

# Gilles Marini Says He's "Blessed to Have the Chance to Be a Father – It's Magical"



By Kristin Mattern

French-born actor Gilles Marini has made a lasting impression on American fans. He's memorable for his beloved turn as Dante in *Sex and the City: The Movie*, his recurring roles on shows like *Brothers & Sisters*, *Ugly Betty*, and *Nip Tuck*, and his stellar appearances on the 8th and 15th seasons of *Dancing with the Stars*. As evidenced by his diverse resume, his brave and beautiful man seems daunted by nothing. Who can forget his full frontal nude scene as Dante? The former model is currently gracing the small screen as Angelo Sorrento on *Switched at Birth*, where he tackles the challenging role of an estranged father who has reentered his daughter's life – a

role that's close to this family man's heart.

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On ABC Family's hit show, Marini plays the biological dad of Bay Kennish, who comes back into her life after abandoning his wife Regina when he thought she had cheated on him. A father himself, the star says that being a parent doesn't affect how he plays the character: "I am the polar opposite of Angelo when it comes to being a father. I think he just landed on this planet and became one sixteen years too late. It's understandable to see why he is the way he is, based on his past and he's childhood, but that also makes him human and interesting."

Marini and wife Carole, who married in 1988, have a son Georges and a daughter Julianna. It's easy to see that the actor knows what he's talking about when it comes to parenting, so one can only hope that a little bit of the father in him will rub off on his wayward character. "There are so many things I could say about how amazing it is to be a father, but the truth is there are no words in the dictionary to explain it to anyone. Maybe I could say that it is the single most important role a man could ever have," he aptly shares. "It shows your real colors and what you are made of. I am blessed to have the chance to be a father and have the great responsibility to raise respectful, kind-hearted, passionate, strong, and dedicated souls. It's magical."

Passionate about his family life, Marini is currently building a retreat in the California woods as a private getaway for them to enjoy. "We bought a new hideaway paradise, a cabin in the woods. We are in the process of completing the little things that need to be fixed, and then, we'll have our safe haven to go to when we need some time off. It's only 90 minutes from our house in L.A., so it is very easy to get to

quickly.”

Given his busy schedule, it’s no surprise that the star hasn’t had time to watch the current season of *Dancing With the Stars*, although he does have fond memories of his time on the show. On season 8, he danced with long-time pro Cheryl Burke and finished as the runner-up. He came back again for season 15 to try to win the mirrorball trophy with season 14 winner, Peta Murgatroyd, and the couple were the eighth eliminated from the show. “Cheryl and Peta are great girls, and I hope that they will go all the way! They will always have a special place in my heart.’

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Currently, Marini is working on a project that has a particularly special meaning for him: He has become part of the Ford Warriors in Pink cause to raise awareness for breast cancer. He’s been personally touched by breast cancer, as he had to watch his sister-in-law battle the disease. At a young age, he lost his father to cancer as well. The star is very hopeful about finding a cure: “The ultimate goal is to one day explain to my grandkids that there *used* to be a disease called breast cancer. I am thrilled to be part of Ford’s Warriors in Pink – a very nice group of dedicated people who are truly making a difference.”

As part of the campaign, he and his wife designed a unisex t-shirt to aid funding for the cause. “I wanted to create something meaningful and important and something that both men and women would enjoy wearing.” Well, mission accomplished! “I am wearing it as we speak,” he says wryly. The shirt is a V-neck in a beautiful deep heather gray that displays the words “Unis Par L’Amour,” French for “United with Love.” Let’s hope along that, with the support of people like Marini, we can find a cure for this disease, and it will one day be a thing of the past.

Be sure to check out the t-shirt Marini made for Ford Warriors in Pink  
on [www.warriorsinpink.ford.com/men-s/united-with-love-t-shirt.html](http://www.warriorsinpink.ford.com/men-s/united-with-love-t-shirt.html)! To watch him in his memorable role as Angelo Sorrento, catch full episodes of 'Switched at Birth' on ABC's website and wait for the series to return in January 2014. Learn more about the star by reading his website, [www.gillesmarini.com/](http://www.gillesmarini.com/) or following him on Facebook and Twitter.