



JOY DRUCKER (Miss August), born in London in 1926.



(Photos: Ido Lavi) MANCHESTER-BORN Anne Cohen (Miss April), 91, is the oldest of the models.

Revealing the beauty of old age

Israeli senior citizens with almost nothing to hide turn into role models for a fund-raising calendar

• LIAT COLLINS

Bar Rafaeli has nothing to fear. These 12 Israeli women will not outshine the Sabra supermodel, just encourage her as living proof that beauty need not disappear with age.

Inspired by the true story-turned-movie *Calendar Girls*, a dozen women who live in Bayit Bakfar senior citizens' residences went the almost-Full Monty and exposed pretty much all. In a case of art imitating golden life, or perhaps the other way round, the women posed – wrinkles and all – for a calendar whose proceeds are dedicated to the Schneider's Children Hospital in Petah Tikva.

Here are the bare facts.

In the original *Calendar Girls* – starring, among others, Helen Mirren and Julie Walters – a group of Yorkshire women, all over pension age, dropped everything to raise money for leukemia research following the death of the husband of one of their Women's Institute members.

The unlikely Israeli models – aged between 60 and 91 – all volunteered for the role last May. They were shot in style in November by fashion photographer Ido Lavi, in a suitably warmed studio.

The result is a series of cheeky yet inspirational pictures which – like their models – won't age if they hang around for a while.

To celebrate the topsy-turvyness of Purim or give a different perspective on International Women's Day, you can feel good about making a date with these pensioner pin-ups.

Eyal Krogman, general manager of the Bayit Bakfar chain of five residences, says of the project: "Our women are a daily inspiration to us, and the women who posed for the

calendar taught us about genuine happiness and showed us what self-love is."

Role models indeed.

The women themselves decided that the children's hospital should benefit from the proceeds.

The photos are saucy and bold, but these are no Dirty Dozen. They are tastefully shot, showing, for the most part, head and shoulders and leaving the rest to the imagination.

The 12 models come from different backgrounds ranging from an Auschwitz survivor to Sabras, including several women who fought in the War of Independence. Together they present – month by month – a different picture of Israel, breaking stereotypes along with conventions.

Two "Englishwomen," now residents of Bayit Bakfar Bitan Aharon, are among the stars.

Manchester-born Anne Cohen (Miss April), 91 years old, is the oldest of the models. She agreed to pose for the calendar, having heard a synopsis of the film, "because it was part of a charity drive."

Cohen, who made aliya "out of pure Zionism" 30 years ago – two days after marrying her second husband – is more than just a pretty face: She was very active for years in both Wizo and Hitachdut Olei Britannia.

Her eight grandchildren and four great-grandchildren, she says, "are very proud of me. They couldn't believe it was me. And I was quite surprised myself. I think the whole calendar came out beautifully."

What's Cohen secret to a beautiful old age? "Well, you have to put it down in part to genes. But also, I'm lucky. I don't feel my age, and I'm in good health, fortunately. I put it down to having a happy marriage and a good life."

Her special recipe: "Drink a teaspoonful of olive oil in orange juice every morning before breakfast."

Joy Drucker (Miss August), born in London in 1926, was also a willing subject: "It was for a good cause, so I was prepared to do anything I could. I knew it wasn't pornographic, so I wasn't scared. In fact, I quite enjoyed the experience. It was good fun. I think all the ladies were of the same mind, like me, a bit *meshugga*."

Her daughter, in her 50s, took the endeavor in stride: "She said she didn't think I could shock her anymore."

Drucker admits that "you can't really describe me as shy." She took ballet lessons from the age of four and studied dress design, "as I hoped to work in costume design for the theater and get into acting that way. I always wanted to act."

After living in what was then Rhodesia, she made aliya with her husband 40 years ago. Widowed just before she moved to Bayit Bakfar, the multi-talented Drucker keeps busy, and although her acting career is somewhat restricted, she notes: "Every Purim, they manage to persuade me – without any difficulty at all – to take part [in the *Purimspiel*]."

Living up to her name, Joy's enthusiasm is evident.

"My body is 83-and-a-half years old, but my brain and heart are only 35," she says. "The big problem is that my body can't do all things my heart wants it to any more."

Still, she's gone a lot further for a favorite cause than most women half her age.

The calendar costs NIS 29.90 and is available at the Steimatzky bookstore chain.

Look at these women, and you might never look at old age the same way again.

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