

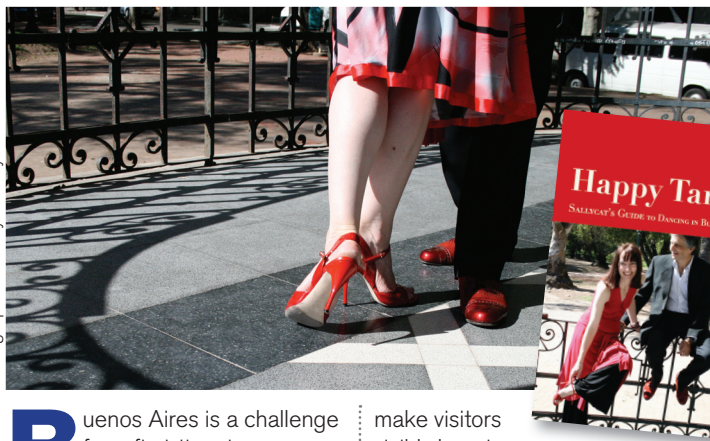
DANCE REVIEWS

All the latest dance releases

Happy Tango

Carole Edrich reviews *Happy Tango: Sallycat's Guide to Dancing in Buenos Aires*

Photographs courtesy of Sally Blake



Buenos Aires is a challenge for a first-time tango dancer. There is a huge variety of milongas and visiting dancers not in the know are often viewed askance. Sally Blake's book *Happy Tango* is an easy read and provides advice that enables new tango tourists to avoid the worst traps and concentrate on having fun.

Sally had already discovered that sharing her knowledge – “such as a place that might suit them, or a cabaceo trick they didn't know about, or a tip to stay late at the milonga to land the best dances of the night” – could

make visitors visibly happier when her story about tango was shortlisted for the Independent on Sunday/Bradt Travel-Writing Competition in 2009.

With the encouragement of friends, she began to gather useful information, tips and tricks for this book. Its objective is to provide sufficient insight to help tango tourists get the best from their visit in the fast-paced city she now calls home.

The book, which is divided into four parts, starts with the rules that will help find “dance partners who can offer you bliss”. These are

followed by a section describing everything that the visitor needs to fit in with the delicate sensibilities of dyed-in-the-wool milongueros and milongueras and their cohorts.

Twenty places where tango tourists would feel most comfortable dancing are then listed, with each venue categorised as “tourist-circuit”, “traditional” and “informal” – all of which is vital information for the visitor who could easily offend (and therefore lose potential dance partners) by behaving or dancing incorrectly for the milonga in question.

Finally, all those who have spent time in Buenos Aires will agree that its sophisticated European appearance is deceptive, and that the city has

a culture, bureaucracy and infrastructure all of its own. The book's fourth section is about practicalities and should help to free up more of the visitors' time for fun.

With lovely stories, self-declared “Sallycat English” and disarming honesty, this book is a great read. It is an invaluable tool for those planning a tango holiday and a lovely insight for those who are not. ●

Buy *Happy Tango: Sallycat's Guide to Dancing in Buenos Aires* from all good booksellers. See www.sallycatway.com/happytango for updates.

WIN We have two copies to give away! Send your name and address on an email or postcard marked “Happy Tango” to the contact details on page 5 by February 3.