

## Latin Butterfly

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The purpose of this project was to design a functional Latin dance costume that meets the Dancesport garment regulations and the needs of the dancer. Dancesport is the international organization that regulates Ballroom and Latin dance competitions for couples. Rules for the dance competition can be found at <http://www.dancingwithwolves.org/docs/USA%20Dance%20Dresscode.pdf>.

To begin the design process, we first reviewed the costume regulations for Latin dance competitions. Regulations provided strict rules for the coverage of legs, the panty area, and breasts. The rules for the dancers differ for each competition category based on age. We also reviewed information regarding the functional needs of the costumes by reading online forums utilized by Latin dancers, by engaging in conversations with Latin competition dancers, and by considering one of the designers own experience as an audience member at a Dancesport competition.

Next, we considered the functional and aesthetic needs of the design

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that were related to performance. When designing the shape and fit of the garments, we evaluated function related to ease of wear and reliable support for the breasts. When making aesthetic decisions for the garments we considered movement of the fabric when the dancer was in motion and the view of embellishments from a distance when under bright lighting.

The costume is composed of a bodice, skirt, and necklace. The butterfly served as the main source of inspiration for the design. The bodice of the costume was constructed over an existing bra to maximize comfort and support of the breasts for the dancer. The skirt was constructed with built-in shorts to meet leg-covering regulations and to provide coverage and modesty for the dancer when spinning. The skirt has different size panels to represent butterfly wings that were sewn into the waistband. Each panel on the skirt has a lettuce edge finish. The bright-colored geometric shapes were first heat bonded onto the base fabric and then machine-stitched around the edge with a zigzag stitch in matching thread. We chose large, simple-shaped motifs as opposed to those with fine detail so they could easily be viewed from a distance. The garment was further embellished with over 575 large and small, colored rhinestones for added sparkle under the stage lighting. We hand applied each rhinestone individually using rhinestone glue. Lastly, we constructed the necklace using the machine-sewn, open cutwork technique and finally added additional rhinestones to the necklace to complete the look.