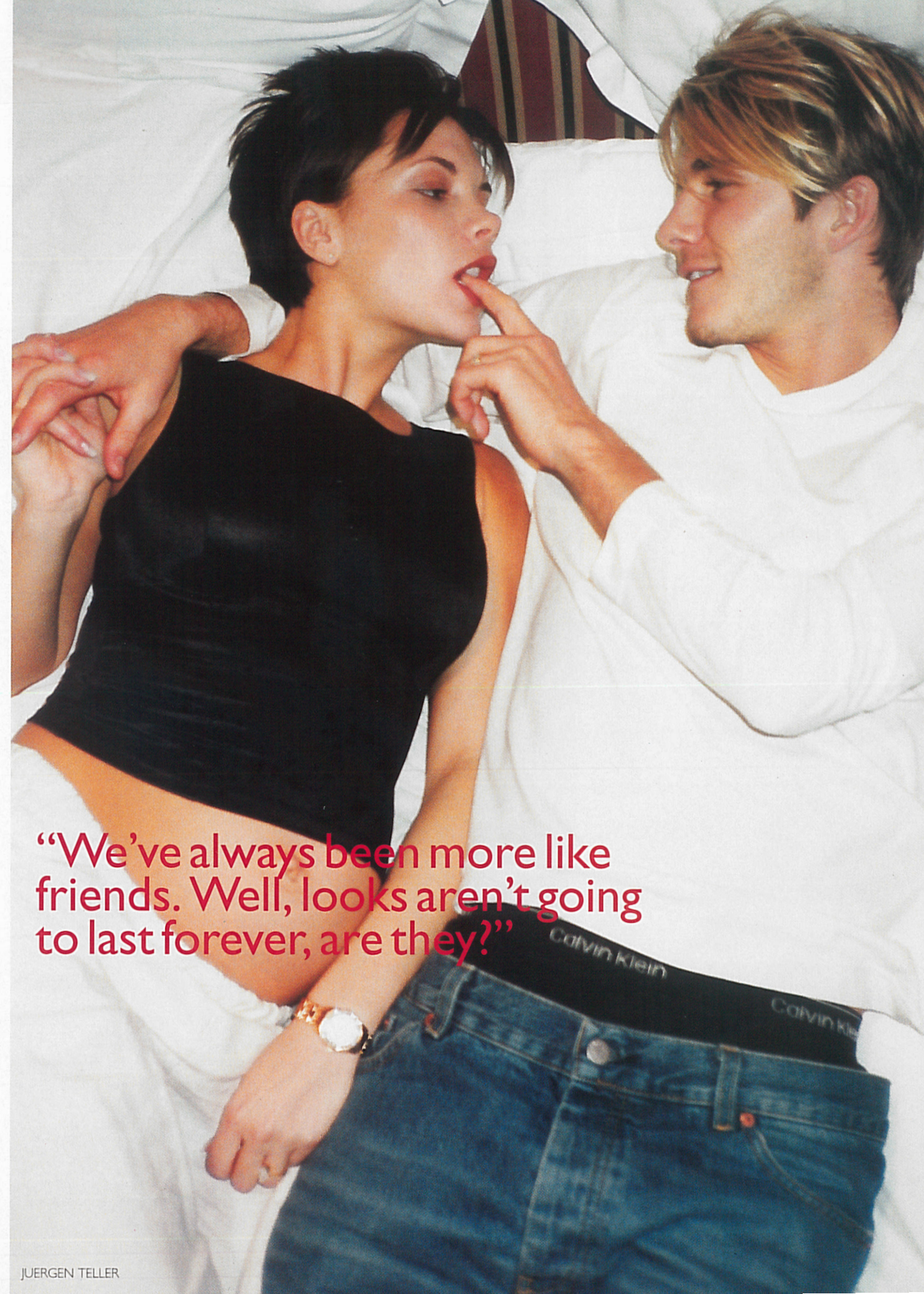


# Life is sweet

She's a member of the biggest girl band ever. He plays football for England's most successful team. Together they're worth about £18 million. And they're still in their early twenties. Meet Victoria Adams and David Beckham, the most famous couple on the planet. By Christa D'Souza

It was to be our little secret – what Posh had bought Becks for Christmas – so I couldn't help but feel a little disappointed when the object in question, a brand new custom-built silver Ferrari maranello, was splashed all over the tabloids the day after we'd spoken. On the other hand, what's the *point* of being able to buy one's boyfriend a Ferrari for Christmas if you can't take it for a spin down Bond Street almost before he's even unwrapped it? Ditto the "one-off" diamond necklace and bracelet David bought Victoria from Graff, which is even more expensive than the one he bought her last Christmas from Tiffany. (Remember it? You must do – it was splashed all over the papers.)

And besides, what did I expect from two of the most joyously conspicuous consumers in the Western world, who have given *OK!* the exclusive on their wedding this spring for the sum of £1 million? No wonder Posh won't tell me who's designing the wedding >



“We’ve always been more like friends. Well, looks aren’t going to last forever, are they?”



dress... or the morning suit. Although, as I can exclusively reveal to you, it certainly won't be Alexander McQueen. Why? Because when Victoria requested two tickets to his last show, he said no. Which is fine by Victoria, who says he can stick his clothes "right up his backside. We'll just find someone else and start wearing their clothes instead."

Well, what about Prada, Versace or Gucci? "Everyone says we wear them," says David, "and there is some nice stuff in their shops, but the thing that I don't like is that a lot of people can go into those shops and buy the same thing." He likes bespoke clothing, then: so how about Savile Row's William Hunt? Nope. He *has* designed a suit for David, of course, but then made the mistake of bragging about it on *This Morning*... "And charging us a fortune for it, too," as Victoria is quick to point out. Who knows? Maybe they'll choose Antonio Berardi, their current favourite, who expressly asked to meet Posh and Becks backstage after one of his shows and is, according to them both, "The Nicest Man In The World".

It's that horrible celebrity bind they're in, isn't it? Outraged when people won't leave them alone, outraged when they do. You can see it when Victoria complains about *The Star* featuring them for 30 weeks running, and also when she says that David went mad when she hung up a Christmas card from "a certain newspaper" in the living room (he was worried that there might have been a bug hidden in it). At the same

without bodyguards. They look surprisingly conspicuous for two so paranoid about security, dressed in matching white Polo Sport jackets, matching Stüssy baseball caps, and clinging onto each other so tightly you'd think pregnant Victoria was about to deliver her baby right then and there. Amazingly no one even so much as asks for an autograph, but the couple still clutch onto each other in us-against-the-world mode, refusing to let go even when we've sat ourselves down in the stuffy French restaurant section (as it happens, one of their favourite places to eat). "Yeah, we feel like two kids coming in here in our jeans and our Puffas when everybody else looks so grown-up and posh, don't we David?" says Victoria in her small, diamond-hard voice, taking a dainty sip from the two Diet Cokes she has ordered, and giving her fiancé's arm a proprietorial squeeze. "Yeah, we do," agrees David shyly as he takes his silver Nokia out of his pocket and places it prominently on the table.

Overgrown kids is *exactly* what Victoria Adams, 24, and David Beckham, 23, are and as such it's difficult not to feel a wave of affection at the thought of them carefully laying out all the tabloids every morning to see which ones their pictures are in and discussing who is more famous: "He gets more respect because he is considered more talented," Victoria concludes.

Even sweeter is the fascination they share for prison. (Victoria ventures the fact that she is reading a book about Myra Hindley,

new outfits staring at him from the rails he should put on in the morning. According to his fiancée, he's totally paranoid about his appearance. "I always tell him he looks lovely," explains Victoria, who later reveals she is keen for them both to be photographed in a campaign for The Gap, "but he's not comfortable at all about what he looks like, are you?"

Let's not forget, though, that the pair of them haven't lived this curious fishbowl existence for very long. Victoria certainly hasn't forgotten, recalling in detail the time last summer when she and David were staying with Elton John in the south of France and got a call to go to supper with ex-Ginger Spice, Geri Halliwell, who was staying just down the road with George Michael. "David and I just kept pinching ourselves," remembers Victoria. "I mean, we've both been fans of George Michael for *ages*." Then there was the time Victoria introduced Madonna to David after a show the Spice Girls did in Madison Square Garden. "She went to him, 'You must be the famous footballer.' As soon as she walked out of the room he rang his mate Gary and shouted down the phone, 'Guess what? Madonna knew who I was!'"

It wasn't so very long ago that Posh and Geri (yes, they made up and yes, she'll be invited to the wedding) were living with the rest of the girls in Maidenhead in a house so tiny, Victoria had to share a room with Emma and Geri had to sleep in a cupboard. Alright, they named her Posh because she was brought up in a mock Tudor mansion and her father sometimes drove her to school in his Roller, but she was still living on the dole and eating chicken korma every Tuesday night just like the rest of the girls.

Less than three years later and Victoria earns £80,000 a week while David, the son of a kitchen equipment maintenance worker and a hairdresser from Chingford, Essex, makes around £20,000 when his Adidas and Brylcreem endorsements are added to his

Manchester United salary. Together they are probably worth in the region of £18 million. One of the more endearing things about the pair of them is that although they've worked hard to get there, they act as if they'd won their fortunes in the Lottery.

Well, David does. Victoria, meanwhile, is horrified by the prices that, say, interior decorators charge. "I mean, £20,000 to do the roller blinds for a two-bedroom house," she says, shaking her head in disbelief. In the end Jilly Hughes – wife of Mark, David's former team-mate, who now plays for Southampton – did the job for half the price. >

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time, however, they declare that they had a horrible evening recently at the much venerated London restaurant, The Ivy, because none of the staff recognised them until halfway through the meal. "And by then it was too late," sniffs Victoria.

The three of us have arranged to meet in the lobby of the Midland Hotel in Manchester (we were going to liaise in their brand new panoramic penthouse in south Manchester, but Posh vetoed it at the last moment because the builders were still there). I am surprised to see not only that they arrive bang on time but that they are

and David adds that they'd both like to see the inside of a prison.) I tell them that prison visiting would be a wonderful thing for them to do, but they say no, they couldn't possibly in case people thought they were doing it for the press. Just like the time, as David points out, "we once visited poorly children in hospital".

But the most touching image of all is of this sublimely handsome young lad, sitting in his dressing room at home (they each have their own), head bowed and hands woven despairingly into blond highlights, wondering which of the hundreds of brand-







Victoria wears Lycra dress by Patricia Field at Betsey Johnson. David wears a shirt and jeans by Rick Owens. Victoria's hair by L'Oréal Paris.

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"It's the one thing David and I differ on," says Victoria. "He never looks at the price of anything, do you? On the other hand, David earns his own money and he spends it on what he wants. I'm not going to be a nagging bag. I'm here to make him happy."

It's unfair to cast judgement on who wears the trousers in this relationship – particularly in light of David's sarong episode – but one thing is certain: they are completely, utterly, unconditionally mad for each other. A goofy

**"I'll just take the baby into the studio with me," says Victoria. And nights? "Oh, straight in a cot, although I have heard there are some babies who never sleep... aren't there?"**

smile of compliance spreads across David's picture-perfect features whenever his fiancée asks him one of her rhetorical questions. Victoria meanwhile, a little wan without her face on and clearly impatient to give birth ("I just want to see what it looks like"), perpetually strokes and pats David with her babyish, stick-on French-manicured fingers as though she'd really rather be sitting in his lap... or have him sit in hers. I assume she's being serious when she says she almost had the builders put side-by-side lavatories in the master suite's bathroom. "I've weed in front of David right from the beginning," she shrugs, "but then we've always been more like friends. Well, looks aren't going to last forever, are they?"

Indeed, it's hard to imagine how David would have survived without her support after that red card incident at last year's World Cup. The lambasting he got in the press was bad enough, but what most incensed Posh – still incenses Posh – was the effigy in a sarong with a number seven on its back that was hung from a rope in some pub owner's back garden. Beckham admits to weeping only twice during the furore – when he saw his parents straight afterwards and when he met Victoria in New York. Of course, it still hurts – especially the taunts of TV presenter Jeremy Clarkson, who would apparently like to get the Manchester United midfielder alone in a padded cell with a baseball bat. "A lot of people would have topped themselves over that," Victoria says thoughtfully, and then leans over her bump to give David yet another hug. "But don't worry, I'll look after you. Just send him round here, I'll beat him up..."

"Before I was pregnant I was never actu-

ally violent, and now I'm so argumentative, aren't I? I had a fight with the woman from Cellnet directory enquiries the other day. I phoned up and said, 'Can you please connect me to Louis Vuitton in Bond Street?' She said (brilliant *Coronation Street* accent, here), 'How d'you spell that, then?' I said, 'V-U-I-T-O-N.' So she goes, 'Yer what?' I said, 'Try Louis then.' Anyway, finally she goes, 'You don't spell it like that, it's got a double 't'.' I said, 'I don't give a shit how you spell it,

just get me the place.' Anyway, I hung up on her... and then I ended up being too embarrassed to call back."

It was right before an England game that David saw the Spice Girls on television and suddenly decided it was the one "with the bob and the short skirt" who was his favourite – rather than Ginger Spice, whom all the other Manchester United players fancied. But he had no idea how to let her know except via an interview in a magazine. Victoria, meanwhile, who'd always wrinkled her nose up at football players, was nonetheless smitten after being shown a picture of him by a journalist and immediately decided to "stalk" him, persuading Mel C, an avid football fan, to take her to one of his games. Love developed quickly, very quickly – and so did the baby which, by my calculations, was conceived just under three months after they became engaged last January. It wasn't easy at first, says Victoria, what with it not being planned, and being on tour in America, and perpetually having to vomit into a bucket at the side of the stage. The tabloid "revelations" that kept winging their way over from home, falsely alleging that Becks was cheating on her with a Stringfellow's lap dancer (the couple have since won substantial damages from the *News Of The World*), didn't exactly help, either. Particularly since Victoria freely admits she's not very good at coping with girls making eyes at her beloved. "It makes me want to smack them in the mouth," she explains. But actually, there's no need to worry: David's as faithful and loyal as a puppy. As he says, "I've never actually been to Stringfellow's. I would never go somewhere like that!"

And now life's as cosy and nest-like as it can be. Victoria sees few people besides her family and spends most evenings curled up with David on the sofa in their newly decorated pad – described by her as "a cross between a poof's house and a whore's house" – watching their favourite TV show, *Friends*. By day they shop or take gentle strolls with their matching Rottweilers, Puffy and Snoop Doggy Dogg. It's David, by the way, who does the pooper-scooping.

"I'm the tidy one," he smiles, because it is their little joke, "and she's artistic." He's also the cook in the family, frequently whipping up mashed potato, his speciality, in their new built-in Miele kitchen. And doing the washing up afterwards.

Sometimes the couple even brave their local branch of Tesco. "It's fine. They're very posh round where we live," explains Victoria.

"If anyone wants an autograph I say, 'Not until we've finished' and then I get all the children to line up and tell them that if they don't say please they're not going to get one. That goes for adults, too. David and I were talking about this the other day, weren't we? We want children who are very well behaved."

Who knows what their baby – who is to be delivered in February at The Portland hospital in central London – will be like? In any event, he or she will have an utterly devoted Mummy and Daddy – particularly Daddy, who admits that he'd like to have six children and drive all of them around in his Bentley Arnage – and will want for nothing. Except perhaps a nanny, since Victoria and David, amazingly, have decided they are going to do all the child rearing on their own, just like normal people, with help when they need it from Victoria's mum, Jacqui.

"But then I have the kind of job where I can do that," says Victoria. "I'll just take it into the studio with me in a backpack."

And nights? "Oh, straight in a cot, because you have to draw the line somewhere," she says briskly, adding with an uncharacteristic question mark in her voice, "although I have heard there are some babies who never sleep... aren't there?"

They have no idea what sex the baby will be, but one gets the distinct impression Victoria would like to follow in her younger sister Louise's footsteps and have a girl. And I can see her point as I watch her shepherding David, one of the surest people in the world on his feet, out of the restaurant, down the stairs and into their custom-designed, £70,000 Range Rover. She's right. Two boys to look after would be more than enough to handle.