

THE REAL DEAL

Photography: Nathan Gallagher
Words: Andy Jones

With his fourth Golden Boot award in the bag, there's no doubt that Ronaldo is the world's greatest footballer. So when he invited FHM to Spain for an exclusive interview, we didn't need to be asked twice...





Slip past the door staff at Ramses – a restaurant and bar on Madrid's manic Plaza de la Independencia – on a weekday afternoon, and you'll immediately find yourself in an oasis of calm and measured luxury. So far, so tasteful.

But if you look around for a while, your attention may be grabbed by the sight of one gentlemen who just happens to be one of the most famous faces in global sport.

He doesn't prop up the bar, but instead sits at a quiet table in the corner, people-watching, going through his emails, maybe having a business meeting. Cristiano Ronaldo – because that's who we're talking about – likes to hold court over the busy plaza below, furiously planning.

These days, the 30-year-old has half an eye on life after football. The central figure in that life is still Cristiano Ronaldo the sports star – record-breaker, goal-getter, jaw-dropper – but beyond that lies an untapped reservoir of potential business adventures. Football boots one minute, briefcase the next.

But it won't be any old tat he'll stick his name on. Ronaldo is a perfectionist and, like his tricks and skills, he's working every detail right. Just as kids ape his free kick technique in the playground – the familiar wide stance followed by the almighty whack of menace – he plans to have us all slavishly copying his fragrances, style and health regime. If other footballers can do it, why can't Cristiano?

He's already got the fragrance, Cristiano Ronaldo Legacy, and even the way it was made tells you a lot about his character.

"I would dash off from the

training ground and spend two hours a day just trying things out," he says. "They say, 'That one smells like Gucci, this one like Dolce & Gabbana.' But I chose what I like. I became so involved, obsessed with it. Everything has to be top. Big. Unique! Like me."

Now, as *FHM* sits down for our exclusive chat with Ronaldo (the only UK magazine to be invited to do so), we notice that everything about him is shiny – hair, shoes, teeth – except his skin, which is, of course, matte and blemish-free. His eyebrows have been tweaked, his hands are manicured and his lips are glossy. In short, he looks absolutely incredible – the perfect athlete for the high definition age.

Fine details matter to Ronaldo. Every day he does countless stretches to avoid injury (seriously, how many times has one of the most fouled players on the planet ever been out?), eats well, sleeps right. Ronaldo never drinks – his father died of an alcohol-related illness – and he has shunned football's obligatory tattoos because it stops him donating blood. Just as every pass on the pitch is carefully measured in the microsecond it takes a brain sensor to jerk a nerve ending in the leg, every nuance on Ronaldo's new field of play is marked out too.

At the launch of his new fragrance (naturally, at Ramses), *FHM* is told there was just one man who handpicked the table arrangements, canapés, lighting, gold and black balloons and legions of identically dressed brunette models at the event. Clue: it wasn't Ronaldo's business manager.

Being Cristiano looks exhausting. He has his own line in underwear,

clothing and endorsed health products. Spend 20 minutes in his company and it's no stretch to imagine him, still in his training gear, looking through bottle designs on his phone, or testing notes of apple and sandalwood on his wrists. Ronaldo wants to rule the world.

DADDY RONALDO

Despite outward appearances, the man himself is humble and sincere. In fact, he's actually a good laugh.

In the middle of his on-stage speech at the launch, an over-eager photographer sends part of the carefully selected decor crashing to the floor. Bits of wood and flowers go everywhere.

Pepe, Ronaldo's Real Madrid teammate, sensing weakness in the same way he would in an opposing striker, whoops with laughter in a bid to put Cristiano off. Ronaldo begins his carefully prepared address again – giggling at Pepe's chiding – and making light of it all. Spanish, Portuguese, English – during the speech, the star addresses the crowd in the whole range.

Back with *FHM*, he relaxes. But his favourite subject isn't goalscoring or Ballon d'Ors: it's his five-year-old son, Cristiano Jr. Ice-cool when talking about business and football, Ronaldo gets glinty-eyed about being a dad.

"I never imagined that something would change the way I look at my life so much," he says. "It's changed my mind about everything. Being a father was always the dream for me. It's something I always thought about. I say to my friends, team-mates, all the time now, 'I want more.' It's all I talk about."

So how many little Cristianos does he want? Five, six? "Why not? I think I have good conditions to have many kids so I want this. Let's find the right woman!"

That's the kind of sentence that makes every female in the world's ears prick up, but being a »

"I WANT FIVE, SIX KIDS. WHY NOT? I THINK I HAVE GOOD CONDITIONS TO HAVE MANY. LET'S FIND THE RIGHT WOMAN!"

Darren Fletcher on Ronaldo

The West Brom captain discusses his former Man United teammate



"People don't believe Cris has a great sense of humour, but he never took himself seriously. He'd be in front of the mirror telling everyone how beautiful he was. He probably meant it, but he was also laughing at himself. He liked to make people laugh and because of that he was extremely popular.

"People forget he didn't speak English when he arrived. He was determined to learn the language and he studied very hard. He was speaking English very quickly and with that came an appreciation for our humour. He'd put on a Manchester accent – 'Ey up lad', that kind of thing – when he could barely speak English. Confidence wasn't a problem.

"In training, he'd do these flicks and tricks. He'd always be on the training field, trying to improve. If it didn't work at first he'd keep going – and he'd get it right eventually.

"He used to blow us away every day because of how good he was. What really came through is that he loved life and football – that was obvious from day one."

A YOUNG RONALDO WITH HIS PARENTS, MARIA AND JOSÉ; SIGNING FOR MANCHESTER UNITED IN 2003 WITH SIR ALEX FERGUSON; AND AS A PROUD DAD WITH CRISTIANO JNR, HIS FIVE-YEAR-OLD SON



“LIVING IN AMERICA IS POSSIBLE. I'D DEFINITELY THINK ABOUT PLAYING THERE FOR A YEAR”

papa is what now makes CR7 tick. "He's a fantastic boy – I'm so proud," he says. "Any father has a special, different life with his son that is all their own. I love just to be with him: sat in bed, speaking with him, watching TV, watching football, playing on the iPad, watching cartoons together. He's very cool and now he's five his mind is starting to change. To see your son grow up with his own different mind – it's beautiful."

He's for real. Ronaldo gushes about giving his son everything he didn't have growing up in Madeira – going to the right school, learning more languages. "He will speak three languages straight from the start," he says, adamantly.

Forget pictures of Ronaldo holidaying with glamorous women or scoring goals – in between dashing off to collect his son from school, the Cartoon Network is where Cristiano's eyes are most of the time. "I have all my favourites to watch, so it's good we like the same ones," he says. "Tom And Jerry, Mickey Mouse, Iron Man. We watch many. But now little Cristiano is starting to move on and instead he's getting into music. He likes to dance around to hip-hop and reggae when I have it on – he's like, 'Daddy, Daddy, you know this music?' He's music-mad."

FUTURE PLANS: BALL IN THE USA

Planning ahead, the Portugal captain is eyeing a tilt at cracking America, too. He dismisses tabloid stories he has paid \$18.5 million for a flat in Trump Tower, New York – "The rumours are crazy. I can't sit there and say, 'That is true, that is not true, that one is sort of true'" – but the idea of following Pirlo, Gerrard and co out to the US definitely appeals. "I do not close the doors on any league or any place. I always say to go and live in America is always possible. I would definitely think about »



PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY IMAGES; PA PHOTOS; REK FEATURES; INSTAGRAM/CRISTIANO RONALDO

**CRISTIANO
RONALDO**



**“BRITISH FANS ARE AMAZING.
THEY RESPECT YOU, MOTIVATE
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GOOD MEMORIES OF THE UK”**

playing there for one year.”

Eyes always front – no room to pass backwards, only forwards – but he still has time for Manchester. “United treated me like a son,” he says. “I was there for six years and had some unbelievable times. Many of my friends there have now left the club, but I am in touch with Nani, Anderson, Ferdinand, Vidic, Evra, Fletcher. And, of course, Giggs is now a coach there – we had a chat when we saw each other in the USA. I speak to the kit man, everybody. I have fantastic memories of being there.”

Ronaldo – apparently without sarcasm – says he even misses supporters in Premier League grounds. “Honestly, UK fans are amazing. For me, they are one of the best because they are polite, they respect you, they push you all the time and motivate you. I love them. I have so many good memories of being in the UK.”

It’s not a fib either. Every returning club legend is obliged to say good things, but according to René Meulensteen – Manchester United first team coach during Ronaldo’s stay – the goal machine practises what he preaches. After Real Madrid played Manchester United in 2013 at the Bernabeu – a match in which Cristiano scored – Ronaldo made an appearance in the away dressing room.

“We saw him briefly before the game, but afterwards he spent a lot of time with his old teammates. I spent a good 50 minutes with him talking about his time in Madrid and how much he enjoyed his time at United and the work we did. He’s a very respectful, intelligent boy. Sir Alex will tell you – the whole United dressing room will tell

you – the moment he walked in, we knew we had a special player.”

**THE BIGGEST STAR
ON THE PLANET**

Ronaldo the brand is growing. In October, he won his fourth European Golden Boot, while a documentary film, *Ronaldo* (made by the team behind *Senna* and *Amy*), is out this month. In terms of money, his earnings were £52 million in 2014 according to *Forbes* magazine, and he has more than 175 million social media followers. He’s especially big on Instagram: a single picture of him with his son got more than one million Likes at New Year.

We tell him how we once visited a village in Gambia, 150 miles from the capital, Banjul, where there was no electricity, no running water and no internet. Yet on the outside walls of the houses was a mural of Cristiano Ronaldo that someone from the village had painted. If he can go beyond the reach of modern civilisation, how big can he get?

“I want to be the biggest and best I can be,” he says. “I have seen these pictures before. I use that as motivation for me to work better in my job. I want to make people happy, to entertain them – honestly I do. These people see this guy and say, ‘He works a lot, he tries to do good things. I want to be like him.’ How can that not be great?”

A life that’s great for someone that has already achieved greatness. As he poses with half a dozen models to promote his own brand fragrance, life does look pretty amazing for Ronaldo.

Cristiano Ronaldo Legacy is available at Boots and The Perfume Shop »

**Ronaldo
in numbers**

2 FIFA Ballon d’Or awards

1 FIFA World Player Of The Year award

1 European Ballon d’Or award

2 Champions League wins

3 Premier League wins

1 La Liga win

1 FA Cup win

2 League Cup wins

2 Club World Cup wins

9 UEFA Team of the Year inclusions

4 Champions League Golden Boots

4 European Golden Shoes



“WE HELPED MAKE RONALDO THE PLAYER HE IS TODAY”

The transformation from precocious teenager to world number one at Manchester United happened under the eye of coach René Meulensteen. Here he tells *FHM* exactly how they made him so good



Apart from being blessed with natural talent and an aptitude for hard work, Cristiano Ronaldo needed a plan for greatness when he arrived at Manchester United in 2003.

The lad from Madeira was already on his way. The first Sporting Lisbon player ever to progress through the under-16s, under-17s, under-18s, reserves and first team within a single season, Ronaldo became Britain's most expensive teenage footballer when he signed for United for £12.24 million in 2003.

“Right from the moment he came in, Ronaldo had unbelievably strong, intrinsic motivation,” says René Meulensteen, coach at Manchester United throughout most of Ronaldo's stay there.

“You see that now when he scores five goals in a game – some players score two and ease off. Not Ronaldo. If you talked to him, even way back at Sporting Lisbon, he wanted to be the best player in the world. The next step for him was finding out how to achieve that.” Here's how they did it...

PERSONAL MANAGEMENT

“Cristiano is very receptive. Anything he could take on board to achieve his goals, he would. Some professional players need constant reminding about looking after themselves. With Cristiano, you never had to do that. He knows. Even when he was at Manchester United he had his own cook at home to ensure that every meal he was eating was right. He's extremely dedicated to his stretching routine and massages – they're always done and executed in the right way. His fitness record is therefore phenomenal.”

AMBITION

“I said to Cris, ‘Look at the best players in the past – nearly all of them played in your position. Who would you like to emulate? Di Stéfano, Best, Cruyff, Pelé...’ I tried to take him on a journey where he mentally mapped out his goals. I didn't do anything revolutionary, but I made him – in his own thoughts – create a jigsaw of what a world-class player should be. Technical, physical, mental – you make him confront what he needs to improve on. You then empower him to follow that road map. Everything he needed to do he did. The physique, mentality, skills, technique – he worked phenomenally hard to ensure he ticked every box.”

FINISHING

“One of the main things we wanted to help Cristiano with was scoring. He always tried to score the perfect goal – like hitting the top corner – but in the process was squandering opportunities. We made him look at the top scorers at United – Solskjaer, Cole, Sheringham, Van Nistelrooy – what was the trend? They were all clinical and scored scruffy goals – off the shin, off the knee. We

started to work on making him appreciate the variety of scoring goals – how different they can be.

“I put cones in a grid around the box so he could understand the areas of entry into the box and then what type of finish he'd use to score depending on the goalkeeper's position. I wanted him to understand that every time he was approaching the box he knew what zone he was coming into and therefore what foot and finish he'd need to use before the ball even came in. He loved all of that.”

BODY LANGUAGE

“When he first arrived, Cristiano would get annoyed – in games and in training – when he'd been kicked or not given a free kick. He'd slap his hands on the floor. I said, ‘Cris, you want people to kick you. That's them admitting they can't stop you. If a defender sees you're getting annoyed, they know they've unsettled you. If you keep ice-cold, straight faced – like Federer plays tennis – you become untouchable. Defenders give up – they see you're unflappable.’ I also showed him old clips of Johan Cruyff ghosting past tackles or seeing fouls coming, getting out of the way. He's excellent at hurdling challenges now. He just glides through people.”

ACCURACY

“To hone his accuracy, we put different coloured shirts in various areas of the goal netting. Each colour represented a separate section.

“I'd start off by making him shoot at a colour. Then, with him looking away, I'd ask him where the yellow bib was in the goal. At first he couldn't tell me. Then he'd make a point of thinking about where each section of the goal was in relation to him. Later, with his back to goal, I'd throw him four balls in succession and at the same time shout

a colour for him to hit. It was making him think – while the ball was coming to him – where in the net the ball was going to be put.

“We simulated it in games, too, picking a marker behind each goal: a supporter in a bright jacket, a steward, a hoarding. You can visualise hitting the ball at those spots. That season, his initial target was 20 goals. I told him he should be aiming for 40. He said, ‘Woah, hold on a minute.’ But I said, ‘Look, previously you haven't intensively worked on finishing, but now you can explode.’ He'd reached 30 goals by the end of January, and ended up with 42 in total.”

HEADERS

“He loves to head. He always has done – the way he attacks the ball, he can hang, he gets the leap right. He's also extremely brave. Cristiano doesn't mind getting hurt – the only thing that matters is winning and scoring goals. He would always do extra heading, extra finishing. Most of the squad would do extra things – defenders practising quick footwork, midfielders doing long passes. Cristiano always worked with someone else or off on his own. He could entertain himself on his own easily for half an hour heading balls.”

FREE KICKS

“If you look at how he'd taken kicks before United, he had the same number of steps backwards as now, but he had a very straight approach. If you try to hit the ball straight-on with your laces, it's harder – and you can damage your ligaments if you catch the floor. We told him to take a step sideways first because your approach means you get your in step involved as well as your laces. It gives bend and that ‘up and down’ effect. But the magic, of course, is all down to him.” **FHM**



RENE SAYS MANCHESTER UNITED TAUGHT RONALDO THE SKILLS TO BECOME THE WORLD'S GREATEST PLAYER. WORKING ON HIS BODY LANGUAGE, GOAL SCORING, HEADERS AND FREE KICKS IN TRAINING