



Fitness fanatics take pole positions

MELISSA KENT

In a darkened studio off Cambridge Street in Leederville, a group of women slither, twirl and gyrate seductively around poles to the sounds of Madonna's *Justify My Love*.

They are learning the art of pole dancing, which has dumped its sleazy image and made its way out of strip clubs to become Perth's latest fitness craze.

But bad news, guys — classes are for women only and no clothes are shed.

"I'm sure most husbands and boyfriends wouldn't object to a demonstration, but really it's about boosting women's strength and self-confidence," says pole dancing student Tanya Goodwin, 29.

"There's definitely nothing sleazy about it."

Britt Bailey-Kerber, 30, a former erotic dancer and stripper, and Kelly Bannister, 33, a health and fitness buff, have combined their expertise to bring the craze to Perth with their

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pole dancing "school" *She Moves*, which also specialises in lap dancing classes.

Ms Bailey-Kerber learnt the suggestive art at a San Diego gentlemen's club, where she worked for two years in her late teens.

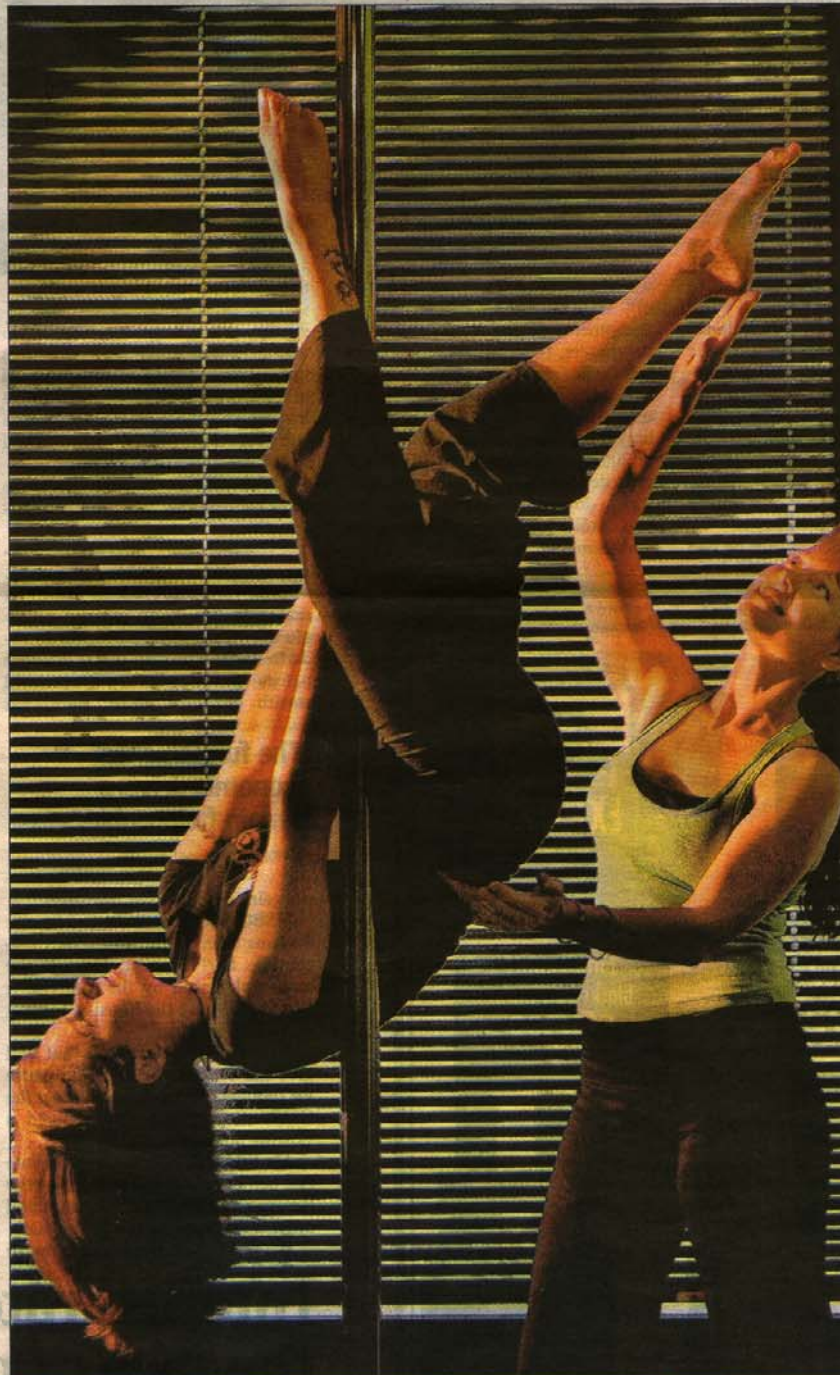
Soon after, she gave up dancing to marry and have children, but found she missed the sensuality and exercise benefits.

"I had gained weight and I felt awful about myself," she said. "I felt like someone's mother, not a sexy woman, so I wanted to find that again."

The pole dancing craze began in Britain and soon spread to America and the Eastern States on a crest of demand for alternative forms of exercise. It is now a favourite among celebrities including Kate Moss, Angelina Jolie, Heather Graham and Britney Spears.

Since opening in August, *She Moves* classes have become so popular that the instructors often have to turn women away and have set up a second studio in Fremantle.

And, if you are willing to endure a few occupational hazards — calluses,



Learning curve: Britt Bailey-Kerber puts student Linda Meyerhoff through her paces. Picture: Nic Ellis

bruising and pole burn — the benefits include an unbeatable upper body, core muscle and leg workout, according to Ms Bannister.

Ms Goodwin, a customer relations manager for a software company, said her strength had improved dramatically since she joined four months ago.

"It's a great alternative to the gym," she said. "Before I started I couldn't even lift my own weight, but now I can do all sorts of moves."

Erica Stephens, 23, a toystore manager, said women quickly shed their inhibitions. "It explores female sensuality, but all in fun... not too seriously," she said.

SMOULDER AND BURN

Top 10 moves

1. She Walk
2. Hip swing and figure of 8
3. Take a bow
4. Fireman's spin
5. Backward spilt
6. Swinging side sit
7. Pirouettes
8. Ballerina
9. Backbend
10. Body wave and peel-off-pole

