

Kay Owen has been teaching Belly Dance in Beaufort for a couple of years after more than 35 years of enjoying the dance as a hobby and professionally.



Her students range in age from teenagers to 60-somethings. Sometimes she finds that women are afraid to take her classes even though they are attracted to the dance form – it seems to be fear of failure and not being able to picture themselves as “exotic” enough. She also hears women say they do not want to bare their bodies, especially their stomachs.

“Belly” dance is a bit of a misnomer, she says. “The dance involves the entire body. It is a feminine form of expression because the movements accentuate a woman’s shape. You can be completely covered and still execute the dance effectively. You can dance for exercise by yourself or in the company of other women. You can perform the dance if you want to in a choreographed manner or freestyle, once you learn basic moves. Like all arts, it is never completely mastered. There will always be more to learn which is one of the reasons it has had such wide appeal to ladies of all ages in all cultures over a long period of time.” But belly dancers still like their privacy:

“Kay’s class is a lot of fun and exercise, too. It is challenging to learn how to move various parts of your body independently. Maybe one day I’ll make the dance look as exotic as it is supposed to look.” — new student from Spring Island.

“At my age I need something to keep me limber. I don’t like exercise, but I do like the slow movements and body isolations – although I can’t get the muscles quite as isolated as when I was younger.” — 60-something Lura.

“I love everything about belly dancing...the music, the costumes, the jewelry, the movements. It’s so much fun that you forget that you are actually exercising!” —Christina from Port Royal.

“It had never occurred to me that I could learn belly dancing, but it is a great way to stretch and exercise. Kay is a patient and thorough teacher and the students help each other. The time we dance goes by so quickly that you do not realize that you have had an hour of aerobic exercise. It is easy to practice between classes with the detailed instructions and music we are given. The best endorsement of all is that since I began in October, I have dropped a pants size.” — Jerri of Habersham

“I had never taken a dance class except one modern dance class in college, but I grew up in the disco era & I have always loved to dance. When I saw the notice about belly dance classes, I thought it would be a fun way to get exercise and I was right. I immediately found out that it is harder than it looks – but well worth the effort. The time I spend dancing with other ladies is time I’m not spending sitting on the couch. It is a great way to meet new people, enjoy the camaraderie while learning a dance routine together. I’d rather learn belly dance at age 51 instead of needlepoint!” — Margaret of Habersham

Kay’s current session at ARTworks is on Monday evenings from 5:30 to 7pm, 6 classes for \$50; missed classes can be made up and you do not need to stay the entire 1.5 hours if your schedule does not permit. The classes are ongoing – beginners are welcome any time. Call Kay if you have any questions, 379-6491.