

the CLIMB to SUCCESS

Written by Todd Spangler
Photographs by David Merrell

About the Twins

Veronica and Vanessa Merrell, also known as *Merrell Twins*, were born on August 6, 1996 (ages 21). The twin sisters are actresses, comedians, singers, songwriters that have taken the internet world by storm. These multi-talented young American adults continue to shape and inspire the lives of many worldwide.

Taking to YouTube to express their passion for acting and creating new videos, the girls have worked on growing their community since 2009; since then, they have 2.9 million subscribers and developed a fan base known as the “Twinner’s”. These girls create comedic sketches and takes on various challenges to keep their fans’ attention enraptured and interested. Besides this, they also do covers of songs and write/record their own. Becoming known on a variety of social media, they are now aiming for even more. The indefatigable Merrell Twins just finished their freshman year in college — all the while posting weekly videos to YouTube, managing their social channels, and hosting shows for AwesomenessTV. “We’ve always just loved making people laugh,” says Vanessa. “It doesn’t feel like a job.”

The cheery 19-year-olds produce videos ranging from challenges, like

performing partner yoga poses (spoiler: pratfalls ensue), to original songs and skits.

Film Industry Opportunities

They’ve also had recurring roles on the CW’s “Jane the Virgin” as Jane’s evil stepsisters, and are the stars of AwesomenessTV’s “What the Truck,” “Food Truck Fanatics,” and “Teen Survival Guide” series. In September, they’ll appear in the indie teen comedy movie “The Standoff” starring Olivia Holt and Ryan McCartan. And now the twins are developing a scripted TV show with AwesomenessTV, details of which are still under wraps.

“That’s still the dream: to have our own television show, to be actresses,” Veronica says.

Three years ago, their parents moved the family from Kansas City, Mo., to L.A., after Vanessa and Veronica landed a deal with Disney Channel to make digital shorts. That didn’t pan out the way they’d hoped, but the twins, to their surprise, found their silly sketches on YouTube, were amassing fans.

Now their income from the YouTube channel, which is part of AwesomenessTV’s network, and other gigs is covering their college tuition and letting them pay for the family’s L.A.-area house. Vanessa is studying TV production and

Veronica is majoring in screenwriting (they aren’t disclosing where they go to school). Their dad, Paul Merrell, is a freelance producer who produces and edits their videos.

Fan Base

The Merrell Twins have 1.18 million subscribers to their YouTube channel—relatively modest when stacked up against the platform’s biggest stars. But their fan engagement is very high, with their videos generating upwards of 14 million views per month.

The twins, who recently signed with UTA and have been managed by Roar for more than four years, also have 237,000 fans on the YouNow live-streaming service, which they use for regular broadcasts and special events like red-carpet interviews at the MTV Music Awards. “YouNow has helped all our other social-media outlets, because they have such an active audience,” says Veronica.

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Stance

“Roni” and “Nessa” have similar personalities and tastes, although Veronica says she’s more reserved and, unlike her sister, doesn’t like ketchup. “We never get tired of each other,” says Vanessa, who has deeper dimples.

The biggest lesson the Merrell Twins have gleaned during their rise to digital fame: stick to your guns. “People have said, ‘You guys need to do more mature material — raunchier stuff — otherwise you’re going to lose fans,’” Veronica says. “That’s not true! We’ve kept it clean. You don’t have to be sexual or curse to be funny.”

Adds Vanessa,

“What we take from this is it’s OK to be ourselves.

We’ve had confidence over the years to express ourselves.”

Editor’s Note

The Merrell Twins are without a doubt, one of the most influential young adults on the internet. These YouTube celebrities are making an impact by spreading the positivity of their message. They work hard to make others realize that *you are beautiful the way you are* and *don’t change for anyone else*. Their messages are heard worldwide. Their positive vibe and funny nature makes them enjoyable to watch their content and become a part of their fan base. Their stance on being kind and respectful while creating child-friendly content makes them the perfect role model for children/teens. Nowadays, when the world is full of hatred, the Merrell Twins are able to be a beacon of light that others can learn from to improve.