

Party Pose

Try on yoga for an unforgettable moms' night out.

So by now it's clear that this issue's theme is parties – from baby showers to birthday parties, from where to have them to how to make them fantastic. Year after year this is one of our favorite features. But somewhere along the line we realized that something was missing. Planning a party is great fun for moms, but shouldn't *we* get the chance to have fun on our own? Don't moms deserve some time to get a group together and rock out kid-free?

When we discovered Pretty Postures, a Charlotte-based, private yoga party business, we were instantly hooked. Others seemed to love the idea, as no one seemed to have a problem committing to the evening we planned!

Lisa Brownstead, owner of Pretty Postures and a single mom of three, is also the corporate yoga director at the Ballantyne Resort, and she has full use of the resort's facilities for her parties. While she does parties for toddlers, tweens, moms and daughters and more at the location of their choice, she can also host parties at the resort – perfect for our party.

The night was set for Nov. 20th, and 25 local ladies – each a mom, but with kids of varying ages – managed to get their husbands, significant others or a sitter to watch the kiddos while we headed out for yoga and socializing.

Because of our large group, we gathered in one of the resort's meeting rooms, lined with mats, blocks, straps (yoga apparatus) and water bottles. The lighting was low and candles were lit near the front of the room, helping set the tranquil mood. Still, chatter filled the air as the women conversed about their days, what the evening held and their weekend plans.

Brownstead began the class by having each participant introduce herself and explain their yoga experience (or lack thereof). And, yes, there were a handful of ladies who had never practiced before, and even one expectant mom! From there, she took us through an hour-long class filled with various poses to stretch, strengthen and enlighten. Every so often we'd take a break for water and, not surprisingly, found ourselves a bit chatty with our neighbors. Two assistants were on hand to "assist" those unfamiliar with positions and to lend a hand with the experienced yogis.

The class portion ended with "Shavasana." Otherwise known as "corpse pose," Shavasana is said to rejuvenate the body, mind and spirit while reducing stress and tension. It's done by lying very still, closing the eyes and taking deep breaths through the nose. It is said to be one of the greatest benefits of yoga, not to mention one that the weary moms were very thankful for – after all, how often can you lie perfectly still with no one bothering you? During the five minutes we held this pose, a lavender-scented wash cloth was placed by each guest for her to place over her eyes. Brownstead concluded the class by having us slowly sit up and to greet our neighbors with "Namaste," a spoken greeting or salutation derived from Sanskrit and used at the end of most yoga classes.

As we sat up, we realized that colorful gift bags had been placed near our mats. Brownstead instructed us to look inside, as three bags contained winning cards. Three lucky ladies won goodies – one a Pretty Postures T-shirt, another a set of Mother Wisdom cards (inspirational quote cards for moms), and a third a super-cool yoga bag by Yogoco (www.yogoco.com). Every guest's goody bag contained a candle, pocket planner, two YUMMY take-home goodies from Confections Cake Creations, a special coupon to Asana Activewear, and a martini glass. Why the martini glass, we wondered? Well, what yoga party would be complete without a Yogatini!

A bartender was on staff to fill the ladies' glasses with a secret-recipe Yogatini (which, in keeping with the theme, contained pomegranate juice). Water bottles were also available for those who preferred it. Earth Fare had provided a healthy spread of fresh fruits and veggies, whole-wheat tortilla chips and hummus ... but all eyes were on the Itty Bittys, which are bite-size pieces of cake swirled with frosting, some with fillings, and all topped with white or dark chocolate. Local baker and owner of Confections Cake Creations (and also a mom of three) Kelly had created a variety of Itty Bittys. The insides were filled with scrumptious combinations – yellow cake swirled with chocolate frosting and dipped in milk chocolate; chocolate cake mixed with Andes mints and dipped in mint chocolate; and strawberry cake dipped in white chocolate. The biggest hits were the ones filled with chocolate-chip cookie dough. Especially after working off some calories, no one felt bad about trying a few!

The ladies mixed and mingled for the next 45 minutes before heading home. The feedback was unanimously positive. Exercise, food, drinks and fun? We can't think of a better combination! ~ kds

Find out more about hosting your own Pretty Postures party for a moms/girls night out, a mother-daughter day or a fabulous birthday party for your tot or tween by visiting www.prettypostures.com or by calling 704.620.0328.

