

Boots, Beats, Life

Weekly NEWSLETTER

December 15, 2025 | Issue #11

Your Ultimate Dance Week Starts Here!



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This Week's Highlights:

- **Featured Venue of the Week:** Experience the Handle Bar at the Grove in St. Louis, an LGBTQ+ friendly spot offering delightful food, dance lessons, and a spacious dance floor for up to 20 dancers.
- **Country Music Spotlight:** Discover Hudson Westbrook, a rising neo-traditionalist country artist from Texas, whose viral hit "5 to 9" and authentic sound are making waves in the music scene.
- **Local Artist/Group of the Week:** Meet Nick Gusman and The Coyotes, known for their powerful storytelling and blend of country, folk, and Americana, captivating audiences at intimate St. Louis venues.
- **Your Weekly Dance Planner:** Join beginner line dance classes at Bottleneck Blues Bar in January and enjoy various dance events happening throughout the week across multiple local venues.

- **This Week's Featured Article:** Explore "The Great Schism" of country music in the late 1980s, highlighting the clash between traditional sounds and modern influences that shaped the genre's diversity today.
Your guide to the best country music, partner and line dance in Saint Louis and across the U.S.

Featured Venue of the Week



Handle Bar at the Grove, Saint Louis, MO

HandleBar: Your Spot for Fun, Food, and Dancing in St. Louis!

Wish you could have joined us at the HandleBar in The Grove, an LGBTQ+ friendly bar in St. Louis that offers a welcoming atmosphere for all! In addition to delicious food and drinks like their tap Guinness and pizza, the venue features fun dance lessons. The atmosphere is joyful, centered around a smooth, spacious wooden dance floor that comfortably accommodates up to 20 dancers.

You can find the date of the next dance here in this newsletter, or join the private Facebook group, [Handle Bar at the Grove](#).

Country Music Spotlight

National Spotlight: Hudson Westbrook – Neo-Traditionalist on the Rise: Why Hudson Westbrook Is Your Next Country Obsession



Hudson Westbrook.

Hudson Westbrook is a Texas singer-songwriter who was in relative obscurity until the later half of 2024, when his music began to gain significant traction. Growing up steeped in the influences of '90s country icons like George Strait, his sound blends classic sentiments with a modern edge. He first began releasing music in April 2024 and quickly made a name for himself, catapulting into the spotlight with a viral hit.

Latest Song

His propulsive blue-collar love song, “5 to 9,” was released in August 2024 and quickly became a hit across country corners of TikTok and streaming platforms. You can listen to “5 to 9” and other tracks from his debut self-titled EP on major streaming platforms like Apple Music, Spotify, or YouTube Music.

Where to See Him Perform

Westbrook is currently touring and has been tapped for major festival lineups. He is also supporting Ian Munsick on an upcoming tour. For the most current schedule and to find tickets, check official vendor sites or his artist page on Bandsintown.

Why We're Watching Him in the Upcoming Year

Westbrook sits comfortably at the crossroads of Texas dancehalls and commercial country, a style that resonates with fans longing for an organic, authentic sound. His debut EP highlights a promising talent who revitalizes the country-rock genre with a raw “rough-around-the-edges” authenticity. With his rapid rise and a sound that appeals to both traditionalists and new listeners, we imagine he’ll only going to keep digging for gold in the new year.

See Tour Dates: Check his tour dates on his official website to see when he's coming to a city near you.

Follow on Socials: On [Facebook](#) / [Instagram](#) for behind-the-scenes content and news.

Local Artist/Group of the Week:***Boots, Beats, Life Spotlight: Nick Gusman and The Coyotes Bringing Authentic Americana to the St. Louis Stage***

St. Louis Nick Gusman is a masterful storyteller known for his authentic, raw, and powerful sound that blends country, folk, and Americana. Growing up in the area, he has become a celebrated local figure, frequently playing at intimate venues across the city before making his way to bigger stages.

Latest Music

Nick Gusman's music captures the essence of classic American songwriting with a modern sensibility. His tracks, such as "American Dream" and "Sound of a Broken Heart," showcase strong narrative lyrics and traditional country instrumentation. You can listen to his work on major streaming services or potentially purchase physical media at his live shows.

Where to See Them Perform

Nick Gusman and The Coyotes are active in the local circuit. They are known to play at various St. Louis venues, including the popular Venice Cafe. For the most current performance dates, local event listings, and show details, check their official social media pages or the venue websites for schedules.

Why We're Watching Them

Gusman brings an impressive level of authenticity and lyrical depth that resonates deeply with audiences looking for genuine country/folk music. They can “rip” through sets and have earned a reputation for engaging live performances that truly scratch the itch for original country music in St. Louis. They are a must-see local act for any true music fan in the region.

Follow their Journey: [Nick Gusman and The Coyotes](#) for show dates and updates.

Watch a Performance: [Facebook Reel](#)

Your Weekly Dance Planner: *Where to Two-Step & Line Dance This Week!*

New & Noteworthy: Beginner line dance class starting in January at Bottleneck Blues Bar! Check our website for details.

- Monday Dances
 - **(W) Lumiere of Chesterfield** – Chesterfield, MO | Line Dancing with Mona | 6:00-7:30 pm
 - **(W) VFW Post 1234** – Collinsville, IL | [Line Dance Lessons with Stompin' Boots](#) | 6:00-7:00 pm, Open Dance 6:00-9:00 pm | Lessons \$3.00 | Open Dance Free
- Tuesday Night Shuffle
 - **(W) Silver Creek Sports & Social** – Belleville, IL | [Line Dancing w/ Little Cactus Line Dancing](#) | Lessons & Open Dance | 7:00-9:00 pm | Free Event 21+
 - **(W) MK Ranch Bar & Grill** – Warrenton, MO | [Line Dancing with Krissy Schulze](#) | 6:00-9:00 pm | Free Event All-ages
 - **(W) Brookdale Farms** – Eureka, MO | [Line dancing w/Stacey Schwartz](#) | 6:30-10:00 pm | \$7 Cover | 18+ Event
 - **(W) High Ridge Elks Lodge #3455** – High Ridge, IL | [Line Dance Lesson & Dance](#) | 6:30-9:30 pm | \$5 Cover | All-ages
 - **(W) Social Bar Soulard** – Saint Louis, MO | [Line dancing with DJ Fish](#) | 8:00 pm-12:00 am | \$10 for 18-20 | \$5 for 21+

- Wednesday Moves
 - **(W) Stovall's Grove** – Wildwood, MO | Couples [dance lessons w/Sami](#) | 7:00-9:00 pm
 - **(W) The Outfield Sports Bar and Grill** - Marthasville, MO | [Free lessons](#) 6:00-7:00 pm
Open Dance 7:00-9:00 pm | Free Event | All-ages
 - **(W) The Marquee at New Town** – Saint Charles, MO | [Line dancing w/Mona](#) | 6:00-9:00 pm | \$5 - 21+ | \$10 - 18-20
 - **(B) Silver Creek Sports Bar & Social** – Belleville, IL | [Line Dance Lessons with Stompin' Boots](#) | 6:00-9:00 pm | Free Event | 21+ | Every 1st & 3rd Wednesday
 - **VFW Post 5694** – Highland, IL | [Line dancing w/Little Cactus](#) | 7:00-9:00 pm
 - **The Crown Hall** at Ballbark Village – St. Louis, MO | [Live music w/ Ethan Carl](#) | 6:00-9:00 pm
- Thursday Throwdown
 - **(W) Stovall's Grove** – Wildwood, MO | [Line dance lessons w/Sami](#) | 7:00-9:00 pm | Free Event | 21+
 - **(W) Swansea Improvement Assoc** – Swansea, IL | [Line dancing w/Stompin Boots](#) | 6:00-9:00 pm
 - **American Legion** - Breese, IL | Little Cactus Line Dancing | 7:00-9:00 pm
 - **Fast Eddie's Bon Air** – Alton, IL | Live band with The Truckers | 6:00-10:00 pm | 21+ Only
- Friday Night Fiddle Fest
 - **(W) Stovall's Grove** – Wildwood, MO | Live band w/Serapis with Mark Moebeck | 7:30-11:30 pm
 - **(W) 54 Country** – Kingdom City, MO | [Line dance with Club Ready-Line Dance LOTO](#) | 6:00-11:45 pm
 - **(W) "The Office" Bar and Grill** - Washington, MO | [Line Dance Lesson](#) 6:00-9:00 pm
 - **VFW Post 1234** – Collinsville, IL | Line dance night | 7:00-10:30 pm
 - **(M) Cedar Lake Cellars** – Wright City, MO | [Line dancing with DJ Cutler](#) | 7:00-11:00 pm
 - **(M) McKelvey Vineyards** – Leslie, MO | Line dancing with Glittering Grapevine | 5:00-8:00 pm
- Saturday Night Shindig
 - **(W) Stovall's Grove** – Wildwood, MO | Live band w/ Pick'N and Grin'N | 7:30-11:30 pm
 - **(W) Gene's Country Club** – Pevely, MO | [Live Music and dance with The House Cats](#) | 7:00-11:00 pm | \$10 CAD | 21+ | NOTE: Cash Only Event
 - **(W) 54 Country** – Kingdom City | [Line dance lessons - Live band - Open dancing](#) | 8:00 pm-1:00 am
 - **The American Legion** – Mascoutah, IL | Line dance lessons with [Stompin' Boots Line Dance](#) | 6:30-10:00 pm
 - **American Legion** – Breese, IL | [Line dancing w/Little Cactus Line Dancing](#) | 7:00-11:00 pm

- ***The Outfield Sports Bar & Grill*** – Marthasville, MO | [Free lessons and open dance](#) | 7:00-11:00 pm
- ***Bottleneck Blues Bar*** (Ameristar Casino) – Saint Charles, MO | Live music with Ethan Carl | 8:00 pm - 12:00 am
- Sunday Soul Steppers
 - **(2W) HandleBar** – St. Louis, MO | [Sunday Stomp by Show Me Country Dance](#) | 4:30-7:30 pm | **Every 2nd & 4th Sunday** | 21+ | Free Event | **NOT THIS WEEK**
 - **(W) Sugar Creek Winery** – Eureka, MO | Line dance lessons and dance | 1:00-5:00 pm | Free | All-ages

Venues with Line Dancing – Practical Details

Several of these local venues offer weeknight line-dance nights with lessons for beginners; cover varies, and floor-size/material details are inconsistent across listings.

This Week's Featured Article

The Great Schism: How the “Class of ‘89” Battled for the Soul of Country Music

The late 1980s were a fascinating time in country music history. The genre was recovering from the “Urban Cowboy” pop wave, setting the stage for a musical revolution where artists battled for the very soul of country music.

For many fans who started listening around 1990, the radio was a thrilling mix of sounds. You could hear the pure, unchanging traditional sounds of the “King,” George Strait, alongside the explosive, arena-rock showmanship of a new superstar named Garth Brooks. This era also gave us powerhouse duos like Brooks & Dunn and the global pop phenomenon of Shania Twain.

Our featured article this week dives into this “Great Schism,” exploring how this battle between innovation and tradition created the incredibly diverse landscape of country sub-genres we enjoy today.

Read the full article [here](#), on BootsBeatsLife.com

Beyond the Mainstream: Unpacking the ‘Country Sub-genre’ Universe

The Branches of the Roots Genre

The term “country music” often brings a few specific sounds to mind, but the genre’s landscape is vast and incredibly diverse. From its origins in Southern folk and blues to its modern fusions with pop, rock, and even hip-hop, country is less a single genre and more a rich tapestry of distinct “country sub-genres”.

This week on the blog, we’re taking a deep dive into the fascinating world of country music’s many styles. We’ll trace the evolution from the raw authenticity of Honky-Tonk and the rebellious spirit of Outlaw Country to the slick production of Country Pop and the acoustic dexterity of Bluegrass. Discover the sound that speaks to you!

Read the Full Blog Post [Here](#).

Community Corner Spotlight

Honoring a Legacy: Gene’s Country Club – A True Honky-Tonk

For those who cherish authentic country music, Gene’s Country Club in Pevely, Missouri, is more than a bar—it’s a community hub and a living museum. This isn’t just about dancing through history; it’s about the remarkable legacy of the Davis family, especially Gene’s son Randy, who left Nashville to preserve his father’s dream. Discover how Randy ensures the “real deal” honky-tonk experience thrives.

Discover the full story and its history on our blog! – [“Gene’s Country Club”](#)

Your St. Louis Dance Hub

Your Comprehensive Guides: Venues & Instructors

We've compiled detailed resources to help you find the perfect place to dance or the ideal instructor. These comprehensive guides provide extensive lists of venues within a two-hour drive and a directory of country and line dance instructors.

Explore the full interactive Venue Guide on our website – [Venue Guide](#)

Find Your Perfect Instructor in our online directory! – [Instructor Directory](#)

Community Call to Action.

The Heartbeat of Our Community

We all move to the same beat! Help us keep the Midwest moving:

Question of the Week: What's your favorite country dance memory?

Help Us Grow: Share events, invite friends, and support local venues!

How you can help keep the scene strong

- Attend consistently—regular turnout encourages venues to expand.
- Tip bands and instructors and buy a drink or two.
- Coordinate “community nights” to bring more dancers together in larger rooms (Marquee or Schuetzenground are good candidates).
- Share event pages and invite friends—numbers matter to venue owners.

Connect With Us:

Got an event or story? Email us at events@bootsbeatlife.com or newsletter@bootsbeatlife.com

Visit Our Blog: BootBeatsLife.com

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Don't Miss a Beat: Subscribe to our Newsletter!

Photo of the Week:



Feeling nostalgic for the breathtaking views of Lake of the Ozarks! Can't wait to return next summer to soak in the sun, explore the stunning scenery, and create unforgettable memories. Who's joining me for another amazing adventure?

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Thanks for dancing through the week with me! Be sure to stay tuned for more venue reviews, music picks, and dance floor stories.