

Notes from the DANCEFLOOR

I WENT 'CAUSE I HAD NOTHING ON...



It was going to be an unusual weekend from the outset. The plan was to travel from the UK through Europe by car – a nice sporty number with an open roof – and plan the stops according to the tango milongas on the way.

The highlight was to be Sunday, September 1: a party that was a whole different experience for everybody involved. The first of its kind – daring, unique – in

which participants bare everything to each other. Yes, we were going to the first ever Naked Tango Milonga.

Held in a small town in Germany, the exclusive event was by invitation only. Rules were strict. The exposure had to be complete. No shoes allowed. Dancers couldn't even carry wallets.

The venue was ideal. It had a large comfy, dimly lit reception area, with sofas and a cloakroom to get undressed. The crowd was international: French, German, English, Canadian and even one Argentine.

Although there was a bit of reservation to start with, most people seemed comfortable in their own skins and quickly took to the floor. There was some inevitable "eye-to-bust" contact when talking to each other – and the room had a wall-to-wall mirror, so there was no escape.

There we all were: dancing tango naked.

Dancing with no shoes slows the moves. The floor had been sprinkled with talcum powder, so that dancers could pivot, but no grip made the dynamic of the dance different. Ganchos and sacadas were tricky owing to the close encounter of thighs and nether regions. Body hair was ticklish too. And the lack of clothes meant that everything got a bit sweaty and sticky...

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You might wonder: did I forget about the nakedness after a while? I didn't, but it got easier. Was it erotic? It was very sensual. Was it shocking? No, it was indeed beautiful. With naked bodies moving harmoniously to the rhythm of tango, it was a scene worthy of the classic painters. It felt playful and tender. Respect was paramount and the feeling of union amongst those present grew as the night unravelled.

We finished the evening dancing a "Nakarera" – a naked Chacarera. Chacarera is part of Argentine folk and not danced in an embrace. Props, such as boots to do the "zapateo" and skirts to do the "zarandeo", which are key to the dance, were missing. But it was the perfect way to finish the evening on a high.

I doubt very much naked tango will spread to the UK, or indeed to the birthplace of tango, with its conservative society, but, gosh, if you can, you've got to try it! ●

JOCELYN NETHERS