



THIS IS A TEST

The Big Tease

Giving saucy, glamorous burlesque a go-go. BY ANNE VICKMAN

Visions of Dita Von Teese splashing around in a giant martini glass fill my mind as I walk toward the tucked-away Boston Academy of Burlesque Education (ahem, BABE) in Allston. I muster all my courage and enter the studio for the first of four “Introduction to Burlesque” sessions. Run by the Boston Babydolls, the series covers the brass tacks of striptease: bumps, shimmies, disrobing, and, finally, pasties and tassel twirling.

The neo-burlesque movement first hit New York and Los Angeles in the mid-’90s, and Boston caught on to the artful, less-is-more striptease trend a few years later: The Babydolls have been titillating audiences since 2005, and other local troupes include Rogue Burlesque (look for their classes at the Boston Center for Adult Education) and Babes in Boinkland, who produce *The Slutcracker* holiday show.

Do I have what it takes to join their ribald ranks? Though I know this initial 90-minute class will be centered on tame basics like struts and glove removal, I can’t help feeling awkward as I stand with four other women in front of the mirror.

“It’s about the tease, not the strip,” BABE and Boston Babydolls cofounder Mina Murray (a.k.a. Miss Mina) told me before class. “The important part is not that the clothes are off. It’s how they come off.”

Miss Mina puts on jazz tunes and shows us the “bump,” a sharp hip

check—“what you do when your arms are full of groceries and you need to close the car door,” she says. We try three variations, and after 15 minutes of fiendish hip thumping among strangers, I’m feeling a bit uncomfortable. But when we start to peel off our elbow-length gloves, I remember Mina’s advice: “The class is all about you. Don’t worry about what [anyone else is] doing.” It works—by ignoring the other students in the room, I can channel my inner sex kitten without feeling self-conscious. Shedding my gloves is PG fun, and I’m enjoying my newfound nerve. Could pasties be in my future? Anything’s possible.

\$30 PER CLASS (\$25 IN ADVANCE); BOSTON ACADEMY OF BURLESQUE EDUCATION, 119 BRAINTREE ST., ALLSTON, 617-869-2000, BOSTONBABYDOLLS.NET.

HAUTE HEADLINES

WHAT’S HAPPENING IN BOSTON STYLE.

NICK AT NEWBURY

➔ Dessert-obsessed clothing company Johnny Cupcakes is collaborating with Nickelodeon on a line of limited-edition T-shirts featuring characters from classic shows like *Ren & Stimpy* and *Rugrats*. The third and final batch will hit stores on December 31. Great! But no love for *Clarissa Explains It All*?

REVELRY-READY

➔ A blowout at Salon Mario Russo’s “Blow-Dry Bar” costs \$45, a bargain considering you won’t have to speed ho-ho-home after work to style your tresses before the big fete. This month only, the Newbury Street location will offer speedy blowouts by appointment on Fridays after 6:15 p.m.... In other beauty news, Mini-Luxe nail spas continue to crop up around town; Chestnut Hill and Brookline outposts are now open, and Wellesley should join them soon.

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