

'DADDY ASKED WHAT I WANTED FOR MY BIRTHDAY.

'I said a fashion line...'

She's 19 and enjoys a family fortune of £600 million. Meet **Kira Plastinina** (right), Russia's most fashion-tastic 'minigarch'. *Grazia* talks to the heiress and designer about bling, best mates (think Georgia May Jagger) and why she hid her £1,000 micro pig in the closet. . .

WORDS: JENNI MARSH

KIRA PLASTININA **ISTELLING ME** about her past 24 hours. 'It's been crazy,' giggles the 19-year-old, who is currently at a lavish party for her fashion line in Moscow's achingly cool Red October district. The day before, the teen tsar-ista had handed in her university assignment in Dallas,

Texas, and boarded a first-class flight to Moscow. There, a car was waiting to whisk her away for cocktails and caviar with the editor of Russia's *Harper's Bazaar*.

Today, she was up at 6am brainstorming designs for her self-titled fashion house, spent lunchtime modelling for a photo shoot, before

inviting 'my Russian A-list friends' to celebrate five years of the House of Plastinina. Then she's boarding a jet to New York Fashion Week to preview her new collection and hit the town with Georgia May Jagger.

Welcome to the opulent, excessive and privileged life of one of Russia's most famous 'minigarchs' (child of an oligarch). While most of the world sinks into economic decline, *Forbes* magazine calculates that Russia now has a record 114 billionaires. And Moscow is now the most billionaire-dense city in the world.

Take 22-year-old student Ekaterina Rybolovleva, who made headlines around the world last year when her dad bought her the most expensive apartment in New York. For a cool \$88 million. And Roman Abramovich bought a £4 million 'starter home' in Belgravia for his 19-year-old daughter, Anna.

So what does Kira make of her minigarch status? 'I've never even heard that word,' she ▶



says dismissively. 'I'm just Kira the designer. I've never felt spoiled. I work hard and I know the value of money. I feel sorry for people affected by the credit crunch. But it's not something I ever talk or think about.'

Well, she has no need to... Kira's father made more than \$600 million from his soft drinks company. Surrounded by such incredible wealth when she was growing up, the young Plastinina wanted to be a princess. 'Princesses always rode horses in fairy tales, so my dad bought me a horse when I was 10,' she tells me. It's name was Spoiled.

Legend has it that when her father asked Kira what she wanted for her 15th birthday, she replied, 'A fashion line, please, Daddy.' Within a year, the teen tycoon had 28 fashion stores throughout Russia. And when 'Kira Plastinina' launched at Moscow Fashion Week in 2007, her father reportedly paid Paris Hilton \$2 million to sit in the front row and pose for pictures. 'Paris is so sweet,' Kira says. 'She took me out in LA. She taught me how to deal with fame and how to pose in front of the camera.' Paris is also said to have advised Kira never to read anything written about her.

Perhaps that's wise. Thanks to her extraordinary lifestyle, there have been headlines aplenty. Her 16th birthday party was held in a giant wardrobe, and she kept a £1,000 micro pig birthday present for just two days. 'I hid her in the closet, as my dad didn't like it, but I felt bad. In the end I gave her to my grandparents.'

Like any teenage girl, Kira is obsessed with shopping. But unlike the rest of us, she doesn't just have one wardrobe. She has six. 'I have a closet at my mum's, one at my dad's and one at my country house in Moscow. I also have a huge walk-in closet in Dallas, and one at my grandparents'. Oh, and one at my office.' She can't put her finger on exactly how many dresses she owns, but it's 'about 1,000. 'They are mostly my own designs, but I also love Alexander Wang and Helmut Lang. And I love Giuseppe Zanotti and Christian Louboutin shoes.'

Reading this, you might be thinking you're not Kira's biggest fan. But you can't help warming to her. She's super-bright... and clearly understands how fortunate she is.

You've got to admire her gumption, too. Four years ago – aged just 15 – when she wanted advice on her fashion line, she approached Vivienne Westwood. 'We went to lunch with her friends from the fashion world and I nearly died! We talked about Russian ballet and opera.'

Kira shows us one of her six closets. She says she's lost count of the number of dresses she owns



MEET THE MINIGARCHS



ANNA ANISIMOVA
Who? The 24-year-old progeny of billionaire metal magnate Vassily.
Got the requisite posh pad then? Oh yes. Diane Von Furstenberg's former \$23 million NYC townhouse, no less.
OK, we're officially jealous. Wait. Anna insists she had a tough upbringing: 'My mum put me in these colourful dresses with matching scrunchies. Nobody liked me.'
Feel any better now? A little. **Scrunchies are grim.**

EKATERINA RYBOLOVLEVA
Who? Daughter of fertiliser magnate Dmitry. She's a student.
So pretty down to earth then? Not really. She just broke Manhattan real estate sales records with the purchase of her student digs, and she's a promising equestrian.
I thought students had it tough. Life doesn't look too shabby from a 10-room apartment near Central Park.



ANNA ABRAMOVICH
Who? The 19-year-old daughter of the infamous Roman.
Another 'Russian Paris Hilton'? Not quite. She's opted for a 'modest' £4 million pad in Belgravia. And she's on Twitter!
Twitter? Yep, her 2009 NYE tweet included this gem: 'Wish u sex, alcohol, bare orgasms... hope u win the f***** lottery loooool.' **Crikey!**



And she used last year's Moscow Fashion Week as a chance to befriend Mick Jagger's daughter, Georgia May. 'We've got so much in common! We have the same dogs, like going to the same bars. We caught up at New York Fashion Week earlier this month.'

Her enthusiasm has paid off. OK, her dad's money started the pink tutus and crop tops, but it's clearly Kira's passion – and savvy marketing – that drives it. When Britney Spears' world tour stopped in Moscow last year, she swung by the House of Plastinina, while Lindsay Lohan is also a close friend.

At the heart of brand control is Kira herself. Her answers are enthusiastic but well thought through. And despite the fact she's anything but, Kira is insistent that she's 'totally normal'. 'I live a normal college life at the Southern Methodist University in Dallas. In my freshman year, I lived in halls. When I'm busy, I eat oatmeal for dinner – though lobster ravioli is my favourite. No one on campus treats me differently.'

That may be true. But in her hometown it's a very different story. Constantly papped, she has a bodyguard and publicists. She's the prime example of the new wealth that's surging out of Russia – set to be one of the world's most dominant economies by 2050. But those thoughts are far from Kira's mind. All she cares about is getting ahead in her fashion career. And, of course, keeping, er, grounded. 'I'm looking forward to my fashion line expanding, having fun with my friends and enjoying life. And I know how lucky I am – I have the best work a girl can wish for!' ■

Main photo: Ilya Vartanyan. Styling: Svetlana Vashenyak. Make-up: Capolha Veréha. Producer: Nino Arshba. Kira's clothes: all LUBLU. Kira Plastinina. Additional photos: James Hill, Geoff Photos, WENN, Alan Davidson