



Briefs success

How Freddie Ljungberg scored for Calvin Klein

When, in 2003, Freddie Ljungberg got the call from Calvin Klein to front its worldwide underwear campaign, it was, the Arsenal midfielder claims, an offer he accepted with circumspection. The prospect of posing butt-naked bar some designer briefs for a Steven Klein shoot was, he says, more than a little daunting. As a man who plays football for a living, the idea of using his body to sell underwear was, he tells you with sincerity, well, *weird*. Embarrassing, even. "I had to spend a very long time thinking about it," he says. And when he tells you this, you believe him. You begin to empathise. Just for a moment you suspect that deep down this shy and genial man is just like you.

But, of course, Ljungberg is nothing like you. Not even remotely. Chances are your body doesn't look as though it has been sculpted from spray-tanned granite. And it's a fair guess your semi-naked likeness hasn't graced 50ft-high billboards in New York's Times Square and downtown Hong Kong.

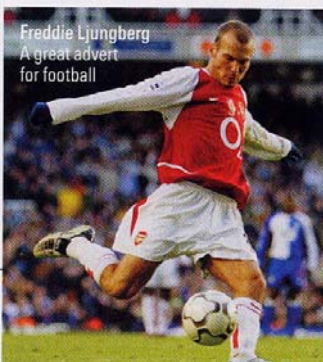
The thing about Ljungberg is everyone knows who he is. You know him because you've watched him play football for one of the world's best teams. But your girlfriend knows who he is because she fancies him and wishes you looked like he does when you strip to your boxers. The same goes for your gay friend at work. The same goes for you mother, for Christ's sake. Girls love him, gay men love him, and straight men don't know whether to hate him or love him despite themselves. And all this is down to Calvin Klein. So don't be too won over by the coy schtick.

Still, you can understand where he's coming from. At first, Ljungberg might have seemed an unconventional choice to front a worldwide ad campaign as high profile and iconic as Calvin Klein underwear. While he has made a name for himself in England playing for Arsenal since 1998 and is revered in

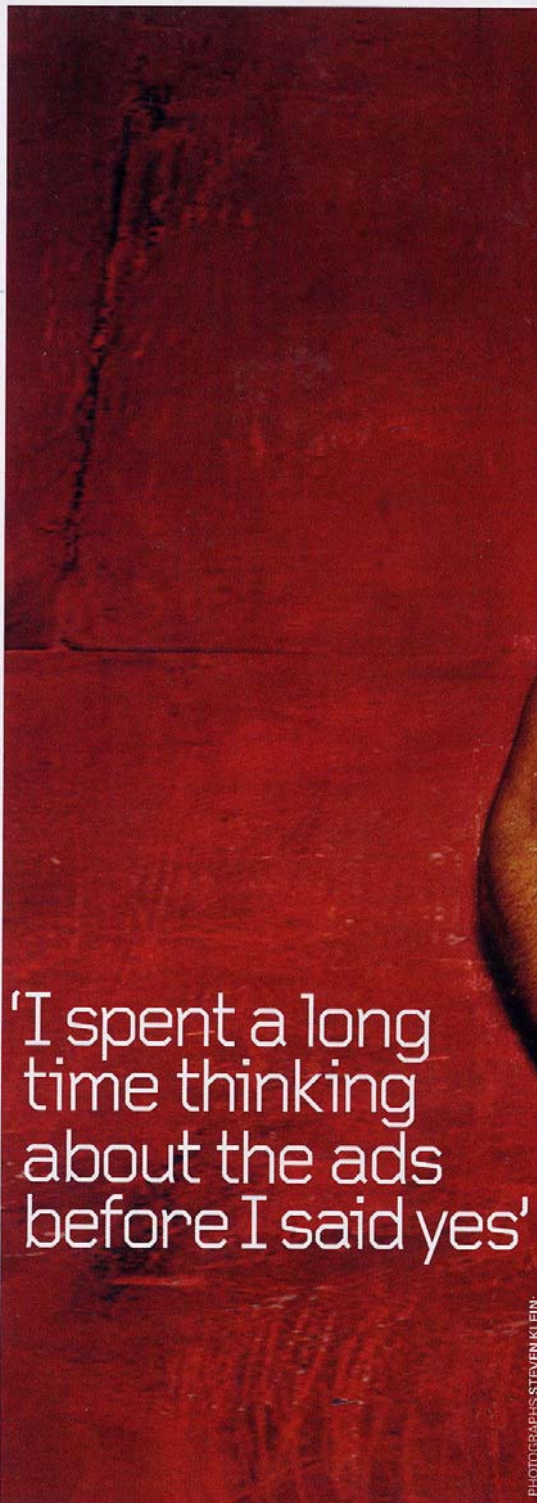
the Sweden team, America's indifference to "soccer" meant Ljungberg was unknown there before the ads. But according to Kim Vernon, Calvin Klein's senior vice-president of global advertising and marketing, this is irrelevant. "Freddie has been incredible and we knew he would. He's athletic, he's got sex, energy, personality, edginess. And people love the ads all over the world. So what if no one knew him in the States before this? No one knew who Travis [Fimmel, former CK model] was either, but they do now."

Ad industry consensus says the Ljungberg campaign has been one of Calvin Klein's most successful. Successful enough for it to repeat the formula with these new Steven Klein-shot images. Meanwhile, America has caught Ljungberg fever. "I did a promotional thing in San Francisco, and I was worried no one would turn up," he says. "But there were loads of people there, people with Arsenal shirts, Sweden flags." For Vernon, his success is no surprise. "He's charming, he's elegant and not at all arrogant. Plus, he's incredibly good looking and has an amazing body. You have to remember around 80 per cent of people who buy Calvin Klein underwear are women. And a lot of women like what they see in Freddie. He is fantastic."

So, everyone loves Freddie Ljungberg: Arsène Wenger, Calvin Klein and, lest we forget, your girlfriend. Hating him would be too easy. But truth be told – and it's almost painful to say this – it couldn't have happened to a nicer man. TW

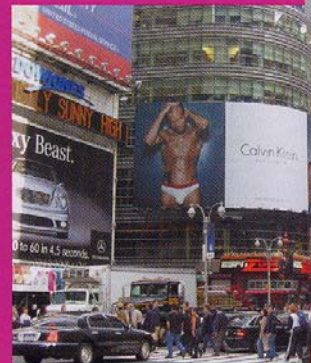
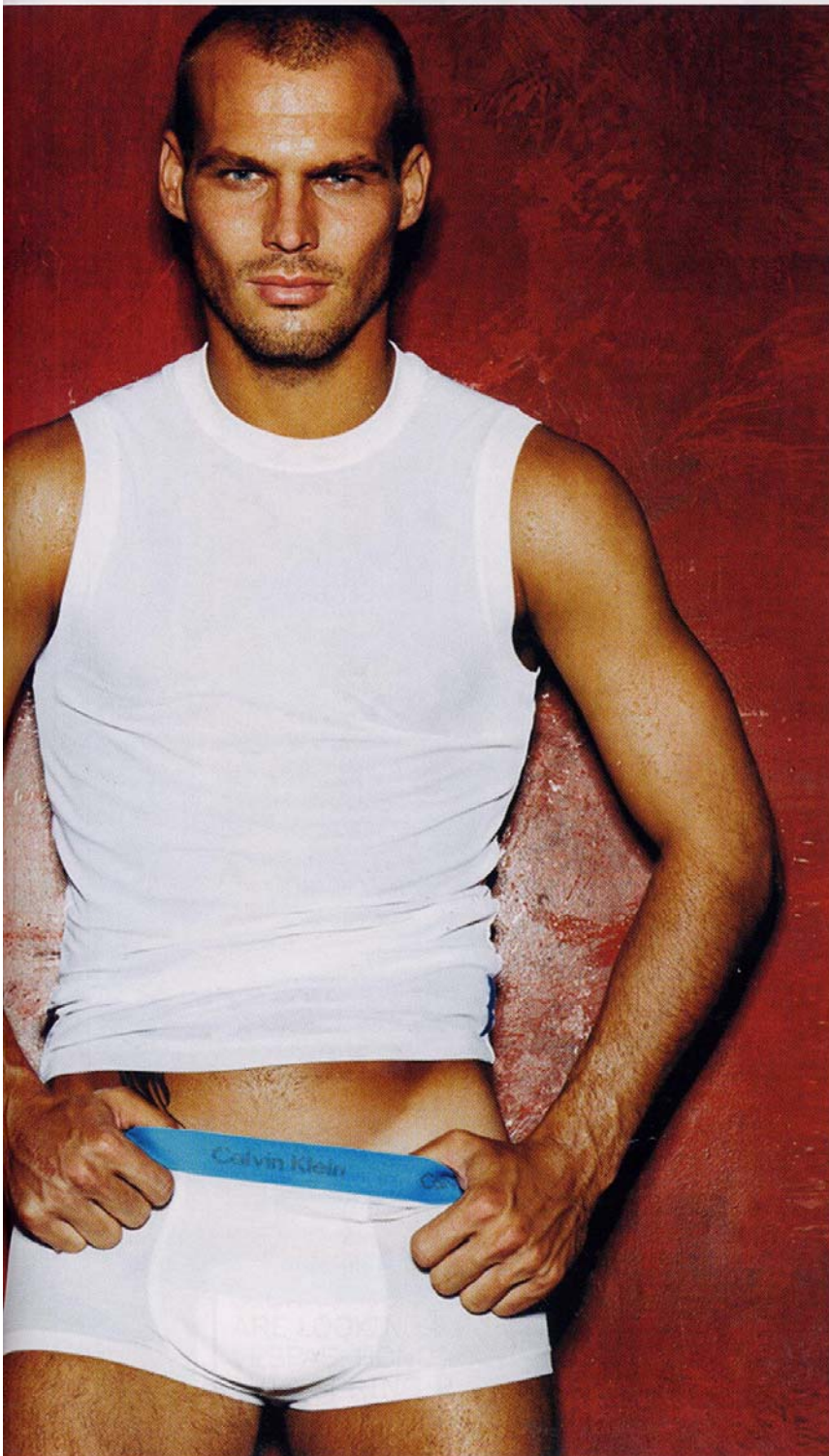


Freddie Ljungberg
A great advert
for football



'I spent a long time thinking about the ads before I said yes'

PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVEN KLEIN



CALVIN KLEIN: A SMALLS WORLD

TOM HINTNAUS 1982 >>>

Bruce Weber gave us its first glimpse of the signature Calvin Klein tight-whities when he shot American pole-vaulter Tom Hintnaus on the Greek island of Santorini.



Calvin Klein Underwear

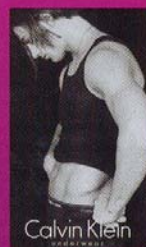


MICHAEL BERGIN 1994 >>>

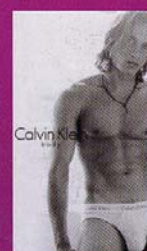
Best known as the model who succeeded Mark Wahlberg, Michael Bergin donned the trunks as Calvin Klein adverts were reaching their peak of exposure and expectation.

MARK WAHLBERG AND KATE MOSS <<<1992

"Marky" Mark Wahlberg's rap career was in full effect in 1992 and his Calvin Klein TV ad featured his own "Good Vibrations" single on the soundtrack.



Calvin Klein Underwear



TRAVIS FIMMEL <<<2004

Travis Fimmel arrived in LA with \$60 and a dream. He went to LA Models and soon found himself on billboards worldwide. He has since appeared on TV as Tarzan.

HOW I GOT MY BODY >>>

Name Freddie Ljungberg

Age 27

Height 5'9"

Occupation Footballer;
Calvin Klein model

"I'm the type who can eat whatever he wants and not get fat, but still, being in shape just comes with the territory of a professional sportsman. I played a lot of sport when I was younger, and the training and diet at Arsenal means that we can't help but be very fit. I like the ball skills and work on the training pitch, but I absolutely hate the gym, and certainly don't do more than I have to. Luckily we only spend about an hour a fortnight in the gym, apart from pre-season when we're working out all the time. People assume I do a lot of sit-ups, but it's really not that many. We do some upper-body work, medicine ball stuff for stability, but no real weights. When you're playing twice a week there's not much room for anything else too strenuous."

THE FREDDIE LJUNGBERG PRESCRIPTION

The work-out Running, football and circuits daily. Gym work infrequently (apparently).

The diet As many carbs as possible, fish and chicken, the occasional glass of wine and "lots of Coca-Cola".

