

Tips from the top **Bananarama**

80's pop stars Sara Dallin and Keren Woodward, both 48, share their thoughts on friendship, fame and fortune



Sometimes you need to be apart to grow

Keren: It was only when I moved to Cornwall with Andrew [her partner, ex-Wham star Andrew Ridgeley] that I really developed as an individual. Sara and I have been friends since we were four, and had lived in each other's pockets all our lives. But when I come up to London, now, I still stay at Sara's. I have my own room which she's just spruced up for me – I've got a new carpet and a new bed!

Fame isn't the be all and end all

Sara: I can think of nothing worse than just being famous for being famous. If you don't have some actual skill, what's the point? I don't see the gratification in that.

Women understand one other

Keren: Early on, we had a man managing us, but when Hillary Shaw, who now manages Girls Aloud, took over it was so much easier. There was an understanding



between us. She realised when we said we didn't like certain clothes we weren't just being awkward. Hills has been a lifesaver – particularly in Sara's case because she's so tactless! We were very immature when Bananarama started.

Don't let others dictate your look

Sara: My worst nightmare was when we'd do a photoshoot for one of the tabloids and they'd supply a rack of clothes for us to wear. I was quite shy and awkward so when they asked me to put a hideous candy striped top on with a bow, I felt I couldn't refuse. There's a hideous photo of me wearing it and looking so uncomfortable. We also did a Smash Hits cover just wearing bath towels and holding up a rubber ring. Why?!

Staying active is better than any diet

Sara: I can cut things out, such as cakes and crisps, but I couldn't do a boiled egg for breakfast and something steamed for lunch. Diets just make you miserable and then you end up stuffing yourself. Instead, I've always been sporty. The only concession I've made to dieting is to eat off smaller plates.

There are no rules for being a mum

Keren: I didn't have time to cope with motherhood when I had my son Tom. I was 25, our single Venus was number one in America, and I was back and forth to the States the whole time I was pregnant. Tom came with us to Japan and Italy when he was a baby. He's 20 now, works in TV production and we're really close. My only regret is that I only had one – if I'd been in a stable relationship I'd have liked to have two kids close together.

You don't need to be flash with money

Sara: When we first started making money, Keren, Siobhan [original band member Siobhan Fahey] and I bought houses next to each other and a Mini each. We used to change our car every two years. Now I think what's the point in that? We've never bought a lot of handbags or shoes. We had a period of buying a lot of designer clothes by Yohji Yamamoto and Comme des Garçons. Now I look back and think 'What a complete waste of money!' My 18-year old daughter Alice wears some of my 80s outfits, but the beauty of fashion these days is that high-street copies are so accessible.

Soulmates are hard to find

Sara: We'd never listen to each other about men. And we've never gone for guys with money – which I regret now! I found my soulmate in Bassey, Alice's dad, and although we're not together any more, we're still friends. But I'm still dating – mostly idiots!

Age is just a number

Sara: As I approach 50 I realise that age doesn't matter. People used to say about Bananarama, 'They're pushing 30 now', as if it was time for us to retire. So age landmarks really don't mean anything at all.

■ **Bananarama's album Viva Bananarama is out now on Fascination Records**



ABOVE: Bananarama in the '80s (left to right, Siobhan, Sara and Keren) ABOVE RIGHT: Keren with Andrew