

Building the King - Legacy & Wade Madray



The Kingmakers

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK LYNDERSAY

"IT'S A family kind of situation," Wade Madray explains as he guides me past the side of his home in Marabella.

It's not surprising, because it's a family kind of mas, with longtime friends and neighbours pitching in alongside family members just four days before the king will make its first appearance at the King and Queen of Carnival preliminaries.

Madray and his friend Ronald "Bally" Blaize have been in mas partnerships since they were teenagers, and 16 years ago they built their first King at Blaize's home in Marabella.

At first, they took turns playing the mas but the partnership has long settled down into their current roles, with Madray handling the financing and playing the mas and Blaize designing the costume and overseeing its construction. In the late nineties, the pair chose to move their aspirations north to the national competition.

They have never won the King of Carnival trophy, but have placed first in their chosen category on several occasions. Last year's third-placed portrayal, Native Warrior, was selected to go to Jamaica for the formal opening of the ICC Cricket tournament.

Madray and Blaize have been producing a king for Legacy since 1992 and have been working at their current location for the last four years, a massive warehouse sized space at the

back of the home, much of which is also co-opted as storage.

They are independent producers, and as financier, it's Madray's responsibility to carry not just the King but the financial responsibility for the production and the rising cost of materials.

To build income, they began producing a section in Legacy for 2007 and while their first year faltered, they have created 50 costumes for 2008 and remain hopeful.

"If we get wood, I get wood," Madray says with a laugh, then adds by way of clarification, "You know, bois."

"Legacy sets the theme and we build a king to suit it," Blaize said.

Dingdaka De Lionheart, is a portrayal of a warrior emerging from the jungle and it's being made from some unlikely materials, like garden hose and computer generated stencils.

"You have your materials, you rest it down on the ground and you say, we're going to make a mas out of this. Then everybody looks at me and asks, how?"

"Ten years ago, we would have used lace on a backing board, metal poles and the costumes were much heavier," says Madray, a middle-aged bear of a man.

"Now we have fibreglass rods and netting; 65 percent of the Dingdaka costume is made of foam and foil. From that point of view, things have gotten better. I'm getting older, and I can't carry those old heavy costumes anymore."

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Anti-clockwise from top

■ ULLI HEYDEN, originally from Norway, glues the framework of Dingbaka De Lionheart at the mascamp in Marabella.

■ RONALD "BALLY" BLAIZE and WADE MADRAY craft garden hose into dreadlocks for

their King of Carnival presentation.

■ BRIAN DE SOUZA, Madray's cousin, glues gold foil to the Legacy King of Carnival costume, Dingbaka De Lionheart.

■ The Murray brothers, KELVIN and IRVING, work at Wade Madray's mascamp.

