



★ John McENROE | 47 | server and volleyer

"I wasn't the biggest or strongest guy out there. Maybe not the fittest, either," says John McEnroe. "But I felt like I could intimidate my opponent if I came out with intensity." From 1978 to 1992, McEnroe's strategy worked pretty well—to the tune of three Wimbledon singles titles, four U.S. Open singles titles, ten Grand Slam doubles championships, and three straight years (1981–84) as the number one player in the world. If stubby shorts, hiked-up socks, and an unruly 'fro wouldn't back a guy down, then playing like a rabid animal certainly would. "I kept coming at them," he says. "Usually, that resulted in an early lead, and I figured right away that would cut out about 80 or 90 percent of the people. Maybe 5 percent could stick with me for two hours." All too often, McEnroe is remembered more for his loud (and foul) mouth than for his graceful playing style, the effortlessness with which he patrolled the court, the softness of his hands. At his best, he was everywhere; he returned everything. Unleashing relentless machine-gun volleys and unreachable, backbreaking drop shots, he owned both the net and the baseline. "It's because I was good that people paid attention to that other stuff," he says. "If I was ranked one hundred, people wouldn't have shown any interest." —HOWIE KAHN

Jeans by Levi's | Boots by Louis Vuitton | Necklace by Cartier | Watch by Franck Muller