

The American Dream Tour

Barry and Dari Anne Amato are two names the world of Line dance knows well. Both live in Nashville and both are incredibly talented dancers in their own right. Here, Barry tells us of one amazing experience the couple recently helped to make happen for a group of dancers...

Four years ago, we had the opportunity to visit one of the most amazing countries in the world...South Africa. Little did we know then that the Line dance community would be thriving just as much as any other country in the world. We made many friends while there and managed to keep in contact.

Just recently, the South Africans ventured to our side of the globe to fulfill their dream of coming to the USA. When our friend and fellow dancer, Karin Van De Merwe of Capetown, South Africa, contacted us and told us they were coming to Nashville, we knew we had to kick things off with our annual 'Dirty Line Dancin'' event held in Pembroke, Virginia...the actual location where 'Dirty Dancin'' was filmed.

When the group arrived at Mountain Lake Resort, they were transported into a world where everything was all about the iconic pop culture film.

This event is all inclusive, so all they had to do when they arrived was eat, dance, dance, eat, eat, dance, dance and dance again. Oh yes, there was sleep as well! It didn't take long for this fun loving group to get acclimatized.

After settling into their rooms and one of the first of many inclusive meals in the famous dining room, the group was treated to a pajama party with a showing of 'Dirty Dancin'' complete with popcorn, soda's and candy. Let me tell you, there is nothing like watching this movie where it all took place. You feel as though you are part of where the magic was created.

The next day consisted of workshops all day with me, Dari Anne, guest instructor/DJ Gail Cummings and also from the group leader, Karin. After lunch, we

took time out to meet with the general manager, to tour the resort and learn of all of the locations where the movie was shot. Mr. Scandland has been the general manager of Mountain Lake hotel since the first week filming began at the resort. The group even got to meet with the Sous chef and listened to his stories about Patrick Swayze. After more dancing, many returned to our cabin, which coincidentally was used by the Houseman family (Baby's cabin) in the film and sat up until the early morning hours playing 'Dirty Dancin'' trivia.

The following two days were more workshops, open dancing, sightseeing around the beautiful mountain top and plenty of laughing. The South African ladies even hoisted me up in the air to replicate the famous 'lift'! We ended the weekend in the middle of the dance floor together with the 'Dirty Dancin'' anthem, 'The Time of My Life', which is something that we all had.

This one of a kind dance weekend included all meals, hotel accommodations, workshops, dances and special activities and because of its tremendous success, will be held once again next year, September 6-9th 2012. You can contact us at barry@barryamato.com for flyer, registration and additional information.

The fun didn't stop there for the South Africans as they made the six hour trip over the mountains to Nashville where they continued to live out their dream. Unfortunately, Dari Anne and I weren't able to accompany them throughout the week but managed to create a couple of exciting moments for our friends. Midweek found the troupe performing live in concert with Laura Bell Bundy. Many of the Line dancers will know Laura

Bell through her dance hit, Giddy On Up but here in America, Laura is most known for her Broadway fame and her portrayal of Elle Woods in the musical, 'Legally Blonde'. The concert was held on the riverfront in Nashville, just behind the Wildhorse Saloon. The group showed up at the stage for a 3pm sound check and rehearsal before the performance at 6pm. Prior to the concert, all the South Africans were brought back to stage for a personal meet and greet with Laura Bell. She was gracious enough to give them all a beautiful coloured photo autographed personally to each one of them. Once the dancers were introduced by Laura, it was amazing to see the energy that they brought to the concert. Many onlookers were snapping photographs and shooting videos followed by an exciting ovation. Throughout the week, there would be many other activities for the group.

The last night in Nashville brought us all together one more time to enjoy meeting up with our friend and CMA Award winner, Suzy Bogguss. All were excited to be able to meet Suzy one on one at the famous Ernest Tubbs Record Shop in downtown Nashville. This place is home to the Midnight Jamboree radio broadcast on WSM which has been in existence since the 1950's. Every Saturday night, Grand Ole Opry stars would leave the Ryman Auditorium and cross the street to the record shop for the midnight broadcast. Stars like Patsy Cline and Loretta Lynn got their early start on the Jamboree.

Dari Anne and I had to bid farewell to our South African friends that night as we started to make plans to return to their beautiful country. We were so blessed that they had the opportunity to come visit our fair city and help make it a memorable one for them.

