

Modern age

A talent agency for over-thirties, Silverfox Management is breaking ground in an industry not traditionally known for its diversity. We spoke to one of its founders and met three of its new Kiwi faces.

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Influential, financially independent, well-travelled, discerning... According to Silverfox Management Group co-founders Brigette Warne and Georgia Branch, the over-thirties are a powerful bunch of consumers, and their age-positive talent agency is here to ensure advertising campaigns reflect them. With models on their books aged from 30 to 97, Silverfox celebrates people who are at their best at any age. The first agency opened in Sydney in 2016, followed by divisions in Melbourne, Brisbane and, a little over six months ago, New Zealand. Today Silverfox's models and ambassadors number around 180 and include some of the most in-demand mature faces in the world.

Says managing director Warne, "I've worked as a professional model for the past 10 years and Georgia had worked in marketing. We'd started to see that the landscape of advertising was changing, and the more research we did, the more we found out about the positive influence relatable talent has on consumers. We thought it was about time Australia and New Zealand got on board with the idea of age diversity. Both have ageing populations, and their consumers are starting to become vocal when it comes to advertising."

Warne says that with their knowledge and life experience, older models tend to be great storytellers. "We think ageing is a gift, and we love to see people of all different ages, backgrounds and looks. We're always on the lookout for anyone who's confident and stylish; we're open to applications from any interesting people, and don't have any height or weight restrictions. Life is about giving things a go, and you just never know who might be the next top model."

Just as body positivity has moved into the mainstream in recent years, age positivity looks set to do the same. If the response to recent campaigns by international fashion heavyweights such as Céline and Zara and local leaders like Karen Walker and Lonely is any indication, mature models are more than having a moment – they're the future. Those millennials had better watch out.

silverfoxmgmt.co.nz



Jacket, \$449, by Trelise Cooper. Earrings, \$69, top, \$199, and pants, \$249, by Gorman. Heels, \$329, by Kathryn Wilson. All other items model's own.

DEBRA YEARSLEY (56), INTERIOR DESIGNER, AUCKLAND

How long have you been working as a model?

I did a small amount of modelling in my twenties, but as my career at the time – in public relations – became busier, it was a natural progression to

forgo it. It was my sister-in-law who suggested I apply to Silverfox, and after thinking about it for a while, I decided I had nothing to lose.

I went to the casting with that attitude, so being accepted into the agency was a highlight.

What do you enjoy most about it? It's fun! It's a new experience for me at this stage in my life, and although I feel nervous about being in front of the camera, I'm learning how

What's been your modelling highlight so far? Turning up for my first photo shoot with Silverfox was both exciting and nerve-racking. But by the end, I was on a high.

to move, how to hold myself, to just let go and not be so self-conscious. It's teaching me to be happy in my own skin.


Are you keen to see more mature faces represented in advertising? I think it's great to see older people in the media. Ageing is a privilege not everyone gets to experience, but accepting the changes that occur in our bodies is challenging. I think the more older people are represented in the media, the more we'll be able to embrace ageing, rather than fear or loathe it.

How do you stay in shape for shoots? I love yoga and try to get to three classes a week. I also keep active by walking, gardening and, when time and weather permit, paddleboarding. This year, I'm aiming to get back into some weight training, too.

What's your top beauty tip? Always take your make-up off before bed. I also try to use all-natural, plant-based products on my skin – including lipstick. I don't feel properly dressed until I have my lipstick on. I wear various shades but do love a true red. My favourite is True Love by Karen Murrell.

What's your favourite item in your wardrobe? I've always had a fascination with earrings. I love supporting local artists so a lot of my jewellery is made in New Zealand and often from recycled materials. As I get older, my philosophy is to buy quality items that are going to last the distance. If you truly love them, you'll want to wear them again and again.





Jacket, \$898, and skirt,
\$499, by World. Shirt,
\$450, by Harris Tapper.
Earrings, \$69, by Gorman.
Heels and anklet
model's own.

Does life get better with age? It does! I don't have the same stresses, and have more leisure time to look after my body and mind and enjoy the good things in life.

JUDY ALVOS (65), RETIRED
FOUNDER OF SWIMWEAR
LABEL EXPOZAY, TAURANGA

You modelled for many years for your own brand, Expozay. When did you join Silverfox?

Last August. I was delighted to be selected at the casting at Fashion Week last year.

Is being able to represent mature women important to you? Yes, definitely. Actually, people often stop to ask me where

I got my shoes, or where I get my hair done – and they're often much younger than me. My friends my age love to look good and many have more money to spend on doing so than younger people, who might have young children and mortgages. I'm 65, but I dress youthfully because in my mind I'm still young. I'm an outgoing and positive person and can get away with it, so why not?

What's your favourite item in your wardrobe? As a designer, I like to put my own looks together and have always done so. I love swimwear, shorts, short skirts, knits,

crochet, shoes, bags, and everything in between. Fashion's been my life, and still is.

What's your top beauty tip? They say we are what we eat, but that's only part of it. I use Swisso Logical beauty products, and argan oil on my body and hair. I've also been an agent for Bioptron for 18 years and use the Bioptron Pro 1 Colour Light Therapy System.

How do you stay in shape for shoots? I've always had an excellent diet. I eat seasonal food, mainly seafood, fruit and vegetables, and avoid rich and processed foods, bread and sugar. I try to limit pasta, and I don't drink alcohol – except for the occasional glass of red wine. I also try to walk every day. For me, the beach is very therapeutic, with the birds and the sound of the waves.

What are some of the positives that come with being an older model? It's excellent for your self-esteem, and for keeping yourself up to speed, sharp, savvy and looking good. It's better to be looked at than overlooked, I say!

Is being able to represent mature women important to you? I'm thrilled to be part of what Silverfox represents. I feel like I'm contributing to a revolution or rebellion against the old stereotype that being a certain age means you have to fit a certain mould. It's exciting.

RUTH ANNE CAUKWELL (55),
TEACHER/AUTHOR/RETAIL
ASSISTANT, CHRISTCHURCH

How long have you been working as a model? In my twenties I did some modelling – mostly catwalk – while I was at university in Brisbane, but at that time I was concentrating on my career rather than the fashion field. I hadn't done anything since, until last year when I signed with Silverfox. My mum had recently passed on, but prior to her death she'd been encouraging me for a while to take up modelling again. So when I saw on Instagram that Silverfox was advertising for interest in New Zealand, I decided to give it a go.

What do you enjoy most about it? I love fashion, style and the whole concept of being uniquely you and not conforming to stereotypical norms. My modelling has become an extension of my inspirational writing. I want to be an ambassador for my generation – the 'ageless generation' – and to encourage others to feel good about the way they look.

What's your top beauty tip? Develop a beauty regime that suits you and includes good skincare, lots of water, moderate exercise and lots of hobbies. Accepting who you are and being positive doesn't hurt either!

What's your favourite item in your wardrobe? My camel-coloured, mid-calf Andrea Moore coat. I love winter clothing and, after living in Australia for 30 years, I longed to wear it again. I bought the coat not long after I returned to New Zealand in 2008, and I love it. It's a timeless classic.

Does life get better with age? Yes, yes, yes! I feel like in recent years I've found the 'real' Ruth. I've faced many things, some not so good, and let them go by walking forward with a new confidence in who I am. I realise how important it is to choose to cultivate happiness. My journey in life is continuing and reinvention is a big part of it. ■



Dress, \$499, by Cooper.
Earrings, \$19, by
Gorman. Boots, \$369,
by Miss Wilson.