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NYC's Coolest Classes — Beginners Tell All!

By Gina Marinelli, Photographed by Amelia Alpaugh



The Beginner: Miguelina Gambaccini

Occupation: Founder and designer, [Miguelina](#)

Class: DJ 101 at [Scratch DJ Academy](#)



In the midst of Fashion Month, it would be hard to ignore not only the street-style stars or runway phenoms, but also the super-suave spinsters behind the DJ booths at the hottest after parties around. Therefore we sent our newbie to attend a few classes of the DJ 101 course at Scratch DJ Academy, under the direction of teachers Ellison Robinson (pictured in slides) and Tim Martell.

With a focus on learning the basics of spinning and mixing, this class acts as the launching pad to eventually work *and* practice your way up to a Solange, Mia Moretti, or Mark Ronson (who happens to be a notable Scratch DJ) level of music-mixing skill, no matter what your genre of choice.

"We have seen many students enroll just for fun only to become serious DJs headlining at the best venues across the country. Yet, alternatively, we also have DJs or producers who have already been successful in their own right, but want to refine their skill set in order to break into the next professional level," Scratch CEO and co-founder Rob Principe told us. "Our unique and exclusive curriculum opportunities really do draw a tremendous mix of people, but they have one thing in common — a passion for music."



Miguelina's verdict: "My goal going into the DJ classes at Scratch Academy was simply to take a fun class and learn something new this summer. This was my first time doing something like this, and I had no other expectations other than to learn how to play and mix music, like you would expect any other DJ could. My first group class was with Tim Martell. He began with teaching me all about the basic history of house music. I learned about how to use the decks, and was able to understand the meaning and the difference between pitch, timing, the counting of beats, bars, and then, of course, how they all fit together.

Overall, the classes were lots of fun, however it was still challenging. Scratching and mixing were definitely the most difficult — and I'm still working on the 9 o'clock position. After the first week, I took private classes with Ellison Robinson. He continued to teach me the fundamentals of scratch techniques. Ellison had a lot of patience with me, and he helped me finally pick up the technique by making me practice over and over again. But, overall, I liked his teaching style.

My time at Scratch DJ Academy was pretty short, but I had a great time. Everyone there was friendly, happy, and I left each class excited. Maybe I won't be a professional DJ any day soon, but I'm excited to at least get some real practice at my future house parties (spinning a mix of '80s and '90s beats). And, if nothing else, this was the perfect class after a stressful day of work."