

# LOOKING FOR LOVE AT

Documentary filmmaker Nili Tal turned her camera on herself, and some of her dates, too, when she began searching for romance on the Internet

By Nili Tal

I made my decision quickly. For more than 10 years I'd been alone by choice, since the last man in my life, whom I loved very much and lived with for six years. Two years ago I decided that since I didn't want to grow old alone I'd better get a move on and look for a mate. On my computer I found a wonderful (in my opinion, that is) photo of myself and posted it to my profile on every dating site possible. I deliberated for hours over the "Who am I?" section of the profile. The final version was: "I'm really funny (especially to myself), a shrewd backgammon player and crazy about Clint Eastwood. Anyone who thinks he's suitable should respond."

I waited all night at the computer, hoping for a mini e-mail, a text message or at least a "wink," but no one responded. I immediately came to an important conclusion: It doesn't matter what I write, it's the picture that counts. I put on a black miniskirt, undid the top two buttons of my white blouse and gave my cheap Canon camera a come-hither look while my friend took some pictures. The images were quite sensuous. Just what I was aiming for.

I put three on the dating sites. No more than two minutes later the flood began: 1,320 men between the ages of 20 and 80 responded. They all sent pictures and offered to meet for coffee, wine, dinner, a few even proposed marriage. I wasted no time. I rushed to a bridal shop at the north end of Dizengoff Street in Tel Aviv and started trying on dresses. I told myself I had to be ready for anything so I also looked for pointy-toed shoes and dreamed about a wedding hairdo, with banana curls.

## Sex, lies and videotape

Of course, I'm not going to tell you about the sex just yet. (We'll see how I feel about it later.) The lies are far from horrifying. Every single person looking for love on the Internet subtracts at least five years and at least five kilos from their vital statistics. Not so terrible, in my opinion, since everyone really does look a lot younger than my grandmother did at 60. As for the videotape, I bought

a professional video camera with a wireless microphone and asked the men who contacted me if they would let me film our date – and other things, should they happen. Many refused. But out of the footage from those who agreed I created the documentary "Sixty and the City" ("Bat 60 Mehapeset Ahava"), which will be broadcast on the Yes Docu satellite station on Monday and is being screened every Saturday in July at the Tel Aviv Cinematheque.

My first surprising date (who unfortunately declined to be filmed) was Ron, from Kfar Shmaryahu. Sixty, very attractive, very rich, after coronary bypass surgery. It was a winter night with rain and thunderstorms. He called and offered to take me in his SUV to the Netanya beach to see the jackals. Yes, jackals at the beach in Netanya. "I'll bring drinks," he said.

I stood in front of the closet for at least 30 minutes, trying to decide. In the end, I went with something formal: jeans and a T-shirt. Ron arrived in a black SUV. He was at least 10 centimeters shorter than I, but at our age who cares? We drove to the beach. It was nice. The atmosphere in the SUV was intimate. Outside, as promised, there were jackals, rummaging through the trash. "Where are the drinks?" I asked, and he pulled out a thermos of black coffee. What a miss. Had he brought a bottle of red wine, the evening in the SUV, at my advanced age, surrounded by jackals on the Netanya beach, might have ended differently.

Oh well. It was the beginning of a wonderful friendship. The next day, Ron invited me to swim in his pool. On Saturday, he asked me to join him for a ride in his two-seat, motorized glider. Although I had nothing against Ron, the flood of responses turned my head a little. Some were from men in their forties and fifties. And so, while the 60-year-old Ron was soaring above Ga'ash, I decided to gently reject his advances.

## Buff bodies

Suddenly I felt just like Samantha Jones from "Sex and the City," who lusts after young, tight bodies. I even heard

from a few guys in their twenties. To go by the photos on their profiles, each one is at least a David Beckham or Leonardo DiCaprio.

Danny, 25, wrote: "Hey, what's up? You're such a beautiful woman, you're really special, you look so good for your age, I'd guess you were at least 10 years younger, wow, simply gorgeous. I may be young but I realize that you older women are the most beautiful and sexiest women in the world! If you're interested, send me a message and we'll talk, it'll be fierce!!"

From Rani, also 25: "Hi Princess, good evening to you. I just wanted to say that you're so beautiful and sexy it hurts and you have an amazing smile and I would really love to meet you. So take a look, enjoy, and if you like I'd love for you to message me back. 'Til then, have a super night..."

I was stunned by the flood of responses. Long-dormant hormones stirred to life. Was I about to plunge into a series of wild sexual encounters with 20-somethings, or would I pause for a moment to think about what I really wanted? I paused for a moment and decided to set off headlong. What do I have to lose, I asked myself. I've known great love. I was married three times. I have two sons and five grandchildren. I'm a 60-year-old filmmaker with a stack of movies to her credit that have been broadcast on practically every television channel possible. I've been reading Haaretz for 40 years and I live in a house with a yard and I have a dog and a cat and I'm looking for love. What do I have to lose? Let's get on with it!

## Bordeaux fantasies

Edward Shadin, a 46-year-old Frenchman and simultaneous interpreter (French-English, English-French), sent pictures of himself, his farm and his room. We corresponded and talked on Skype for several weeks, and when I told him I was coming to France to shoot a documentary, he invited me to visit, promising to wait for me at the train station. In my mind's eye I saw my train approaching the station; he is on the ▶