

Wise. Well-heeled. Career-minded. Meet the iWAGs

Remember when England's WAGs ruled the world? Those days are long gone, says **Tom Mitchelson**

Here in Britain we may think we understand what it is to be a WAG — after all, we did produce the golden generation: Victoria Beckham, Abbey Clancy and Coleen Rooney. As with the game itself, though, inventing something doesn't mean owning it for ever. WAGs are now a global phenomenon, in fact, and World Cup holders Spain have built a formidable squad for Rio.

International WAGs (aka iWAGs) are older and wiser than their English adversaries — who may struggle to compete on Brazil's sweltering terraces and in its air-conditioned malls (it's no longer all about spray tans and luxury shopping). So never mind worrying about the degrees of humidity in Manaus or Stephen Hawking's formula for winning an England penalty shoot-out — here's what matters in Rio: how many of our homegrown WAGs would make it into a World Cup XI?

*Starting formation: an attacking 3-3-4

Goalkeeper

Sara Carbonero
Country Spain
Age 30

Going out with Spain's Iker Casillas

● After suffering a shock defeat to Switzerland during the group stages of the 2010 World Cup, some alleged that Spain's keeper had been distracted by Carbonero, who was reporting on the game from the sidelines. American *FHM* magazine was sympathetic, anointing her "the sexiest reporter in the world" (are they unfamiliar with the work of Rageh Omar?). Spain later went on to lift the trophy and Casillas, unable to contain himself, kissed Carbonero live on television while she was interviewing him. She looked a bit cross and now we must always worry about her journalistic impartiality.

Defenders

Shakira
Country Colombia
Age 37

● Going out with Spain's Gerard Piqué
● Her list of achievements would make Abbey Clancy weep. She is the highest-selling Colombian music artist ever, with 60 million sales. She's won two Grammys and last year *Forbes* listed her as one of the 100 most powerful women in the world. She was invited by President Obama to discuss the White House education initiative. Her English-language breakthrough album occurred at some point between the albums *Fijación*



Sara Carbonero and Iker Casillas

Oral vol. 1 and *Oral Fixation vol. 2*. Despite her successes she's not an expensive date: in 2010 she was the face of Freixmet cavá's Christmas campaign, and urged viewers to "toast so the sun shines more than ever", which seems somewhat at odds with her campaign against climate change.

Pilar Rubio
Country Spain
Age 36

● Going out with Spain's Sergio Ramos
● Presenter of the Spanish equivalent of *You've Been Framed* (*La Ventana Indiscreta*), so think of her as a sort of female Jeremy Beadle. While she failed to finish her economics degree, she recently landed a role in a show called *Pirates*, which apparently required her to wear a lot of white frocks that go transparent when wet. This didn't save the show from being cancelled after eight episodes for poor ratings.

Carla Company
Country England
Age 29

● Married to Belgium's Vincent Kompany
● Luckily, Mancunian Carla is a lifelong Manchester City fan. She's a

radio presenter and by all accounts is fairly down-to-earth. Which is just as well since, according to *Manchester Evening News*, a Sainsbury's shop assistant wouldn't let her buy a bottle of wine and a DVD for a quiet night in as she didn't look old enough. She's also had a Twitter conversation with Shauna Muamba about what to do when "at McDonalds eatin your drive thru chips an someone parks right next to you when the car parks empty". Not afraid of the big issues, then.

Midfield players

Daniella Semaan
Country Lebanon
Age 38

● Going out with Spain's Cesc Fàbregas
● A master of the disguised pass. Semaan's millionaire ex-husband only found out she had left him for a footballer 11 years younger than her when he saw pictures in a newspaper of her kissing him. She's an attention-seeker who displays copious cleavage while being ultra-serious about her Catholic faith. Her Twitter feed is a riot of red roses, pink kisses and hearts, and a recent retweet reads: "People will talk about you and envy the life you lead. LET THEM." Quite.

Yolanthe Sneijder-Cabau
Country Spain or Holland
Age 29

● Married to Holland's Wesley Sneijder
● A television presenter and actress who was named Dutch *FHM*'s sexiest woman in 2006, 2007 and 2009. Clearly 2008 was a bad year. On her website she's pictured with her breasts barely covered by a cascade of limpets, clinging on for dear life.

She does have a more serious side, however, having co-founded the Stop Kindermeisbruik foundation, with the aim of stopping child sexual abuse in developing countries. She participated in an event for her charity that saw her locked in a cage for 12 hours to raise awareness of child trafficking.

Melissa Satta
Country Italy or USA
Age 28

● Going out with Ghana's Kevin Prince Boateng
● Born in Boston, Satta grew up in Sardinia. Aged 19 she described herself as a "communications expert" and was spokeswoman for Telecom Italia Mobile. Her website (emphasising the "me" in "Melissa") is dedicated to her

English WAGs may struggle to compete on Brazil's sweltering terraces

main interests of style, fitness, pets and charity (in that order). She is profoundly dedicated to the cause of swimwear modelling, having appeared in numerous magazines devoted to the scientific advances of this ever-capricious branch of athletic apparel. A serious sportswoman herself, she has been a keen footballer and won bronze and gold respectively in the Sardinia and Italy karate championship. So whatever you might say about her, don't say it to her face.

Strikers

Laia Grassi
Country Spain
Age Undisclosed
● Going out with Chile's Alexis Sánchez
● Grassi lives and works in Barcelona. She has a bachelor of fine arts from the University of Barcelona and a master's in design and art direction from ELISAVA Barcelona School of Design and Engineering. She loves Instagram because it enables her to share selfies with nearly 5,000 Twitter followers. Her website showcases her photography, the theme of which seems to be men in lipstick, in distress.

Amra Silajdzic
Country Bosnia and Herzegovina
Age 29

● Going out with Bosnia and Herzegovina's Edin Dzeko
● Silajdzic is an Ambassador for Bosnia Foundation, a non-profit mission to improve access to education for the people of her country. She speaks three languages proficiently — which is three more than some of the England team — and she's a prize-winning taekwondo fighter.

Her website explains that she is a "humble" girl from Bosnia and Herzegovina who just happens to work as an underwear model. It also details how in 2010 she humbly embarked on "another of life's challenges" — becoming an actress in Los Angeles.

Fanny Neguesha
Country Belgium
Age 23

● Going out with Italy's Mario Balotelli
● She has graced many magazine covers, proving that there is a famous Belgian. Neguesha must be extremely patient and calm under pressure because she goes out with a man whose list of misdemeanours includes throwing a dart at a youth team player, driving into a women's prison to "have a look around" and setting his house alight with a firework.

She may have tired of him, though, since it is rumoured that she's just dumped him via Instagram. In which case she may regret getting her bicep tattooed with the words: "Your love is the only thing that lets me love, Balotelli." Perhaps she should have just opted for a dolphin on her bum.

Irina Shayk
Country Russia
Age 28

● Going out with Portugal's Ronaldo
● Perhaps, with the exception of Shakira, the best known WAG of all. The couple met while modelling Armani. She studied marketing but ended up at beauty school, and is now breaking into movies, having taken on a role opposite acclaimed thespian *The Rock*. The part requires her to strip and take a bath. She has a dog named Caesare, after Julius Caesar. Her Facebook page has 4.2 million likes — how much of this is down to her famous boyfriend is up for debate.



Carla and Vincent Kompany

Amra Silajdzic and Edin Dzeko

Irina Shayk and Ronaldo

Yolanthe and Wesley Sneijder

Shakira and Gerard Piqué

Pilar Rubio and Sergio Ramos

Daniella Semaan and Cesc Fàbregas

Melissa Satta and Kevin Prince Boateng

Laia Grassi and Alexis Sánchez

Fanny Neguesha and Mario Balotelli