



THE ONLY MUSEUM THAT REQUIRES
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WOMEN A GO-GO / Devil-Ettes Retro 'gals' have been dancing for 10 years, drawing inspiration from the go-go '60s

The Devil-Ettes have been shaking things up for 10 years. There are always about 15 active Devil-Ettes, with about 50 alumna who come in and out of retirement. Photo by Kimberly White, special to the Chronicle



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WOMEN A GO-GO

Devil-Ettes Retro 'gals' have been dancing for 10 years, drawing inspiration from the go-go '60s

Delfin Vigil

Thursday, June 26, 2008

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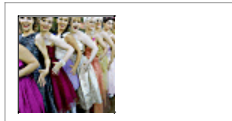
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Sometimes girls just want to have fun.

That's the deal each of these go-go dancing dames had to make to become a Devil-Ette. The group celebrates 10 seasons of shaking things up with a Prom Party Au Go Go! at the Rickshaw Stop tonight.



"The Devil-Ettes began as a bunch of retro-loving gals who love dancing and having fun," says Baby Doe, artistic director and founder. "We were sick of all these scenes filled with pretentious people who were way too cool for school. We wanted to do something that celebrated being a woman."

As the Devil-Ettes soon found out, there were plenty of people who wanted to party for that same cause.

Their first gig was at a 1998 company Christmas party for Radio Valencia, where all of the ladies worked. They opened up for a couple of bands, including Virginia Dare, who dubbed the dancing girls the Dare Devil-Ettes. After stealing the show, Baby Doe and company were bombarded with good vibes from the crowd, including tons of gig and audition requests.

Soon after, the Devil-Ettes dropped the "Dare" and spent the next decade twisting the nights away.

"Back then, a lot of people hadn't ever seen dancing acts at a rock 'n' roll club," says Baby Doe, who rates the Devil-Ettes as a PG-13 version of burlesque dancing. "Sometimes the crowd would stand there in silence and just look at us. It wasn't until we'd finish our act and bow that people would clap like crazy."

The Devil-Ettes have since added emcee Juan Rapido, who reminds the crowd that it's OK to hoot and holler, whistle and belly up to the stage.

Baby Doe says the spirit of the '60s speaks to their mission of just having a good time. To be true to their school, the Devil-Ettes make an extra effort to deliver an authentic go-go dancing act. Working as a collective, they spend hours examining old '60s beach party films, television shows, records and wardrobes to respectfully replicate the Watusi, the Twist and the Swim - all with the right wink and a smile.

There are always about 15 active Devil-Ettes, with about 50 alumna who come in and out of retirement. They are schoolteachers, Web designers, bike messengers and executives - who all love to dance.

"The Devil-Ettes have always been different shapes, sizes and colors," Baby Doe says of the girls who'll all be looking for a prom date tonight at the Rickshaw, where the punch will undoubtedly be spiked. "We've had girls with lots of tattoos, colored hair, curvaceous girls, slender girls. ... It's just girls, girls, girls."

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- *Delfin Vigil*, dvigil@sfgate.com

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