

The Viper Tango

(U.S./Argentina/Europe)

The Tango from Argentina found fertile soil in Paris in 1911, and quickly grew into a dance craze that outshone the modest success that the dance had enjoyed in its native country. The Parisian Tangomania peaked in 1912-1914, with a basic vocabulary of steps that is preserved in the "Parisian Tango" taught by Richard and Melanie Powers at the 1989 University of the Pacific Folk Dance Camp in Stockton, Ca. By 1914, the tango craze had spread throughout Europe and to the United States, expanding its step vocabulary month by month.

The "Viper Tango" (El Viburita) is a companion piece to the "Parisian Tango," to exemplify the alternate steps seen in Early Tango, many of which disappeared before 1920. The Viper Tango is a selection of some of the more sensuous early tango steps, with an emphasis on playful interplay between dancers.

The Viper Tango was taught by Richard Powers at the 1992 University of the Pacific Folk Dance Camp.

Cassettes: "El Viburita" (The Viper) by Eduardo Arolas, ca. 1914. 2/4 meter
R. Powers special cassette for Stockton 1992, "El Choclo" also works well.

Formation: Cpls in ballroom pos both facing LOD (CCW).

Steps: Reverse Turning Corte: (2 meas = 4 cts) In ballroom pos, advancing ptr (either M or W as directed) walk fwd 2 steps L,R (cts 1,2) then step fwd L, beginning to turn 1/4 CCW as a cpl (ct 3); step R to R continuing turning 1/4 CCW (ct &); step bkwd L (ct 4). S-S-Q-Q-S
(Retiring ptr walks bkwd R,L, turning 1/2 CCW on R, sdwd L, fwd R.)
There is a slight down-up-down undulation in the 3 turning steps.

Ebrio (Drunk) Grapevine: (2 meas = 4 cts) In ballroom pos, with M facing outward diag RLOD, M walk bkwd moving diag twd ctr 2 steps L, R (W fwd R, L) (cts 1,2); M turn slightly CCW and step L sdwd to L twd LOD (W step R to R) shifting to R hip to hip (ct 3); M step fwd on R across in front of L (W bkwd L) diag twd LOD (ct &). S-S-Q-Q

Molinete: (4 meas = 8 cts) In Ballroom pos, M step L fwd but slightly to L then rock bkwd on R (W bkwd R, fwd L) turning as a cpl 1/4 CCW in place (cts 1,2); S-S
repeat 3 more times, for a total of 8 steps, turning once CCW.

Generally the steps are describe for the M, and W dances the counterpart unless otherwise directed. Although the music is 2/4 meter with 2 cts per meas, the dance is more easily counted with 2 meas together. This results in 4 counts in the description for each 2 meas pattern. The Molinete is 4 meas resulting in a total of 8 counts for this pattern.

Styling: The body is held firmly erect without stiffness, knees always somewhat flexed to maintain a smooth carriage of the body. Movement is precipitated from the center of the torso, not with leg extensions (i.e. body moves an instant before the feet, which stay under torso.) Movement is smooth, without undulation (except for the turning corte.) Feet move with a toe-lead, and a slight degree of turnout, keeping the feet close to the ground while in motion. "Imitate the sinuous grace of the tiger."

Measures	3/4 meter	PATTERN
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4 meas INTRODUCTION. No action other than taking ptr in ballroom pos.

I. PROMENADE: REVERSE TURNING CORTE

1-2 In ballroom pos with both facing LOD, beg ML, WR walk 4 steps fwd in LOD, S-S-Q-Q (cts 1,2,3,&). M step fwd on 4th step on R, toe turned out 90° to R. M holds with wt on R (knee slightly bent) and sweeps L around in a CW circular arc twd the W, turning 1/2 CW to face ptr. Meanwhile, W holds on L and sweeps R in CCW arc twd M, both keeping toes close to floor during the arc (ct 4). End in Ballroom pos, M facing RLOD, W LOD.

3-4 Dance a Reverse Turning Corte reversing directions where M is the advancing ptr. Move in RLOD M fwd, W bkwd, and turning 1/2 CCW (cts 1-4).

II. BACK THE WOMAN: REVERSE TURNING CORTE

1-2 In ballroom pos, M beg R, walk fwd LOD 4 steps S-S-Q-Q (cts 1,2,3,&); on the 4th step, M step fwd on L and sweep R fwd and under W L in a CW arc, toe close to floor, while W holds 4th step on R and flicks her L heel straight up in back (ct 4).

3-4 Dance a Reverse Turning Corte reversing directions where W is the advancing ptr. Move in RLOD, W fwd, M bkwd, and turning 1/2 CCW (cts 1-4). End in ballroom pos, M facing outward diag RLOD.

III. EBRIO GRAPEVINE: MOLINETE

1-4 Moving sideways in LOD making sawtooth or zig-zag pattern, dance the Ebrio Grapevine step (cts 1,2,3,&). Assume ballroom pos and repeat the 4 steps of the Ebrio Grapevine step (cts 4,5,6,&). For cts 7,8 repeat the first 2 steps of the Ebrio Grapevine step (cts 7,8).

5-8 Dance a Molinete step turning once CCW in place.

Repeat dance from beginning.