



WTA Family Circle Cup

Q&A WITH NADIA PETROVA

The Russian veteran plans a breakthrough

BY CHRIS ODDO

Moscow-Florida Living

You were born in Moscow but live in South Florida. Do you return to Moscow often?

I probably visit three times a year to see my parents, but right now I'm working on my Florida house, so as soon as it is finished I will have my parents coming over to spend time with me, especially in the winter months.

When you are in Florida, what do you still miss about Moscow?

What I miss the most is summer months, going out in nature, swimming in the lakes, barbecues, picking berries and mushrooms. And of course my mom's home cooking.

Russia makes me think of novelists like Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. Do you like their works?

My favorite so far is War and Peace.

Olympic Games

How has Russia developed such strong women tennis players?

It's a tough question. I think it's just the hard environment that we grew up in. We all wanted to have a better life, and we saw a great possibility in sport overall. Tennis was still kind of new, and there was a huge wave of new players at the same time, so there was huge competition. The competition helped a lot because we all wanted to be on the Fed Cup team, the Olympic team and also be the No. 1 Russian player.

Alisa Kleybanova said that the Olympics are maybe more important to her than a Slam. Are you gunning for the 2012 Olympics?

I would still prefer to win a Slam, but the Olympics are only every four years. This is something that is very personal for each Russian player. It means a lot to win Olympics because then you are kind of set for life in the country.

Do you have a goal to play in the 2012 Games?

I'm looking forward to them. It's going to be tough in singles. I'm working to bring my ranking back, and if it's not going to be possible in singles, I think I have a pretty good shot at doubles.

Grand Slam Desire

Do you still feel that same competitive spirit or has it diminished?

Of course over the years it has diminished a little bit.

Do you know that there are currently only five active players with more wins than you?

I actually don't think about it at all. I take it one match at a time because you know tennis has become so tough, the first round might be as tough as the final so you really have to dig in. I don't keep a count of matches, head-to-head with other players. I just really try to work on court and focus on winning.

So you leave the counting up to your fans and the media?

Exactly.

Reflecting on 2011, Francesca Schiavone and Li Na won their first Grand Slam at the age you are right now, 29. What has changed on the Tour that has helped the older more mature players have success?

The mature players have so much experience. They know how to deal with days when things aren't going their way; they know how to keep their heads cool.

You've had a great career. What more do you want to accomplish?

I'm quite happy with my results, with my ranking. I've maintained a pretty consistent spot in the top 20. The only thing that I'm missing, and I really dream to achieve before I retire the sport, is to win a Slam.

So, is winning a Slam is your main goal for the next couple of years?

Yes, that's exactly what I'm working on right now.

AT-A-GLANCE ▾

NAME | Nadia Petrova [RUS]

DOB | June 8, 1982

Birthplace | Moscow, Russia

Currently Resides | Miami, FL

Height | 5'10 1/4"

Turned Pro | 1999

Plays | Right-handed [two-handed backhand]

Career-High Singles & Doubles
3 [5/15/06] & 3 [3/22/05]

Current Ranking Singles & Doubles | 31 & 29

Style + Signature Shot
Aggressive, all court

Favorite Surface | Hardcourt, clay

Titles Singles & Doubles | 10 & 19