

**W**hen the photographs of Naomi Campbell kissing the Russian billionaire Vladislav Doronin first appeared in the newspapers last month, their mutual obsession with secrecy went into overdrive. They had met at the Cannes Film Festival in May and were conducting a clandestine relationship, even though neither was married. 'It's not a simple coincidence that there is no information on the internet,' said the businessman's chief spokeswoman in Moscow. 'He is not a public person and does not want anything to appear there [on the web]. We don't reveal any information about him either.'

The spokeswoman was unaware that paparazzi pictures of the couple had already been published and still denied the relationship. 'It's just a rumour,' she told a journalist in Moscow. 'He's not dating Naomi Campbell. There is nothing surprising in the fact that an unmarried man has beautiful girls among his friends.' Then, after being shown the photographs, the beleaguered spin doctor claimed that her earlier denial was 'not an official comment' and requested that her earlier denial should not be used – even her denial should be kept secret.

Paranoia and a desire for privacy are essential personality traits of the modern Russian billionaire. After all, these men often have a lot of secrets to hide. The pursuit of unlimited wealth, luxury living, security and a passion for litigation are other characteristics they share. The oligarch – and Doronin is no exception – can be loyal, unselfish, hospitable, passionate, intelligent and charismatic, but also demanding, hypersensitive, impatient, aggressive and prone to volcanic bouts of temper with little provocation. And they have an overriding fear they may lose everything they've worked for.

When Campbell throws a telephone across a hotel room, beats her assistant around the head with her BlackBerry, assaults her secretary and flies into uncontrollable rages, she could easily be channelling a typical powerful Russian oligarch at his worst. And when she sues newspapers over libel and invasion of privacy, that is uncannily similar to the way wealthy Russians react to criticism or mockery.

That is why the 38-year-old is fast developing a love affair with Russia and the Russian people. And the affection is reciprocated: the supermodel is constantly voted one of the most admired and beautiful women by Russians, and has twice appeared on the cover of →

Goffint.com. Getty Images. © Olga Tobreluts



# TO RUSSIA WITH LOVE

Only a ruthless, muscle-bound billionaire from Moscow is man enough to take on our most temperamental supermodel. But who is Vladislav Doronin? **Mark Hollingsworth** on an epic romance of silk sheets, yachts, jets and a strangely serene Naomi Campbell

**On Capital Hill:** Zaha Hadid's design for Vladislav Doronin's Moscow home







Clockwise from far left: Naomi and Vladislav arrive at Nelson Mandela's 90th birthday dinner in London in June; aboard a yacht in Sardinia earlier this month; Naomi as a Renaissance noblewoman as envisaged by artist Olga Tobreluts







**Campbell's crew**, from left: the PM's environment adviser Johan Eliasch; Naomi with former boyfriend Badr Jafar in 2006, both Eliasch and Jafar partied on Doronin's yacht; controversial Chechen businessman Umar Dzhabrailov who socialises with Campbell and Doronin

Russian *Vogue*. No wonder the supermodel is so attracted to Doronin, the intense, muscular property magnate who has been called Moscow's Donald Trump – a towering ego but without the lust for self-promotion.

**B**ut in Campbell's current relationship with Doronin everything is sweetness and tenderness. When the tycoon invited her to a rowdy all-night dinner party on his yacht *Lady in Blue* off St Tropez, her friends were amazed by her serenity. Wearing a black string bikini, the statuesque supermodel introduced him to 12 of her closest friends and showered him with kisses and hugs. 'She said it was love at first sight, and he is completely in love with her,' said one of the guests, Brazilian writer Bruno Astuto. 'Watching them looking into each other's eyes, it was obvious that this is a very serious affair. He thinks that she is a goddess, and Naomi believes that she has finally found the right man. She is now planning a really big party for Vlad when we hope they will announce their engagement. Vlad is like Naomi in that he likes to have fun. But he is also a very gentle, calm person and that makes Naomi calm.'

The other guests on the yacht included Johan Eliasch, the wealthy environment adviser to Gordon Brown, and one of Campbell's former suitors, Dubai playboy Badr Jafar. Other former lovers of hers include motor-racing boss Flavio Briatore and U2 bass guitarist Adam Clayton. But her friends say that at long last she has found contentment.

After the cruise on the Côte d'Azur, the scene shifted east. Campbell secretly flew to Moscow in a private jet provided by Doronin and landed at Vnukovo-3 airport, usually reserved for senior government officials. On arrival, she demanded total confidentiality from staff and security. She was greeted by Doronin and they checked into the £10,000-a-night presidential suite on the 11th floor of the Ritz-Carlton hotel.

'He thinks she is a goddess and Naomi thinks she has finally found the right man'

At noon the next day Campbell went to the bar and ordered the most expensive cocktail, before disappearing into the city. Doronin drank lightly, but his companion drank heavily. The supermodel returned to the hotel to change before meeting friends, including controversial Chechen businessman Umar Dzhabrailov, pop star Zhanna Friske and Russian *Vogue* editor Alyona Doletskaya, for dinner at Shatush restaurant.

During the meal Campbell complained loudly about the 'hardship' of being in the public eye and the 'pressures' of modelling, according to fellow guests. 'They had a table for ten but were surprised it was not in the VIP area,' said one waiter. 'They demanded that we turn down the lights in the restaurant so they could have romantic candles. They also ate and drank the most expensive stuff on the menu. The bill was around £1,700 in the end.'

Despite her boisterously good mood, controversy is never far away from Campbell. On her departure from the Ritz-Carlton, cleaners found holes burnt in the silk sheets in her suite by cigarettes or candles. She was asked to pay a £200 bill by the

management. Campbell denied causing the damage and flatly refused to pay. She later sent a message saying that the hotel was 'being ridiculous'.

Like Campbell, Doronin, 45, is now at the stage in his life where he has made a lot of money and is ready to have some fun. So who is this broody billionaire? He was born in 1962 and educated in St Petersburg – home city of Russia's former and current presidents Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev – and first made his money as a raw cotton distributor in the former Soviet republics of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

In 1993, Doronin set up Capital Group, a Moscow-based property company, and specialised in 'luxury-design property projects'. These included grandiose 100-apartment high-rises, 'Yacht City' (a development on Moscow river), Imperial House (a Moscow office block) and elite housing at Barvikha Hills, in pine forests near the capital. Mindful of the importance of politics to his business, he is close to the mayor Yury Luzhkov and his wife Elena Baturina, the wealthiest woman in Russia. Doronin's big break came in 1999 when he →

**The Doronin crowd**, from left: Moscow mayor Yury Luzhkov and his wife Elena Baturina; Vladislav Doronin with former girlfriend Karen Schonbahler in 2006





charmed Italian designer Valentino into making him his business partner in Russia.

Doronin has hired some of the best architects in the world and knows Lord Foster of Thames Bank. But he fell out with top Dutch architects Erick van Egeraat, and Capital Group was ordered to pay £1.4 million over the unauthorised use of van Egeraat's design for two Moscow skyscrapers. The architects accused Doronin's company of illegally promoting itself by using a 2004 design it commissioned from them for an imposing pair of cube-like high-rise towers and handing over the designs to a rival to complete. 'To use other people's nice pictures and graphics to advertise your company without the owner's consent is not good for the economy and not good for the country,' said van Egeraat.

Now one of the top ten wealthiest construction tycoons in Russia, Doronin has accumulated a £1.5 billion fortune. His current project is Moscow City, a spectacular Canary Wharf-style development that is helping transform the city. He has also commissioned a bizarre, futuristic, Bond-villain-type house called Capital Hill designed by British architect Zaha Hadid.

According to *Real Estate Catalog*, 'The most striking feature of the design is its substantial volume, rearing up 22 metres above the ground on three sharply raked legs, that looks like it could be the bridge of a ship or even a spacecraft. In fact, it contains the master bedrooms and a lounge with exterior terrace.'

Doronin is intense, focused and driven, and his staff seem slightly scared of him. But he now appears ready to settle down. He has long been Moscow's most eligible bachelor and dated Swedish model Karen Schonbähler for some time. But sources close to him say that he is infatuated with Campbell. Together they attended the recent London dinner to celebrate Nelson Mandela's

90th birthday. 'Vlad (Doronin) started to bid for a bronze mould of Mandela's hand in the auction conducted by Will Smith,' recalled her friend Astuto. 'He wanted to give it to Naomi, but she quietly told him to stop when the bidding reached £1.7 million. She told him that she would prefer him to give the money direct to Mandela's charity.' He has yet to do so.

The supermodel has been visiting Russia since the mid-Nineties and has always been popular there. In 1999 she was listed 57th in a poll of the most beautiful women of the 20th century.

She was the fourth British woman on the list, beaten by Elizabeth Taylor, Samantha Fox and Audrey Hepburn (25th, 53rd and 56th respectively). That year she also featured among the gaudy works of Russian artist Olga Tobreluts, who portrayed the supermodel on canvas as a Renaissance noblewoman. The painting was exhibited at Liverpool Tate. And in 2001 she modelled in the Kremlin for Nikita Kondrushenko, manager of the Versace boutique in St Petersburg.

Apart from Russian men, Campbell loves the Moscow nightlife. She is addicted to Japanese food and once went to the Sumosan restaurant in the Radisson Slavyanskaya hotel five times in three days. At night she frequents Moscow's Diaghilev Project nightclub, which a *New York Times* reporter once described thus: 'This re-created belle époque fantasy world is where international celebrities, corporate heavies and Moscow's self-appointed beautiful people chug 500-ruble mojitos and \$1,000 bottles of Cristal Champagne. Crowds gyrate on the banquettes of the \$1,000-a-night tables and ricochet around the \$20,000 VIP boxes like superheated, champagne-fuelled molecules.'

In November 2005, she was among the guests attending a three-day party in St Petersburg organised by Richard Caring, now the owner of Annabel's and Harry's Bar. Parties were held at the Yusupov Palace (where Rasputin was murdered) and the Catherine Palace outside St Petersburg. The 450 guests were dressed as Napoleonic aristocrats, and many of the costumes were valuable antiques, loaned by the city's Hermitage Museum. On her return from St Petersburg, Campbell was ecstatic about the opulence: 'Catherine the Great. Her carriages freaked me out,' she said. 'Diamonds in the doorknobs and in the spokes of the wheels.'

Campbell also appears to be fascinated by the sinister, dangerous seedy underbelly of Moscow. For the past decade she has been linked with another Russian multimillionaire, Umar Dzhabrailov, although they have always maintained they were only friends. Dzhabrailov is a Chechen property tycoon. His estimated fortune is £820 million, and he is believed to be the real-life model for the ruthless Chechen godfather in Frederick Forsyth's novel *Icon*. Dzhabrailov's entry visa to the US was revoked some weeks after an American business associate was shot in Moscow.

Like her beloved Russian tycoons, Campbell is motivated by wealth accumulation, though her fortune is currently estimated at merely between £20 million and £30 million – peanuts by Russian standards. The Design House of Naomi Campbell, which has produced several perfumes, has been hugely profitable, although her advisers claim that she is increasingly working for and giving money to charities.

Since she met Doronin, Campbell has managed to stay out of trouble. Her last brush with the law – when she assaulted and threatened a police officer and abused British Airways cabin crew – was a month before their first encounter in Cannes. Could it be that the Russian bear has tamed the tempestuous Campbell? An intriguing aspect of her relationship with Doronin, a more calculating character, is whether his calming influence will finally teach her self-control. It could be that Campbell's goal of security and happiness lies in the boulevards of Moscow and St Petersburg. ■



**Doronin's Moscow:** Imperial House office block (above left) and Moscow City (above right), a business development he hopes will transform the Russian capital

Campbell is ecstatic about Russian opulence: 'Catherine the Great. Her carriages freaked me out. Diamonds in the doorknobs and the wheels'



**The hand of Mandela:** the bronze Doronin unsuccessfully bid £1.7 million for to give to Naomi