



MIND YOUR LANGUAGE

ENGLAND footballer Trent Alexander-Arnold impressed fans with his fluent Spanish at his Real Madrid unveiling. The 26-year-old spoke for over a minute without notes, thanking the club and expressing his excitement about joining the Spanish giants. His speech, which included a shout of 'Hala Madrid', highlighted his desire

England football star Alexander-Arnold wows fans with fluent Spanish skills at Real Madrid unveiling

By Ben Pawlowski

to win titles and showcase his skills. British

footballers have long held a reputation for lacklustre language skills, with the likes of Gareth Bale, David Beckham and Michael Owen famously failing to get to grips with the local lingo. When asked by the press how long he had been learning Spanish, Alexander-Arnold replied: "A few months, a few months." The right-back joins Real from his boyhood club Liverpool where he made 354 appear-

ances in all competitions, scoring 27 goals and providing 96 assists.

Alexander-Arnold's contract had been due to run out at the end of June, but Los Blancos agreed a €10 million deal that allows the defender to join Xabi Alonso's squad ahead of this month's lucrative inaugural Club World Cup in the US. The Englishman was hailed as a star by Real Madrid's flamboyant president, Florentino Perez, who in his opening address said: "26-years-old, a legend in the game, and now he is joining our family."

"A player who has won everything. One of the best defenders and full-backs in world football who has played for one of the most important clubs in the world, Liverpool."

CARLOS Alcaraz has been taking a few days off in Ibiza to completely disconnect from tennis, after his gruelling French Open win. He was joined by his usual crew of friends, including Tottenham Hotspur footballer, Sergio Re-

Time to relax

guilon, who somehow managed to 'win' a Europa League winner's medal despite not being registered in the squad.

The 22-year-old tennis ace pulled off an unbelievable comeback against rival Jannik Sinner, recovering from two sets down and saving three championship points in a marathon final that lasted over five and a half hours.



MULLINS IT OVER

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE IN THE UK AND LIFE IN SPAIN, WRITES CHARLIE MULLINS

Spurs, sun, and crime

A year in Marbella, football farce, and the gangster plague hitting Spain

AS I'm sure you've all heard by now, I've officially embraced my role as a full-time expat resident in Marbella - and, I've got to say, it's been a year of bliss.

So, after a year of soaking up the sun and living the Spanish dream, I reckon I'm well within my rights to voice my opinion on what's going down in Spain - especially with the flood of Brit tourists descending for the next few months.

Is it too soon to start playing the classic NIMBY? Maybe, but when you can't even get a table at Cyrano in La Cala because tourists have snapped up every last booking, I think it's fair game to have a little moan. That's my whinge of the week. Now, let's get onto the serious (and slightly bizarre) matter of two English football clubs battling it out in the final of a major European competition - the UEFA League - in Bilbao.

On a positive note, I hear the Spanish authorities did a better job looking after the Manchester United and Tottenham fans than the French have in recent years.

A mate of mine - let's call him Jon, a diehard Spurs fan - went up for the match. Now, even though it was probably the most mind-numbing football match since the Greeks somehow dragged themselves across the finish line at the 2004 Euros, Jon came away as happy as Larry.

His beloved Spurs (currently languishing in 17th in the



DAMP SQUIB: The Europa League final

Premier League) managed to scrape past an equally uninspiring Manchester United (sitting at 16th) by the slimmest of margins - a 1-0 win.

Not exactly a classic, but hey, it was a European trophy, and that's something. Rumour has it the catering was top-notch, and unlike the usual dodgy trip back from White Hart Lane, the good folks of Bilbao weren't out there setting up ambushes for the 80,000-strong crowd of British fans.

Now, as an Arsenal fan, I can't help but wonder: What lessons, if any, will our traditional rivals over at Spurs take from their Bilbao adventure on May 21?

It seems to me Tottenham play a whole lot better when they're off British soil. Sure, they lost 22 matches in the Premier League, but somehow managed to trouser a major European title on the other side of the Channel.

Maybe, just maybe, Tottenham Hotspur might want to consider a US-style relocation?

After all, Malaga, who are affectionately known as Los Boquerones (the anchovies), don't have much of a winning legacy down here on the Costa del Sol. Sure, they bagged the 2002 Intertoto Cup, but that's about it.

So why not ditch the smelly fish team and bring a real bit of English football to the Costa del Sol? Spurs, it's a no-brainer!

Away from Jon's football obsession, though, there's another UK import we could all do without - and that's the gangster lifestyle that's currently giving Spain a bad reputation. Clearly British wrong 'uns feel like sunny Spain is a good place to do business, which seems to have created unwanted criminal competition.

Most recently, a couple of Scottish gangsters got gunned down outside a bar. Not a good look, and I wonder if the UK and Spanish police might be able to work together better to sort this problem out? That also makes sense!



BOOKED UP: Can not get a table because of tourists

Gered up



ATTRACTIONS: Queen Letizia and Richard Gere, pictured with Alejandra Silva

HOLLYWOOD royalty Richard Gere met the real thing when he bumped into Queen Letizia at a charity event in Madrid. Gere and Spanish wife Alejandra Gere moved to Madrid last year. They attended the closing ceremony for 'Euros de tu nómina' (Euros from your payroll) event.

The event, run by Banco Santander, has been on Queen Letizia's agenda for several years.

Both the Spanish Queen and Gere gave speeches at the event. Gere and Alejandra support the Spanish charity Hogar Sí, which works with the homeless. They met at a hotel in Positano, Italy in 2014, and married four years later.

They've spent most of their married life in the United States, but headed to Spain for 'its beauty, extraordinary food and generous people'.

The couple's Madrid home is in the ultra-exclusive La Moraleja neighbourhood, home to football stars and business magnates. In February, Gere was presented an International Goya award.

KING Felipe did a spot of flying over the Mar Menor in Murcia as the area hosted Spain's biggest aerobatic display.

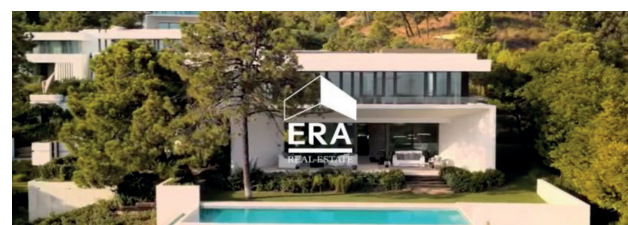
'Aire 25' featured the San Javier-based Patrulla Aguila (Eagle Patrol) team - the Spanish equivalent of the Red Arrows - which is celebrating its 40th anniversary.

King Felipe did his air training on the old C-101 display plane during his time at San Javier between 1987

The flying monarch

and 1988 and so could not resist trying out its replacement - the new Pilatus PC-21.

The head of state, dressed in a flight suit, boarded the Pilatus, accompanied by an instructor from the academy, Commander Guzman, in a trip lasting around 40 minutes.



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