

COUNTRY DANCING DOWNTOWN STYLE

by Lisa Tresch

It's an unlikely place to two-step or line dance: an old brick warehouse on a busy downtown street, tucked discreetly between a hipster bar and a slick marketing firm. But on weekend nights in Tulsa, Whiskey 918 flips the switch and a ten-foot vertical marquee lights up to welcome a weekend party crowd that prefers raging fiddles to screaming guitars. The dance floor is expansive, the beer cold, and the music loud. But what if someone doesn't own a pair of cowboy boots, a flashy belt buckle, or a cowboy hat? You might be surprised at the response.

Everyone Can Two-Step

At Whiskey 918, party-goers can hit the large, wood-plank dance floor in Vans or boots, a silk skirt or jeans, with or without a Stetson hat. It doesn't matter whether they dress the part or can keep up with the line dance steps. This is an urban country dance venue, and everyone is welcome. It's an unusual, but necessary in this city that defines itself as both rural roots and city sophistication.

Tulsans have a unique perspective on their identity as Oklahomans. Oil money from California, a thriving arts district and a population that has never been reliant on the agricultural industry creates an urban mentality that keeps downtown humming with new life. But anyone who lives in Oklahoma knows that country life resides in the city. Cain's Ballroom, which is only a mile from Whiskey 918, was the original home of the country swing icon Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys sixty years ago.

So if you want to learn the line dance but don't own the boots, you'll be welcomed at Whiskey 918. It's not just for cowboys and cowgirls, but what they might tell you is that everyone has a little country in them.