

Holding Court

Tennis ace **Martina Navratilova** volleys questions

and answers with **Lauren Paige Kennedy**.

Martina, what inspired you to write *Shape Your Self*, your new fitness-and-nutrition book? My fans! They have been asking me for years how I stay in such good shape. Instead of answering them one by one, I finally decided to write the book.

In it you frequently discuss your childhood idol, Billie Jean King. How did she influence you?

More than anything else, she taught me that it's okay to speak out for what you believe in. She helped me with my game, both technically with my strokes and with the mental side of tennis.

Has there ever been a time in your life when you ate poorly, or felt out of shape?

I never ate poorly, but after I had retired from singles in 1994 I was just not working out as much, and I started feeling tired and out of shape. My fluctuating weight and sluggishness was the motivation to get myself back into shape. That led to my "comeback" in 2000 and a few more Grand Slam titles.

What is your response to: "I'm too busy to work out!"

I say, "Are you TOO busy to be healthy?" Seriously, there is always time to carve out for exercise and always time to think about what you eat before you eat it.

You are nearly 50. How old do you feel?

Some would say I'm about 12 years old, mentally! I actually probably feel like I am in my early 30s.

With 168 singles titles and 175 doubles titles, where do you keep all those trophies?

Most tournaments didn't give trophies, so I don't have as many as you think. We don't get to keep the big ones from Wimbledon—they give us small replicas to keep, and the Australian Open did not even give replicas until the late '80s. Most of my Grand Slam trophies (I have 58 of those) are at the International Tennis Hall of Fame in Newport, R.I.

You still play competitive doubles. Did you stop playing singles because you didn't want to embarrass the kids?

I didn't want to embarrass them—and they do not want to embarrass me! I do have to make some concessions to age—I did win a singles match at Wimbledon in 2004 at the age of 47, but the hard courts are [getting] too tough on my body for singles at this point.

Whom among the "kids" do you admire? Sharapova? The Williams sisters?

I would pay to watch Martina Hingis (she is attempting a comeback this year), Justine Henin-Hardenne, Kim Clijsters and Roger Federer.

If you couldn't play tennis, would you still be an athlete?

Is the Pope Catholic?! I definitely would have been involved, hopefully professionally, in another sport. As it is now, when I have a chance I snowboard, ski, play basketball, mountain bike, hike, ride horses . . .

Washington is a big tennis town. Will your book tour stop here?

I love D.C., and I know it's a big tennis town, so if I have anything to say about it, we will be making a stop there. My schedule is being worked on right now—so stay tuned.