

## Maria Sharapova

### Sony Ericsson Global Brand Ambassador

The 2004 Wimbledon champion, the first Russian female to ever claim the #1 ranking in the world, the fifth youngest female to ever hold the #1 spot and a growing list of corporate endorsements - Maria symbolises what hard work, world-class training and unwavering commitment can achieve: a front-row seat on the world's stage.

In March 1993, six year-old Maria and Yuri arrived uninvited at IMG's Nick Bollettieri Tennis Academy in Bradenton, Florida. Although the Academy's coaches immediately recognised Maria's talent, she was too young to be enrolled as a full-time student. Yet Yuri was not discouraged. Believing in his daughter's talent, he settled in nearby Venice and coached Maria on public and private tennis courts.

In December 1996, perseverance paid off - Maria received a scholarship to the Academy and became a full-time student. The nine-year-old lived on the prestigious campus for seven months, seeing her father only on weekends.

In November 2000, 13-year-old Maria exploded onto the world tennis stage with an impressive win in the Girls' 16-and-under Eddie Herr Championships. Her first professional tournament quickly followed in April 2001 and her first WTA tournament in 2002. In a highly competitive sport where many try but few succeed, Maria Sharapova's drive and determination will inspire young girls for years to come.

Maria's hard work on the court has focused her interest off the court in fashion and lifestyle. In many interviews Maria has confirmed her interest in the creations by New York fashion supremo Marc Jacobs. While her recent relationship with Tiffany & Co further confirm her as one of the leading ladies not just in the sporting world, but also the lifestyle and fashion world. Relationships that confirm Maria Sharapova as a perfect fit with Sony Ericsson.

Maria has commented on her work with Sony Ericsson, saying: "Sony Ericsson have given me the chance to explore design – not many people know that if I was not a tennis player I would have loved to be a designer. I really enjoy working with the

Sony Ericsson design team on phones and accessories, like the Maria Sharapova Design Collection launched last year. It's also great to be involved in fashion projects with Sony Ericsson like this year's partnership with London College of Fashion."