

Unlucky for some



Dari Ann & Barry Amato doing a West Coast Swing Demo

Traditionally considered to be unlucky but the 13th Crazy Country Dance Festival was breaking with the trend and celebrating luck, *Martha Ogasawara* reports

The 13th Crazy Country Dance Festival, put on by the Nagoya Crazy Feet dance club, was held in Tajimi, Japan. This year's special guest instructors were Barry and Dari Anne Amato, and they made sure there was nothing unlucky about the 13th event.

About 130 dancers from all over Japan (and one from Hong Kong) came together for a weekend of workshops and open dancing. Many of the attendees to this event come every year, so there was lots of socialising and catching up as dancers came together to enjoy a fun weekend.

Friday afternoon was a pre-event bonus workshop, and everyone who attended was taught a Line dance that would be performed in the show the next night. One of Barry and Dari Anne's specialities is putting together production numbers, so they were asked

to work with the dancers to make a demo number. After learning the basic dance, they started working on formations etc., and in a mere three and a half hours the dancers were looking pretty sharp. Of course, whether they could remember what they learned until Saturday night was still to be seen.

Friday evening was open dancing, and everyone headed back to their hotel early to rest up for the main event the next day. There was an after party at the hotel but people didn't stay up too late.

Saturday was a full day of intermediate level workshops. One of the characteristics of this event is that there is only one workshop room going on. Everyone learns the same dances, and they are taught at a leisurely pace with plenty of reviews. This helps to ensure that the dancers go home with a sound knowledge of all the new dances. Also, the instructors



Dari Ann & Barry Amato's lovely sales assistants



Dari Ann & Barry Amato



Relaxing at an after party at the hotel

emphasise good technique and give styling pointers. The idea is to go for quality rather than quantity. Barry and Dari Anne, who are both professional singers in addition to being choreographers and instructors treated us to live renditions of several of the dances.

In the evening there was a buffet dinner followed by an open dance party with several demos. The Friday afternoon dancers performed quite well, considering. They certainly enjoyed themselves! A group from Osaka performed a demo to the Spider man music, then To-Chan and Chidori did a competition level demo that got a lot of applause. The highlight of the evening was Barry and Dari Anne's demo which held everyone spellbound. They also sang again.

Each year, the playlist for open dancing is published in advance, which means that dancers are able to brush up on the dances they may not remember. All of the dances that were taught the year before are on the playlist, along with a variety of older and newer dances. This ensures that the dance floor stays full all evening long.

Sunday was a day of beginner to beginner/intermediate level workshops. Most of the dancers that were there for the intermediate workshops the day before also came on Sunday. After taxing their brains on Saturday, it was nice to not have to strain to learn the dances on Sunday, and the ambience of the

event changed to a more relaxed atmosphere. There was an informal question and answer time with Barry and Dari Anne, and people enjoyed getting to learn a little more about them. The day ended with an overall review so everyone could really master the dances.

This event is not a big event with lots of instructors and lots of workshops, but there's a very friendly, positive feel to it. Next year, the guest instructors will be Bryan McWherter and John Robinson, and the event will be held the last weekend in November. If you've ever contemplated taking a trip to Japan, that would be a great time to do it! Visitors are always welcome!

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To-Chan & Chidori after their 'Vogue' demo



Martha Ogasawara & friends



A clogging demo

