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# A 56-Year-Old Model Will Be an Ad Star in Sports Illustrated's 2016 Swimsuit Issue

## Swimsuits for All brand pushes the envelope again

By Robert Klara

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Advertising & Branding



Aged 56, model Nicola Griffin cuts a memorable figure with, in her own words, "white hot hair."

When you break open Sports Illustrated's Swimsuit Issue on Feb. 16, you'll see plenty of eye-popping stuff, including Justin Bieber's ex-girlfriend Barbara Palvin wearing a schoolbus-yellow bikini and UFC star Ronda Rousey wearing even less than that ([just body paint](#), in fact).

But the biggest surprise this year is actually on the advertising pages. Clad in a reflective

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gold bikini, Nicola Griffin will demonstrate that swimsuit models are not always stick figures—and they're not always twentysomethings, either. At 56-years-old, Griffin is the oldest women to appear in SI's fleshy showcase since its debut in 1964.

"People think you lose your sex appeal as you get older—but that's a myth," Griffin said in a statement. "I've never felt sexier."

Griffin will appear on a three-page ad buy from **Swimsuits for All**, a Web merchant that specializes in sizes 10-34 and bills itself as "the leader in swimwear for curvy women." The brand's other two ad pages will feature supermodel Ashley Graham and British Ghanaian model **Philomena Kwao** who, like Griffin, embody "a shift in the traditional notions of a bikini body," according to the company.

"Young and skinny is typical," Swimsuits for All CEO Moshe Lanaido told Adweek, "but we're saying it can also be curvy and older women."



Ashley Graham shook things up in last year's Swimsuit Issue, too

Lanaido said as much in last year's Swimsuit Issue, too, **when its "Curves in Bikinis" campaign debuted model Ashley Graham (size 16)** wearing a black string bikini and knocking a skinny guy in a suit into a swimming pool. (New York shop **KraftWorks** created both this year's and last year's campaigns.) Even though size-12 model Robyn Lawley was also featured in the same 2015 issue, Graham's appearance created a media sensation and landed everywhere from local news broadcasts to **People's style pages**.

"We thought, 'Wow, we hit a nerve,'" Lanaido said, "and I thought this may become an annual point of view for us."

For 2016, instead of simply adding ever-curvier models, Lanaido decided to push the envelope again by adding an older model. Griffin isn't just 56; she sports luxurious tresses of gray hair. "I feel quite unique in the modeling world," Griffin says on her **website**. "Mature models have come a long way in the industry, and we now have a place to represent women

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of all ages."

Swimsuits for All's effort comes amid a slow but undeniable shift away from decades-old notions of what a "beautiful" figure looks like. On Jan. 28, Mattel announced the expansion of its Fashionistas line of Barbie dolls, **featuring new body types** that included petite and curvy, in addition to "a variety of skin tones." And late last year, the famous **Pirelli Tire calendar** made headlines when it broke with its tradition of showing slender and busty models in favor of portraying women of achievement including Amy Schumer, Serena Williams and Yoko Ono—who is now 82.

"There's this idea of age that's been floating around in the popular culture," Lanaido said. "Jennifer Aniston said she's going to rock a bikini when she's 80, and that really sticks for us. We know consumers are shifting away from what my mom and grandmother thought of as being beautiful and sexy. There's a different take on it, and we feel we're trailblazers within it."



Phenomena Kwao was Essence magazine's "curvy model of the month" in March 2014

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