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# The Columbus Dispatch

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## AT A GLANCE

# Event takes steps to promote enjoyment of salsa dancing



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EAMON QUEENEY | DISPATCH

Carlos Rubio, founder of Salsamante Dance Academy, leading a salsa class for beginners.

## COLUMBUS SALSA WEEKEND

Emerald City Ballroom,  
2809 Festival Lane, Dublin

Contact: 614-316-8818,  
www.salsamante.com

Times: 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.  
Friday, noon to 2 a.m.  
Saturday, noon to 3 p.m.  
Sunday

Cost: \$10 for the Friday  
pre-party, \$25 for each  
class on Saturday, \$20 for  
the Saturday night salsa  
social, \$35 for Sunday  
master class

By [Allison Ward](#)

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Dance instructor Carlos Rubio has one question for people who haven't considered learning to salsa or merengue.

"How are you going to have rhythm?" joked the founder of Salsamante Dance Academy, which is based in Dublin and where he teaches the two Caribbean styles as well as rumba, cha-cha and bachata.

Inviting willing participants to spice up their weekend, Salsamante and Emerald City Ballroom in Dublin, where the academy shares space, are hosting Columbus Salsa Weekend, a three-day event celebrating the genre with lessons, performances and gatherings.

A night-before party with a salsa lesson, a Latin social and a bachata contest will take place on Friday at Alegria's Seafood and Mexican Grill in Dublin. The rest of the activities will take place at Emerald City off Sawmill Road.

"Whether you've danced for 10 years, one month or never, you will have a heck of a good time," said Rubio, a native of Puerto Rico who moved to Ohio when he was 7. "It's not only for people to get better in dance but also to meet people."

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Making new friends is exactly why Nichole Siegfried, 28, began taking lessons at Salsamante.

Although family members danced salsa and she would dance at late-night Latin clubs when she lived in New York, she didn't take lessons until four months ago.

"It's just something really different," said Siegfried, an accessory designer. "I really like the music."

Her eyes widen in excitement when she talks about the opportunity to learn from Jorge Burgos and Tanja Kensinger, whom Rubio considers the "king and queen" of bachata. The Rockville, Md., dancers and their troupe, Island Touch Dance Academy, will be leading workshops and performing on Saturday.

"You're getting to learn from the best," said Crystal Lindow, another dancer planning to attend the event. "They bring so much to the floor."

Lindow, a 23-year-old from Cleveland, fell in love with salsa two years ago, she said. She travels to Columbus for lessons or socials at least once a week — and to see her boyfriend, who is a Salsamante instructor and disc jockey.

"You haven't been able to get me off the floor," she said, donning strappy, rhinestoned dance heels.

Jeff Stein, owner of Emerald City, and Rubio hosted a similar event in March.

Stein hopes that dance-specific festivals can help expand the salsa community in central Ohio.

They're expecting about 200 people to attend.

"Salsa is sexy, hot," Stein said. "It makes you think of a tropical fantasyland."

Having a salsa weekend in Columbus is a good fit, Rubio said, because residents are open to trying new things.

And learning to salsa can help you become the life of any party, Lindow added.

"No matter where you are, you always find that the best people are on the salsa floor."

@AllisonAWard

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