

Synchronized Seniors

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When it comes to disrupting the stereotype of senior lifestyle it doesn't get more inspiring than the [Aquadettes](#)! Meet the real-life golden girls from southern California who are some of the original pioneers of synchronized swimming. One of the members was part of an American Aquacade, which traveled around Europe in the late 1950s and 1960s promoting the sport and took part in the debut of synchronized swimming demonstrations at the Rome Olympics in 1960. It took 24 more years before it was officially inducted into the Games in 1984. While some of the members of the current team are pros, everyone is welcome - you just need to be 55 or older and live in their senior community to participate. People actually move there just so they can join the Aquadettes!

I came across these inspiring ladies while I was doing research to re-visualize the over 50's for our [Disrupt Aging Collection](#) in partnership with AARP. I approached [Thomas Barwick](#) to collaborate on ideating a shoot with them and was confident we could create something special. He and his team were as excited as I was to be able to meet and work with them and it became clear at the beginning of the shoot that these ladies continue to challenge themselves despite their age and know how to have a ball doing it!

Valerie, who was our main contact and designs all the costumes (about 217 pieces a year) summed up their camaraderie and what it means to be an Aquadette: "...even though age, health and stress issues can wear anyone out - once you're in the water, have great music and surrounded by lifelong friends - it puts you in a different world - all the bad stuff melts away and you are so happy. It takes hard work and dedication but it's worth it. I'm so proud of these girls - I could cry just writing this and I will always call them girls."