



# Living Social @ 50+

- FACEBOOK
- TWITTER
- INSTAGRAM
- YOUTUBE
- PINTEREST
- LINKEDIN

A wave of older tastemakers have become online celebrities, sharing their wit, wisdom and style. Can you become one, too? **By David Hochman**



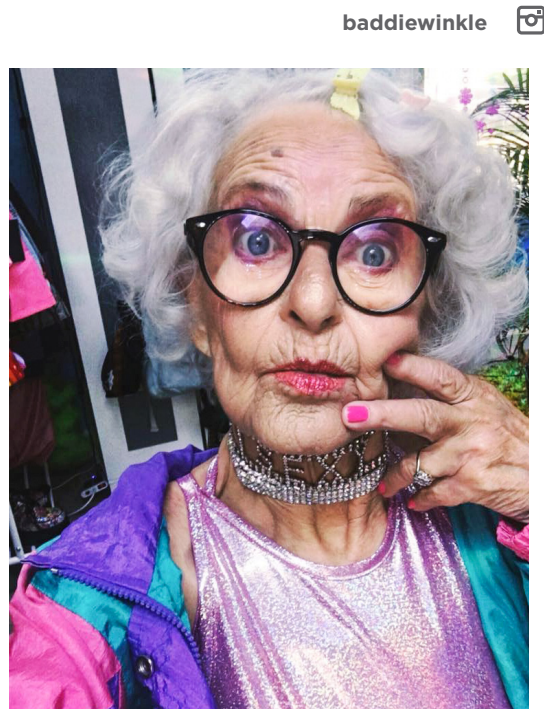
THE MAD FASHIONISTA

# Dazzling After 90

**Helen Ruth Elam Van Winkle, 90**  
3.7 million Instagram followers

☆ Before Instagram and Twitter, it wasn't a very good life for me, honestly. I had lost my son and my husband, and was living alone and doing all the work. In 2014, at age 85, I was lying by a pool in jean shorts and a tie-dye shirt. My great-granddaughter said, "Granna, you look so cute in that outfit. Let me take a picture." I flashed a peace sign; she took the shot and posted it online.

Within a week, thousands of people shared that photo, and after about a month, companies started calling, wanting me to wear their products. The more photos we post of me in outlandish outfits, the more crazy opportunities I get. I've done modeling, I've met pop



baddiewinkle

stars who call themselves fans of mine! But my favorite reaction is from older people who see what I'm doing and feel inspired. So many folks give up on growing and changing. But now people come up and say, "I'm 79, and I wear funny sunglasses because of you."

THE CHANGE AGENT

**Angie Schmitt, 56**  
56 million YouTube views

Not pausing for menopause, Angie shows women over 50 how to sizzle rather than sweat in more than 600 friendly, chatty YouTube video tutorials—all created since 2012.



HotandFlashy

Subscribe to AARP's YouTube channel to see our influencers on video [YouTube.com/AARP](https://www.youtube.com/AARP)

Lili\_Hayes

THE KVETCH

**Lili Hayes, 70**  
107,000 Instagram followers

She says she's "over everything" and loves to gripe (loudly) about it. Watch her make music and dance. Wow!



THE GAMER

**William Rollins, 55**  
48,000 YouTube subscribers

The retired Navy man now commands the attention of a virtual fleet of gamers who watch and learn as he expertly maneuvers the hottest online games.

GrandpaGaming

WendyIdaFitness



THE FITNESS GURU

## Sharing Strength

**Wendy Ida, 66**  
30,000 Facebook likes

☆ Twenty-five years ago, I moved to California with my two kids to start over after an abusive relationship. I met a gentleman who taught me about fitness and nutrition. People started noticing the physical changes and also that I seemed so much happier. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram—I felt like I was born for these, to tell my story.

THE FLY TEACHER

irvinrandle

# All About the Kids—and Looking Superfine

**Irvin Randle, 57**  
202,000 Instagram followers

☆ I've been an elementary school teacher for 26 years, married for 31 years, and have two kids and a beautiful 5-year-old granddaughter. When she was born, she really motivated me. I was pushing 240 pounds and wanted to get myself together. I started going to the gym, laying off dessert, and jogging. I lost 30 pounds. I've always been a sharp dresser, so I started putting up pictures on Facebook of the new me. A guy asked if he could repost them on Instagram. I said, "Sure." That was a Tuesday night in 2016. By Wednesday morning, people were texting and emailing from all over the world! It's been a wild, wild ride. My son-in-law keeps telling me I'm a brand. If anything, I just want to inspire people to keep looking good after 50. But I'm not quitting teaching. Show me a kid reading a book and you'll see the greatest joy in my face.



PHOTO CREDIT: TEEKAY



THE SUPER SAVER

## Blogging for Bargains

**Cindy Livesey, 55**  
487,000 Facebook likes

☆ This all started because we were living way beyond our means. Then, boom, my husband lost his job. To survive, I taught myself to use coupons every day, and that first year, I saved \$11,000. I started a blog—an unpaid online diary, basically—about unusual ways to save money. Out of nowhere, people started flocking to the site. It became a real community. We now we have 12 people working for us.

LivingRichWithCoupons

THE URBANE BEARDSMAN

**Greg Berzinsky, 130,000 Instagram followers** • The design director at an architecture firm shows how to gray gracefully with a face full of fab fuzz.



berzinsky

### 5 Rules of Social Etiquette

- 1 Stay positive.
- 2 To be followed, follow others.
- 3 Don't believe all you see.
- 4 Keep personal stuff private.
- 5 Don't let it take over your life.



**VIN DIESEL**  
The Hollywood action hero (real name: Mark Sinclair) is the first to hit 100 million likes on Facebook.



**JENNIFER LOPEZ**  
The multitasking star—@jlo to her loyal fans—has 100 million-plus followers across Instagram and Twitter.



**ELLEN DEGENERES**  
At 60, she is the undisputed queen of the YouTube clip, last year surpassing 10 billion views—a first among TV hosts.



**DALAI LAMA**  
For nearly 20 million followers on Twitter, the Dalai Lama's account, @DalaiLama, is a meditative still point in an otherwise churning social media cauldron.



THE LOVING ARTIST

@drawings\_for\_my\_grandchildren

## Drawing Grandkids Closer

Chan Jae Lee, 76 351,000 Instagram followers

☆ I'm a Korean grandfather living in São Paulo, Brazil. I have three grandchildren. Two live in South Korea; one is in New York City. I had nothing to do, so I started drawing for them and posting the pictures on Instagram. What was meant only for the family has grown bigger than I ever imagined. Today some drawings will get 10,000, 20,000, even 40,000 likes. In Asia there is a saying: "We can only be heart-felt with what comes from the heart." In my heart, there's so much to share—melodies, stories, ideas, wishes, wisdom. I'm just happy I found a way to share it with my grandchildren and with the universe.

madhungrywoman



THE TASTE WIZ

Anita Lau, 52  
16,000 Instagram followers

Following her feed of food pics is truly as mouthwatering as a five-star meal.

@saramaijewels

ARTFUL LIVING

Sarah Jane Adams, 63

180,000 Instagram followers • A self-described "Juggler Disrupter Designer Adventurer and Real [Fireball]"

THE ODD COUPLE

Kevin and Lill

## My Amazing Grandmother

Kevin and Lillian Droniak, 21 and 88

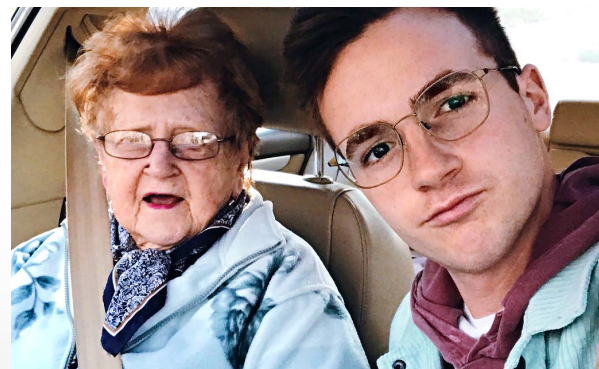
54 million YouTube views

☆ KEVIN: When I was 14, I started making videos of my grandma without her knowing it and uploading them to YouTube. The views kept rolling in. My grandma has too much personality to keep it just in the family.

LILL: I knew something was up. People started recognizing me. After a while, I was, like, what is going on here? Then Kevin confessed the news to me. It's great! We're famous all over Connecticut.

KEVIN: All over the world, Grandma.

LILL: That's right. Isn't that amazing?



## What Media Fits You Best?

Hi world, I'm here!  
Choose: YouTube, the vast video archive

My vacation pics really must be seen.  
Choose: Instagram, the place to share daily snaps and vids

I love all the juicy details.  
Choose: Facebook, an ongoing dialogue with friends, family

News! Opinions!  
Choose: Twitter, where the world shares fast thoughts and web links

I like that design!  
Choose: Pinterest, home for enthusiasts showing their stuff

No one actually retires from work.  
Choose: LinkedIn, to find business talk, all the time

THE MODEL-PHILOSOPHER

SilverDisobedience

## Putting Age in Its Place



Dian Griesel, 57  
97,000 Instagram followers

☆ I used to dye my hair every color under the sun. But I stopped at 45 and never really thought about it until a makeup artist told me the Wilhelmina agency was looking for a model with silver hair. I made an appointment. The agent told me, "Twenty years ago we wouldn't have been having this conversation. You don't necessarily have the model look." But she said I have energy and people would respond to me, and I walked out with a contract. That year I started the blog. I'm a huge believer in collective consciousness. What I worry about, other people must be worried about, too. There's so much meanness on the internet, but I find it's a place for kindness, a place for expressing yourself.

THE WANDERERS

David and Veronica James, 50s  
36,000 Twitter followers

The globe-trotting, RV-ing boomers known as @gypsynester hit the road in 2008 and, as blog is their witness, haven't looked back. Kids gone! Now what? Let's go-o-o! Their website and social posts brim with excitement and with insight into traveling America (and the world) postchildren.



@gypsynester

THE BUILDER

@essentialcraftsman

## Tools and Tinkering for a Good Life

Scott Wadsworth, 61 31 million YouTube views

☆ I'd been in construction for 40 years. About three years ago my son Nate made a video of me in my shop and threw it up on YouTube. I was skeptical. But a few videos later, we had 100,000 views. Now we have millions. It's incomprehensible. I had assumed I would just continue as a small contractor until I couldn't get out of bed anymore. But now what I'm doing has more value than ever before.



PHOTO CREDIT: TEEKAY

Homeless Herbie

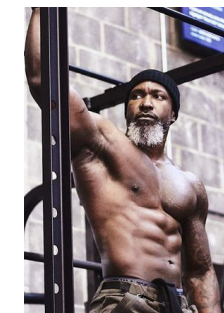
THE GIVER

Herbie Russ, 55

48 million YouTube views • Herbie performs for tips he donates to folks living on the streets.



titusunlimited



THE MOTIVATOR

Jean Titus, 51

182,000 Instagram followers • After a shirtless pic went viral, the businessman has tried to inspire: "We rise by lifting others."

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Social Celebs



DOLLY PARTON

Yee haw, y'all! At 73, Nashville legend Dolly Parton is many things to her 4.7 million tweeps: singer, actress, auntie.



BILL GATES

One of the richest men in the world is also among the most followed, with 46 million fans on Twitter alone.



KRIS JENNER

@KrisJenner, 63, practically gave birth to the influencer era (perhaps you've heard of her Kardashian offspring?)



POPE FRANCIS

The pope speaks directly to more than 40 million faithful on Twitter accounts in nine different languages, including Latin, Arabic and Polish.