



# *A Day with Maria Sharapova*

*Maria Sharapova is a native of Russia who lives in the United States.  
At a photography session with the 911 in California, we talked with the world tennis star  
about home, Porsche, and top performance in sports.*

**Interview by** Viktoria Wohlrapp **Photos by** Axel Koester

Maria Sharapova at the wheel of a 911 Carrera 4S Cabriolet in Los Angeles



**Ms. Sharapova, what would you say is American about you?**

I really enjoy the convenience of everyday life in the United States. Everything is easier and more accessible. I enjoy the American lifestyle.

**Why did you choose the United States as your main place of residence?**

Because my father and I were convinced that it offered the best training opportunities for my tennis career. We saw how many famous athletes have come from the United States, and also that many athletes from abroad trained here successfully.

**And what would you say is still Russian about you?**

A lot! You never lose your roots. Even though I now live in the United States, my formative childhood years were in Russia. The culture, the society, the language—you really absorb all of that in the first few years of your life.

**How does the Russian part of you show?**

Probably in my realistic mentality. Of course I have goals and dreams, but I have a very clear view of my chances and possibilities. That is very Russian.

**You'll be acting as an ambassador for the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi.**

It's an incredible opportunity for me to give something back to my country. Sochi is beautiful, and people should experience that. This city on the coast of the Black Sea is wonderful, and it's just an hour away from the Caucasus Mountains, one of the most beautiful mountainous regions in the world.

**What should tourists make sure to see there?**

The city's parks and its spectacular beaches. A lot of open-air concerts are held there. It's beautiful to hear the sea and listen to good music at the same time.

**That sounds marvelous. By the way, in what language do you dream?**

I dream in both, English and Russian.

**What does "homeland" mean to you?**

"Homeland" is where you feel at home, but it also has a domestic side. I'm constantly trav-

*"Making films is a refreshing break from my everyday life of working nonstop to be the best tennis player in the world."*



The model, the 911, and the photographer: Setting the scene in Los Angeles

eling, so I have to feel at home in many different surroundings. What's crucial, however, is that I feel at home in my heart.

**And your actual physical home?**

My house is very important to me, precisely because I travel so much. I think if you always live at home, it's easy to forget how lovely that is—the little things you really appreciate, familiar places and routines. Coming back from a long trip makes you realize how nice it is to be home.

**Could you imagine living a life far removed from the spotlight?**

Yes, I can. But I don't know if I'll ever have that (*laughs*). Let's put it like this: I enjoy

relaxing and spending time with myself. But I'm always around people, which I'm not always in the mood for. It's also important for me to set my own schedule.

**Right now you're involved in work on films for Porsche here in Los Angeles. Do you like being in the limelight?**

I enjoy having different experiences. It's a

refreshing break to make films, because it's so different from my everyday life of practice and working nonstop to be the best tennis player in the world.

**But what is it like on the tennis court—wouldn't you prefer to just play without the cameras capturing every detail?**

It's just part of it for me to be observed. People are evidently interested in my movements and my appearance. I had to get used to that quickly.

**Are there any photos out there that you can't stand?**

Not many. When I'm in a private setting and unaware that someone has their camera

Maria Sharapova likes fast cars; as she puts it, the 911 is a passion for her



trained on me, well, that can be unpleasant. I was even photographed in a bikini on a beach with friends.

#### Yes, the paparazzi ...

Fortunately, that doesn't happen very often. I think everyone has to do their job, and the photographers have theirs, too. You just have to accept that.



Having the sea in the background means a lot to Sharapova: "Wherever there's water, I feel comfortable"

#### Do you have favorite photos?

I love black-and-white photography, and I also like portraits and shots of people not looking directly at the camera. That makes them more natural, more realistic.

#### What types of settings produce the best pictures?

The sea! Wherever there's water, I always feel comfortable. The sea makes me feel like I can run around and splash in the water like a child. And you can see this delight in the picture of course.

#### Can a car be a star too?

Yes, absolutely. The car is often the first thing that people see when you're driving. That's why some people choose a certain

car. To them it represents a certain personality or a certain look. A Porsche is a visible statement of taste and individuality.

#### You're a Porsche driver yourself—what fascinates you about the 911?

It's terrific fun to drive a 911. It embodies power and emotion—and it's just very, very

fast. I've always liked fast cars, and have a passion for my 911s.

#### Some people even find cars sexy.

That's easy to understand. The Porsche 911 Turbo S, for example, is definitely sexy.

#### Let's talk about sports. What do you do to put in top-level performances time and time again?

It doesn't happen overnight. It requires years of hard work to be able to do your best on demand. You also have to go through a learning process to be conscious of all the hours of practice you've put in, which enables you to believe in your ability. This self-confidence is essential for bringing everything out at the right moment.

#### For that you need technique, fitness, and strength of mind. Which is the most important?

All three of them are key factors. Technique and fitness are always fundamental. But sometimes your mentality makes the crucial difference in victory or defeat. There are times when it's not a matter of being the fastest or the most talented, but rather having the strongest mentality. In long matches, especially, you have to be tougher in the end than your opponent, and want to win more than she does.

#### A huge amount of self-sacrifice is needed to achieve that.

I practice six days a week, with about four hours a day on the court and usually another hour in the fitness room. And I also devote a lot of time to physiotherapy treatments, all the more so if injuries are involved. I constantly have to take care of my shoulder, for example.

#### How do you care for your body so that you can put in top performances at fifteen tournaments a year?

It's absolutely essential to stay healthy. That's true for everyone, of course, but professional athletes are probably even more aware of this. You need to avoid injuries and always do the right thing. Over the years I've learned what's good for my body and the best way to prepare for tournaments. Nothing compares to experience. In addition to lots of practice and physiotherapy, nutrition plays a big role. And, not to forget, enjoying life! ●

#### Maria Sharapova

was born on April 19, 1987, in the western Siberian town of Nyagan. She moved to Bradenton in Florida at the age of seven, and enrolled two years later at Nick Bollettieri's Tennis Academy there. A top-ten player, Sharapova has already won all four Grand Slam tournaments (Wimbledon, US Open, Australian Open, French Open), and she also took top honors at the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix in 2012 and 2013.