



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

FABULOUS AT 50!

YANNICK BISSON

AND WIFE SHANTELE OPEN UP ABOUT LOVE AND LIFE LESSONS

One of Canada's most inseparable power couples, Yannick Bisson and his wife of 29 years, Shantelle (whom he affectionately calls "Shantilly"), are the epitome of togetherness – they've known each other since high school – yet have carved their own creative paths. He's the star of popular TV drama *Murdoch Mysteries*, she's an actress and writer (her upcoming book *How to Raise Your Kids Without Losing Your Cool* hits shelves next spring). They have three grown children and two dogs, and divide their time between Toronto, Los Angeles and their cottage in Ontario, where they also own a marina called Shantilly's Place.

The duo, who turned 50 three weeks apart, celebrated the twin milestone with a party thrown by their three daughters – Brianna, 30, Dominique, 28, and Mikaela, 22 – that saw them feted by family and famous friends, including Drew and Jonathan Scott. "I was kind of dreading the time leading up to 50, but it was just wonderful," Yannick tells *Hello!*

Here, the busy and generous couple – who support causes such as Artists for Peace and Justice, Childhood Cancer Canada and Camp Ooch – chat candidly about turning 50, working on their marriage, and meeting a famous *Murdoch* fan!

Congrats on turning 50! How does it feel?
Shantelle: I was more OK with turning 50 as I led

up to turning 50. I was like, "I don't know what the problem is! Everybody is freaking out. It's great. I don't get my period anymore, I'm free to travel, the kids are gone, woo hoo!" And then I turned 50 and I hit the wall a little bit. I'm not gonna lie.
Yannick: I hit the wall, too. This past year has been a little weird. You get in touch with your mortality, time starts to speed up ... I'm sort of glad it's behind me now. I'm starting to see the light and it's going to be OK.

With your double celebration and big family, gift-giving must be eventful. How do you handle it?

Shantelle: We've wised up over the years. Instead of getting little doodads for every event, now we say, "What one thing do you really want?" Yannick got a car. He picked his California all-purpose vehicle for himself.

Yannick: It's a Land Rover Range Rover Sport. And I got another bike.

Shantelle: Yannick treated me to a yoga retreat in California's Desert Hot Springs. And I got my first Hermès bag, a one of a kind, so I'm in the system now for maybe one of those Birkins that everybody seems to love so much. [Laughs]

Yannick: I hope not! [Laughs]

Like every couple, you've had your ups and downs and even took a "marriage hiatus" a while

back. What did you learn from that experience that has made your current relationship sparkle?

Yannick: One of the big things I learned was about taking some responsibility for how your partner feels inside the relationship. There is some accountability; some extra effort that needs to be put in to safeguard that love, that spark, that incredible thing you've been building for so long. I know I've come up short in this area, like, "I'm just wonderful and you just need to like it." That doesn't always cut it. The price that you pay for being "right" can also be a lot steeper than you were willing to pay.

Shantelle: I've learned to understand he's not solely responsible for my happiness, that I feel romanced and desired and cared for. If he doesn't know where I'm missing out, how can he fill that need? ... And the grass isn't greener on the other side. Another relationship is not necessarily going to be any different from the relationship you're having with your current partner. Everywhere you go, there you are.

Yannick: Besides, who wants to break in a new one anyway? [Shantelle laughs]

Yannick, what has Detective William Murdoch taught you? He's taught me to be more patient, to research things a bit better – and the value of intelligence. [Laughs]

The show has become part of Canadian culture, and I feel extremely privileged. It's putting our history, our talent and our culture out there around the world. People are digging it and I couldn't be happier.
Shantelle: We were having dinner at our favourite restaurant in Malibu and [The Shape of Water director] Guillermo del Toro was there with *Titanic* director James Cameron. Yannick went over to say hello and Guillermo stood up and said, "[Your show] is a Canadian institution." It's a lot to be proud of.

What's on your bucket list for the next 50 years?

Shantelle: I used to have the bucket list thing going. Then I realized that every damn day is a blessing and every day should be about living life to its fullest. Why not? Why wait until tomorrow? Just do it.

Yannick: I couldn't have said it better, baby. If you're able to really take care of your inner self, your outer self will carry you through for the next 50 years.

INTERVIEW: SUZANNE WINTROB



'When we started, 50 seemed like a lifetime away'
- SHANTELE

Yannick and Shantelle, who turned 50 on May 16 and June 1, respectively, celebrate their 30th anniversary next year. 'If you are lucky, once in a lifetime you find someone to look at you the way [she] is looking at me here,' he wrote recently, sharing with fans a romantic photo from their 1990 wedding day (left, top). Left, below: The couple's daughters – actress Mikaela, makeup artist Brianna and stylist Dominique – threw their parents a joint 50th birthday party at Toronto's One Eighty restaurant. Below, the actor in *Murdoch Mysteries*, returning for a 13th season this fall.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: INSTAGRAM; RYAN EMBERLEY; SHANE MAHOOD/CBC/ACORN TV/EVERETT COLLECTION/EVERETT COLLECTION; RYAN EMBERLEY