

Southern Hospitality

A Savannah yoga teacher and artist fosters creativity and self-discovery through asana and art

By Melinda Copp

Savannah, Georgia, is known for its eclecticism and southern hospitality. The Savannah Yoga Center embodies both. Located in a big, yellow Victorian-style house in the city's historic district, the warm and welcoming studio provides a safe space for students to relax and expand in their practices.

Kelley Boyd, the Savannah Yoga Center's founder and director, is an artist who has made her living painting murals and faux-finishing for the past 11 years. But when she found—and fell in love with—yoga nine years ago, she wanted to share it. Last year, Kelley transformed the first floor of this house into a yoga center by adding a bookstore and a massage-therapy room, hiring six more teachers, and regularly hosting workshops and meditation classes.

Kelley also found a way to marry her passions for yoga and art. Each month, she holds a belly-casting class, where moms-to-be can create a 3D sculpture of their bodies. And her four-week Sacred Birth Art Workshop encourages the women to creatively explore and celebrate their journey into motherhood through collage, henna tattoos, painting, and other artistic projects.

As vehicles of self-discovery, these workshops help expectant moms connect with their emotions and create artful memories of this important time in their lives. "I like the idea of people exploring their creative sides," says Kelley. "It's not only celebrating the fact that they're pregnant, but also getting to know themselves."

Trained at the Asheville Yoga Center in North Carolina, Kelley describes her asana style as a vinyasa-based flow with Anusara influences. Her favorite part of teaching yoga, however, is the transformation of her students during the class. She loves to see the effects of the practice on her students' faces after they arise from Savasana. "I just love to see people float out of here," she says.



Here's a typical day in her life:

5:30am: Kelley is up having tea and reading the local paper and the Wall Street Journal with her boyfriend Raymond.

7am: Raymond leaves for work. Kelley checks her e-mail and does the administrative tasks that come with running two businesses.

8am: Kelley does her yoga practice for about an hour to an hour-and-a-half.

9:30am: Breakfast is always two eggs over-easy with wheat toast and pomegranate green tea.

10am: After breakfast, she's back to the computer to finish administrative stuff, work on press releases, and check her investments.

10:30am: Kelley either goes to a faux-finishing client's house, meets a student for a private lesson, or heads to her studio to work on her art projects—or any combination of the three.

1pm: Lunch is usually leftovers. "I hate to waste food," she says.

1:30pm: Kelley returns to work, either at her art studio or a client's house.

4 or 5pm: She finishes up and either heads to the yoga center, if she has a class, or goes home.

5:30pm: If she's not teaching, Kelley does more administrative and marketing work.

6:30 or 7pm: She makes dinner for her and Raymond. She loves cooking and trying new recipes, so dinner is usually something different.

8pm: Kelley and Raymond relax by reading, indulging in some television, or sitting on their front porch and talking.

9:30-10pm: Early to bed, early to rise. 🧘

Melinda Copp is a freelance writer based in Bluffton, SC. She has been practicing yoga for four years.