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Soul to Sole

AT ONE PHILADELPHIA GYM, YOGA REACHES NEW HEIGHTS IN A PAIR OF YOUR FAVORITE STILETTOS. BY ALEXANDRA LESHNER



For someone who struggles to so much as walk in high heels, the thought of performing a physical activity in them was a bit daunting. That was until I met Rocco DeFinis, the fabulous, free-spirited dancer and visionary behind Rocco Yoga, a combination dance and yoga workout that offers the option of wearing stilettos while you strut, pose, and sweat into shape.

“The inspiration for Rocco Yoga came from [my desire to] create a class that was liberating for everyone involved, including myself,” says DeFinis, who teaches the class on Saturdays at 4 PM at Optimal Sport 1315. “I’ve been to dance and yoga classes that have often felt like boot camps, and though structure and guidance are important, as a dancer, artist, and entertainer I understand how vital it is to have the personal freedom to freestyle.”

The hourlong class intertwines elements of hip-hop and vogue dance with standard yoga poses, as the sounds of divas like Beyoncé and Nicki Minaj flood the studio. Although it was comforting to see some familiar moves, it took a few attempts to get my technique down, considering my choice of footwear. Wearing heels “is just a creative way to add a level of difficulty, fun, and sexiness to yoga,” DeFinis explains.

Once I found my balance, I felt confident striking each new pose without fear of tumbling to the floor—although I admit I gave the heels a rest halfway through (they are optional, after all). When the class ended, I was definitely aching from the burn of a successful workout. “Clients leave feeling more refreshed and uplifted than when they arrived,” DeFinis says. “Many have also [said] they can last longer on the dance floor because my class has helped build leg strength and stamina.” *The Philadelphia Building, 1315 Walnut St., 215-735-1114; optimalsportthehealthclubs.com* **PS**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHLOE ROUSE (MAT); MICHAEL BROSGHARD (ROCCO)

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