next day. Friday morning got up to see the sunrise, then another walk along the beach before heading to the airport at midday. They wouldn't let us take the CAMARO on the plane ☹ so had to say farewell in the parking lot (we've got loads of photos of it, makes a great screen saver!!!)

Everything about the Event and our Holiday was beyond our expectations, and with this being Jacqui's first visit to the USA she was overwhelmed with the whole thing. We have lots of pictures of the people we met and places we have been, hopefully we can return sometime in the future, and visit some of the places we didn't have time to see.

We'd like to say a great big THANKYOU to Arline (and Rosie) and everyone involved in organising this incredible event for inviting us along, it out lived our expectations completely. Everyone we talked to had nothing but the utmost respect for Arline and the event, which is fully justified in our opinion. We wish Arline well in her retirement, she can relax and enjoy next year, stress-free!!!!

“We had the Time of Our Lives”