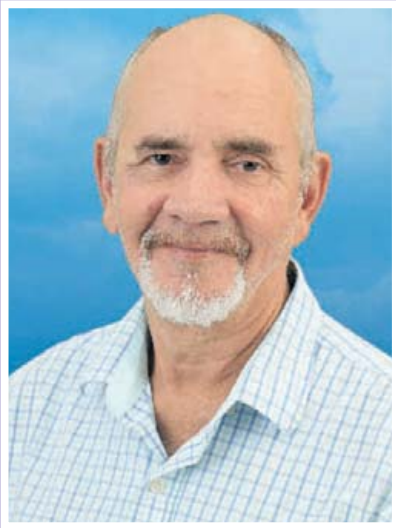




# Carnival 2024

APRIL 17, 2024

A PUBLICATION OF THE DAILY HERALD



# MAY THE FETE BEGIN!

Despite the cancellation of some international shows, St. Maarten's Carnival 2024 still has many ingredients to become a major success, with the usual explosion of music, food, drink, pageants, dance and costumed parades marking this festive season. From the opening jump-up tomorrow, Thursday, to the burning of King Momo at the village on May 5, it promises to be another exciting edition.

Regardless of circumstances, organisers, participants, spectators and all others involved, no doubt stand ready to make this a memorable celebration worthy of the Dutch side's biggest cultural event. As always, people are encouraged to enjoy themselves and blow off some steam, but do take care and be considerate of others.

It's revelry time!

The Publisher

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**Publisher**  
Paul De Windt

**Coordinators**  
Darlene Hodge  
Daniella De Windt

**Contributors**  
Judy Fitzpatrick  
Nakisha Boasman  
Darlene Hodge  
Daniella De Windt  
Jenny Steel

**Layout**  
Pip van Gelder

**Copy Editor**  
Sharon van Arneman

**Operations Manager**  
Steven De Windt

**Advertising Coordinator**  
Maira Marcelle

**Cover Image**  
provided by Rio Productions

# CARNIVAL COSTUME TRENDS

*It's the most wonderful time of the year for bacchanalists in St. Maarten as Carnival season is here. With preparations underway for the upcoming fet-tin, local designers and troupe leaders are fitting revellers into their latest creations. Before the trucks set off for the Grand Parade and the streets become filled with feathers, diamantes, soca and dancehall, The Daily Herald caught up with Brenda Wathey, leader of Rio Productions Carnival Troupe for her thoughts on the changing trends in Carnival-costume design.*

"Bystanders will see a lot of colour, flowing materials and not just the same old wings. This year, our troupe is inspired by India, so the costumes reflect that culture. We have a lot of Indian influence in St. Maarten as we have a huge community there. So this is something we wanted to do that we haven't represented before and it's unique. We have the Elephant section called Jaipur; the Saf-ron section, where you'll see costumes in beautiful shades of lavender and blood orange; and the Holi section, which centres on all the vibrant, bright colours you would expect at a Holi celebration."

Rio Productions collaborated with designers Dylan Thomas and Alicia Heart of Secrets Mas, along with Chris Santos and Gregory Medina, for this year's presentation, "The Bejeweled Crown" by Secrets Mas.

Despite the allure of extravagant costumes, Carnival fashion is not without its controversies. The increasing trend of costumes being more and more revealing has often provoked heated debates.

"We have noticed that Carnival has lost some of its culture and is becoming more sexualised. Our costumes are not as skimpy as is the norm for other groups. I've been in Carnival since I was six or seven so I've come from a place where you don't have to be naked to be beautiful. As Caribbean women, we tend to be more voluptuous so I offer bathing suits that are less revealing, unless the person wants that. I typically lend my costume designs to couture as opposed to what's trending, as far as bathing suits, because the current trends are very strappy and revealing. But if I do have a strappy design, I tend to include skin tone mesh-

es to make them less revealing."

While St. Maarten's Carnival fashion often trends in tandem with Trinidad, Brenda has noticed a movement away from the head-to-toe cloth designs of neighbouring islands like Aruba and Curacao.

"We stay true to our roots while drawing inspiration from Trinidad's iconic looks. Even the St Lucia Carnival uses a lot more cloth in their costumes than we do. In St. Maarten culture, it's not as prevalent; we prefer to dress in bathing suits. I've been to Junkanoo, where they are covered head to toe in colour, but it's so hot, I don't understand how they do it!"

Beyond the parade, there have been more and more influencers and content creators changing the game for Carnival. Platforms like SocaMom, Trini Jungle Juice, and Carnival Diary have transformed the narrative with their coverage of Carnival, sharing everything from soca music playlists to tips for costume preparation. Influencers, like those on The Carnival Ref, show off the intricate craftsmanship of Carnival costumes and offer reviews and recommendations for Carnival-related products and services. Brenda believes that interactive social media platforms like these have expanded the reach and impact of Carnival culture, turning it into even more of a global phenomenon.

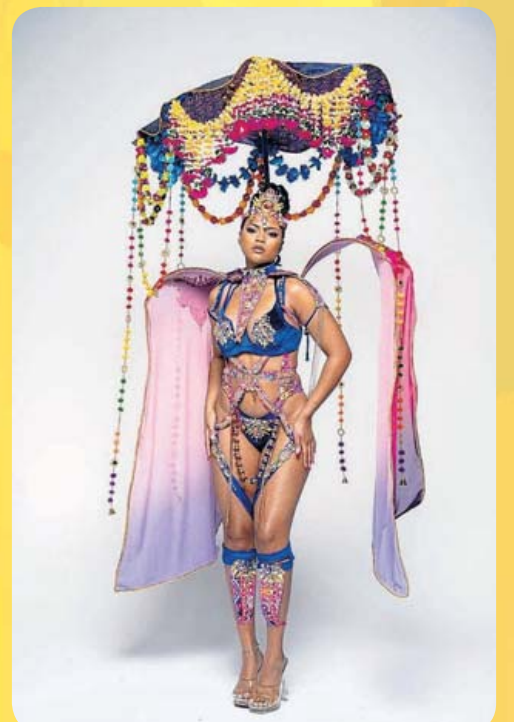
"What seem to be on trend now are influencers and people who are going from Carnival to Carnival around the world non-stop. We are seeing cruise Carnivals with famous performers on-board and cruise ship tours that go to specific countries for their Carnivals. Influencers are having a very big impact; they are posting everything about Carnival. They share details about their troupes, where they're staying, the journey of picking up the costume, costs, and all the behind-the-scene details. It's not just about the parade anymore; it's about the entire experience. St. Maarten isn't there yet, with a trend for things like air conditioned tents on the road that's happening in Trinidad, but I don't think it's going to be long until we see that replicated."

Another trend that troupes are committed to each year is the opportunity to showcase St. Maarten's cultural heritage. This year, the Carnival committee requires at least 10 participants to be dressed in something that represents St. Maarten culture.

"My people will be dressed in traditional cultural cloth. They will be wearing madras – even though it's not our culture – it's from Guadeloupe and Martinique – we sometimes use it. It's more of a misno-

mer that madras is our cultural cloth. The patterns of a true St. Maarten cloth have more to do with flowers than the plaid we see of madras. St Maarten's national dress has the crinoline under the skirt, flowers on the material, and perhaps people carrying baskets on their heads. Crowds might even see some groups depicting the national bird, the pelican, or troupes pulling replicas of the salt pond or border monument along the road."

As the final touches are put on this year's Carnival creations, the stage is set for a celebration of culture, creativity, and community that pays homage to the past, while embracing the trends of the future.



Pimpin,  
Yung Bredda,  
Dj Hotty



# Get ready to glow at the UV Neon Glow Fest

**A night of laughter, music and neon fun**

*The UV Neon Glow Fest is set to take the Jocelyn Arndell Festival Village by storm on Thursday, May 2. This unique event is not your average concert, but a combination of three exciting experiences all rolled into one unforgettable night. Featuring Comedy, a Concert/Fête and The Finale After Party, this festival promises to be something different, something unique and something incredibly creative!*

wonderland, as UV and LED lights will illuminate the entire village. The organisers are urging guests to embrace the theme by dressing in neon or white attire to truly enhance the glowing effect. In addition to the mesmerising lights, attendees can also enjoy free glow accessories and have their faces and bodies painted with dazzling designs by Funtopia.

The audience can expect an atmosphere filled with neon colours, ultraviolet/LED glow, body painting and a line-up of talented artistes, bands, DJs and comedians.

Organiser Jason Bartlette of SIK Entertainment is no stranger to hosting themed events and promises that this UV Neon Glow Fest will be a spectacle unlike any other. With Absolut Vodka and Funtopia on board as main sponsors, attendees can expect surprises, interactive displays and free face and body painting designs. Attendees are urged to come with an open mind and a willingness to embrace all the festivities.

The event kicks off with a Comedy Show Segment, where popular social media comedians will take the stage to bring laughter to the Festival Village with their stand-up routines and skits. Following the comedy, the Concert Segment will showcase musical artistes from various Caribbean islands, providing a high-energy performance for Carnival lovers in attendance. The night will culminate with The Finale After Party Segment, featuring a battle between two bands and a special international DJ performance.

With gates opening at 7:00pm and the show starting promptly at 8:00pm, tickets are available at various locations on the Dutch and French sides of the island. Early Bird \$30, advance \$40 and week-of-the-show \$45 tickets are available at Van Dorp (both locations), Nowhere Special, Tech Hub, Booth 36, Sxm Promotionz, Levi's Boutique (Marigot), Thirteen Paws Nail Salon, Kband App and Any SIK Team Member, with gate side tickets \$50 also an option for those looking to experience this one-of-a-kind fest.

Artistes like Yung Bredda, Dj Hotty & Pimpin, Suhrawh, and Ayewai will be taking the stage, while comedians including White Yardie, Trabass and Jahmal Burnette as Ma Buttercup of "Jingle Jam Ent" will have the audience in stitches.

So come with an open mind, a positive mindset, and get ready to enjoy a night filled with laughter, music and a whole lot of neon glow at the UV Neon Glow Fest.



White Yardie

The event promises to be a new and exciting venture, complete with UV glow elements that will add an extra layer of fun. Get ready to be transported to a UV-themed

# Reloaded!

## St. Maarten 2024 Carnival Schedule-Reloaded!

APRIL 18TH - MAY 5TH 2024

- SAT. MAR. 16 ▶ CAUSEWAY JUMP-UP
- FRI. MAR. 22 ▶ "FETE TO FITNESS" AROUND TOWN JUMP-UP
- FRI. APR. 05 ▶ SIK ENTERTAINMENT ROAD TO CARNIVAL (RTC) BASH
- SAT. APR. 06 ▶ CARNIVAL CORNER FETE IS FETE VOL. 3 (RTC EVENT)
- SUN. APR. 07 ▶ JUNIOR CARNIVAL QUEEN PAGEANT
- FRI. APR. 12 ▶ DJ KILO FLASHBACK JAM (RTC EVENT)
- SAT. APR. 13 ▶ DA BIG BAD XP'S BACKYARD SESSION III (RTC EVENT)
- SUN. APR. 14 ▶ JR. CARNIVAL CALYPSO & ROADMARCH COMPETITION
- THU. APR. 18 ▶ OPENING CARNIVAL 2024 / OPENING JUMP-UP
- FRI. APR. 19 ▶ CARNIVAL ROADMARCH & BAND CLASH COMPETITION
- SAT. APR. 20 - 5AM ▶ SOAKING WET BREAKFAST FETE
- SAT. APR. 20 - 8PM ▶ THE VILLAGE CHILL
- SUN. APR. 21 ▶ JUNIOR CARNIVAL PARADE / CULTURE NIGHT
- MON. APR. 22 ▶ FREE BOOTH HOLDERS NIGHT
- TUE. APR. 23 ▶ SXM CARNIVAL CARIBBEAN QUEEN PAGEANT & KING & QUEEN OF THE BAND
- WED. APR. 24 ▶ NAGICO SENIOR CALYPSO FINALS
- THU. APR. 25 ▶ KONCERT X - THE ANNIVERSARY
- FRI. APR. 26 ▶ JOUVERT JUMP-OFF INTERNATIONAL SOCA CONCERT
- SAT. APR. 27 - 4AM ▶ JOUVERT MORNING JUMP-UP
- SAT. APR. 27 - 8PM ▶ NOCHE LATINA INTERNATIONAL CONCERT
- SUN. APR. 28 ▶ FAMILY FUN DAY, COOK-UP AND COCK-UP 2024
- MON. APR. 29 ▶ YOUTH EXTRAVAGANZA
- TUE. APR. 30 ▶ GRAND CARNIVAL PARADE
- WED. MAY 01 ▶ LABOR DAY PARADE
- THU. MAY 02 ▶ UV NEON GLOW FETE
- FRI. MAY 03 ▶ TIMO LIVE IN CONCERT
- SAT. MAY 04 ▶ II BROTHERS ENTERTAINMENT ONE LOVE REGGAE
- (ONE LOVE REGGAE CONCERT IS NOT INCLUDED IN SEASON PASS)
- SUN. MAY 05 ▶ CLOSING CARNIVAL / BURNING KING MOMO

**APR 22ND ▶ FREE BOOTH HOLDERS NIGHT**  
BRING EVERYONE TO CARNIVAL VILLAGE TO EXPERIENCE THE BIGGEST OUTDOOR RESTAURANT IN THE CARIBBEAN!

**APR 28TH ▶ FAMILY FUN DAY, COOK UP & COCK UP**  
A FAMILY OUTING, A FUN DAY OF ACTIVITIES IN CARNIVAL VILLAGE. ALONG WITH THE POPULAR VILLAGE COOK-UP AND COCK-UP 2024!

**MAY 3RD ▶ TIMO LIVE IN CONCERT**  
ONE OF ST. MAARTEN'S MOST ICONIC ARTISTS WILL HEADLINE A SPECTACULAR CONCERT FEATURING LEGENDARY LOCAL BANDS.



# KONCERT X: THE ANNIVERSARY

~ Soca concert celebrating King James' 10-year musical journey ~

*Celebrating a decade of melodious mastery, King James, an icon of St. Maarten's music scene, is set to dazzle audiences with the newest addition to this year's Carnival roster: "Koncert X: The Anniversary".*

This monumental event marks the remarkable journey of King James – born Kelvin James – in the music industry, showcasing his unwavering dedication to his craft and his tireless efforts in putting his beloved island on the global map. Throughout his illustrious career, he has been a beacon of inspiration, representing St. Maarten both locally and internationally.

Now, as King James honours his 10-year milestone with Koncert X, he promises not just a celebration of his personal achievements, but also a platform for fostering unity within the St. Maarten/St. Martin vibrant community.

Breaking away from the conventional competition format witnessed in events like Soca Rumble and The Groove, King James said Koncert X will redefine the concert experience. It is set to merge the energy of a Soca Rumble with the allure of a concert, promising an electrifying fusion of rhythms and melodies.

He said what sets Koncert X apart is its inclusive approach to entertainment. In addition to King James' captivating performance, the stage will be graced by the talents of local artistes, showcasing a rich tapestry of cultures and experiences. "By elevating our local artistes to the global stage, Koncert X challenges the notion that only international headliners can draw crowds," says King James.



But Koncert X isn't just about the music; it's about creating an immersive experience for the audience. With no MC interrupting the flow, the show aims to captivate attendees from start to finish, transporting them on a musical journey like never before. Backed by a live band, each artiste will deliver performances enriched with intricate arrangements and embellishments, ensuring an unforgettable night of entertainment.

"Koncert X isn't just a celebration; it's a testament to the cultural and artistic vibrancy of Sint Maarten. By supporting this ground-breaking event, you're not just celebrating King James' legacy; you're championing the spirit of our island's music scene and paving the way for a brighter, more

inclusive future," states James.

"KONCERT X: The Anniversary" is set to heat up the stage at the Jocelyn Arndell Festival Village on Thursday, April 25, starting at 8:00pm and wrapping up around 2:00am. In addition to King James, set to perform will be Lyte, King Vers, Magicx, Jabz, Just A Rose, Ebony Empress, Toli Boys, Odd Brothers, Youri, Uncle Shadz, Acha, King Kembe and Kenyo. DJ Maestro and DJ Big Boss will also be in the house.

Don't miss KONCERT X: The Anniversary – where the past meets the present, and the journey continues!

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# NOCHE LATINA 2024 GOING BACK TO ROOTS WITH DIVERSE LINE-UP OF INT'L ARTISTES

All roads lead to the Jocelyn Arndell Festival Village on Saturday, April 27, for Noche Latina 2024, the spicy annual crowd favourite in the Carnival line-up. Coordinators say this year the show will be going back to its roots to inject some zing and pizzazz into the event.

"We are very excited for Noche Latina 2024. This year we are going back to the originality of the night in which attendees will experience different Latin artistes and social media sensations not only from the Dominican Republic, but also from Colombia, Curaçao and the United States," say coordinators.

Set to perform this year are Luis Miguel del Amargue from the Dominican Republic; social media sensation DJ Adoni is straight from the US; Dominican Republic-based rapper and singer Rochy RD, who is now more controversial, rich and famous than ever; Ephrem J from Curaçao; and Mimi Ibarra from Colombia.

## About the artistes

Ephrem will add some zest to the show as he plays a different genre of merengue and bachata, which will get and keep patrons on their feet all night long. After his first great success, Amor en la luna, he has continued working tirelessly and is slowly managing to reach with his music where his heart wants for the whole world. Although



Ephrem

he was born in Curaçao, where he grew up and developed his artistic potential, he is a multicultural performer with Latin and Dutch roots – something that is positively noticeable in how well he handles the various rhythmic mixtures that make up his repertoire.

Elizabeth Ibarra (artistically known as Mimi Ibarra) is a Colombian singer and songwriter, who is known worldwide for her romantic Salsa. In her career as



Mimi Ibarra

a singer, she has achieved multiple hits, such as Que Tiene Ella, No Puede Ser, Marinero De Amor and Te Crees El Mejor (a song that was nominated in two different categories in the "Nuestra Tierra" 2023 music awards edition). She is known for her versatility. Although she composes and performs mainly Salsa, she has also written and composed in different musical genres, such as Bachata, Balada, Cumbia and Música Popular, like her latest release De Pie (Version Popular).

De Pie has received great support – thanks to its lyrics being so easy to identify with.

On TikTok, more than 43k videos have already been created using the song, in Meta, around 9,000. Mimi Ibarra is also a prolific composer, and her multiple hits – Te Propongo (performed by Hector Rey), Dile A El (Anthony Cruz), Dejale (Tito Gomez), La Va a Pagar (Pedro Conga), Culpame (Luisito Carrión) – back this up. She has also composed for Oscar D'León, Maelo Ruiz, Luisito Ayala Y La Puerto Rican

Power, Roberto Roena and Roberto Lugo.

Luis Miguel has a great trajectory. The 60-year-old Dominican singer-songwriter specializes in merengue and bachata music – two popular genres in the Caribbean region. He has been active in the music industry for over three decades, releasing numerous solo albums as well as collaborating with some of the biggest Latin artistes. He recently won the Dominican Republic's highest award "Bachata Sing-

er of the Year", and he is ready to unleash his talent in St. Maarten for the Noche Latina show.

DJ Adoni has over the past seven years gained notoriety through his impressive mixes, which he uploads on his social media channels. With 2.9 million followers on Instagram and 2.14 million subscribers on YouTube, he has built a strong online presence. His YouTube channel showcases his talent.

During the pandemic, DJ Adoni's popularity soared as people heavily consumed his work on YouTube. His videos have received thousands of views, contributing to his estimated net

worth of \$2.65 million. While it is challenging to estimate his total net worth due to the nature of his work, his YouTube channel has been a significant source of income. On good days, he garners an average of 981,000 daily views, further solidifying his financial success.

Rochy RD is no stranger to St. Maarten. This Dominican Republic-based rapper and singer is popular for his hits such as El malo Soy Yo, De computao, and Alta Gama. In the year 2018, he started his career with the song, "Sometimes I Have No Money", which became an instant hit among the public. His song "Ella No Es Tuya" has hit more than 4 million plays on Spotify and has 133 million views on his YouTube channel. Rochy RD's total

net worth today is approximately \$3.1 million.

Rochy RD is active on Instagram, where he has more than 14.6 million followers. Despite artiste prices being very high and sponsorship limited, coordinators are thrilled that they managed to secure a great line-up of performers this year, noting that attendees have been expecting a mix of performers and not only artistes from the Dominican Republic, and this year's show is set to deliver just that – diversity and great entertainment from great artistes.

Coordinators said patrons can expect a show full of high energy and fun, urging not only the Latin community, but also all of Sint Maarten and Saint Martin to come out, support the show and enjoy the country's Carnival festivities. Tickets are available at Tu y Yo Bar Restaurant, Oasis Restaurant, La Bomba Restaurant, and RD Barbershop in Sandy Ground.



Luis Miguel



DJ Adonis



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## OFFICER CRISTINA-ROMEIO: DOING HER PART TO KEEP CARNIVAL SAFE, ONE EVENT AT A TIME

**When it comes to keeping revellers and everyone else safe during the country's biggest cultural event, seasoned Law Enforcement Officer Helen Cristina-Romeo means business.**

It is not a task she takes lightly and not one she plays around with. Officer Cristina-Romeo has been a staple during Carnival over the years, working alongside her colleagues to help ensure that law and order prevail at the various Carnival events. It is not an easy task, as maintaining law and order in crowds of hundreds of persons can sometimes be challenging, but it is a challenge that the officer takes head on.

Her personality comes out in her role – she minces no words when confronted with situations. “As a St. Maartener, if I have

to tell you something, I go will go straight to the point,” she tells *The Daily Herald*, adding “I don’t like gossiping.” As an officer, she is primarily concerned with facts.

Officer Cristina-Romeo has always gravitated toward law enforcement. From young, it was an area that fascinated her and grabbed her attention. “Growing up as a child, I was always interested in the laws of my country [and I always wanted] to serve my island,” she said. When she got the opportunity, she joined the Police Force of St. Maarten KPSM, and today she clocks more than 37 years serving her community in law enforcement – an accomplishment for which she is proud.

Looking back on the years, she has no regrets. “It is challenging, but worth every step of it,” she notes. So, how did she get into Carnival?

Officer Cristina-Romeo said part of her job description as a police officer is to protect and serve, so when given the opportunity to protect and serve during one of her favourite pastimes, she did not let the opportunity pass her by.

“I am here to serve my country and I enjoy doing it. A while back, I was asked to assist with the logistical planning for Carnival – something I enjoy doing and continue to do. I respect persons and they also show me respect for organising things,” she noted.

While she does not recall how many years she has been involved in serving and protecting during Carnival, one thing is sure, she applies knowledge, her skills and experience, and she shows respect while executing her job.

“I try to relax myself by doing what has to be done, by preparing and planning ahead of time both personal and job wise,” she explained. “I manage the large crowds by just speaking and advising them when something is wrong. I also listen to them. It is a two-way street for this to work. We have to work together and have some fun while doing this,” she noted.

It is not always hard work and no play for Officer Cristina-Romeo. She is only human and also tries to immerse herself in her country’s culture while at work. “I enjoy myself whilst working and try to keep our community safe. I enjoy dancing with the revellers and citizens – respectful of my uniform while also enjoying myself. Once I hear soca music, it’s time to have some fun in a decent way, whilst drinking my bottle of water,” she says.

Being an island girl, she personally enjoys experiencing Carnival. “I love to see the children dancing, laughing, eating and having fun during the parades. I also like to see my colleagues having some fun during this time of the year,” she says. “I also encourage members of SCDF [St Maarten Carnival Development Foundation] to also have some fun [because] it is part of my [and] our culture,” she said.

While she enjoys seeing children having fun, her worst experiences usually stem from the regretful behaviour of some

adults. She says “seeing adults fighting in front of the children” is amongst the experiences she wishes would not happen.

Her advice for continued safety during Carnival is simple: “Citizens and tourists should respect each other and have fun. Use plastic utensils not bottles. No fighting; go easy on the alcohol – you don’t need alcohol or drugs to have fun. Just be yourself.”

Officer Cristina-Romeo is a community-minded person at heart. In addition to being in law enforcement, she is a proud Distinguished Toastmaster and member of the KPSM Police Choir. At present, she is the Area 40 Director for Division 1 District 81 Region 8 of the Toastmasters.

Her future goals are as uncomplicated as she is: She plans to “continue serving my island until I reach pension age.”

In her spare time, she enjoys reading, doing puzzles, fishing and singing.

Her wish for everyone this Carnival season? Be safe and be your brother’s keeper, while enjoying the St. Maarten culture. “I am hereby wishing everyone a safe and enjoyable Carnival and taking care of each other.”



Don't miss a Beat during the Carnival

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## YOUTH EXTRAVAGANZA

### 'Appreciating the 'ol skool, encouraging the next!'

*It's all about the energy when it comes to the Youth Extravaganza, where bands, singers, dancers and rappers light up the stage for an exciting night of performances. Presented by the SCDF in collaboration with Teen Times, this one-of-a-kind event is truly for- and by-the-youth, and many who have performed over the years have gone on to do great things. This year, organisers are paying homage to them.*

Under the slogan "Appreciating the 'ol skool, encouraging the next!", organisers are paying tribute to some of the island's best local performers who got their start at Youth Extravaganza and the Teen Times Talent Showdown, and have since gone on to build on the art forms.

"The idea is for that generation to be an inspiration for our current group of teen artistes. They will not only perform, but share positive and encouraging messages as well," says organiser Rochelayne "Roosje" Rommy-Richardson, who herself performed as a teen. "This year, we really wanted to honour

and give flowers to our older artistes that paved the way for the new artistes."

Host for the night is none other than Rummer, who will also be performing. Rummer is not only a singer, radio personality, and MC who continues to grow in popularity, but is also a great example of a former Youth Extravaganza performer who went on to successfully work in the entertainment industry, and has always taken the time to give back.

As for the line-up, that information has not yet been released, so you'll have to come and see what artistes are performing. What we do know is that this event is known for a great variety of talents across genres, surprises, and audience engagement! Be sure not to miss it. Youth Extravaganza is more than 25 years' strong, and has consistently proven itself as a hit. This will be its fourth year hosted by *Teen Times*.

"This show is for you by your own peers. They've worked hard to show you their talent and maybe next year it can be you up on that very stage singing, dancing or rapping your heart out. Who knows, you can get recognized that night, always dream big and never stop pushing yourself. You never know who's watching you," says

Rochelayne.

Come out to support and enjoy a night of explosive talent on Monday, April 29, from 8:00pm to 2:00am. Tickets cost US \$10 pp and can be purchased at the gate.



## 'Switfood' Chef Fara Van De L'Isle: 'Carnival has a special place in my heart'

*When it comes to romancing appetites, Fara Van De L'Isle is in her element. She had such a great time titillating appetites during previous Carnivals that she decided to take the plunge and do it again this year from her booth, "Switfood".*

"Carnival holds a special place in my heart. Not only was I a booth holder back in 2022, I also worked in the booth with family-friends 30 years ago when I came to the beautiful island of St. Maarten... it's not just an event, but a celebration of culture, joy, and community spirit," she said, when asked what brought her back into the kitchen at the village again this year.

"Witnessing the happiness on people's faces as they savour our Surinamese delicacies fuels my passion for wanting to participate year after year. Additionally, the opportunity to showcase our culinary expertise and contribute to the vibrant atmosphere of St. Maarten's Carnival is something I eagerly anticipate," she said.

Switfood is located at Booth #21 in the Carnival Village this year. The booth had a different number last year. "Switi" means "sweet" in Surinamese and Van De L'Isle says the name reflects not only the delightful flavours of the booth's dishes, but also the warm hospitality that is ex-

tended to each and every customer.

"At Switfood, customers can expect an authentic taste of Surinamese culture through our diverse menu offerings. We're dedicated to providing a great culinary experience, blending traditional recipes with island twists," she says, urging everyone to stop by and give their cuisine a try.

When asked what new items Switfood will be offering this year, she said the team is excited to introduce several vegetarian additions to its menu, including curry egg and an eggplant and chickpeas dish crafted with the finest ingredients to tantalize the taste-buds of Carnival-goers.

She prides herself in the quality and unique taste offered by Switfood. "What sets Switfood apart is our unwavering commitment to quality and authenticity. Each dish is carefully prepared using the finest and freshest ingredients straight out of Suriname. Many, who know my food, know that it's quality. Moreover, our warm and welcoming atmosphere ensures that every customer feels like a part of the Switfood family," she said.

As the official opening of Carnival inches closer, the team has been busy working hard to welcome customers. "We're putting in countless

hours of preparation to ensure that everything is perfect for Carnival, from sourcing the freshest ingredients to fine-tuning our recipes."

As the owner and chef of Switfood, Van De L'Isle will be the main person in the kitchen, leading the team in the booth. Alongside her is a dedicated team of four support staff who play integral roles in ensuring smooth operations and excellent customer service.

Van De L'Isle sees the glass half-full when it comes to this year's Carnival. "I'm optimistic that this year's Carnival will be a great success, filled with joy, laughter, and unforgettable memories. Despite the challenges we may face, I believe the spirit of Carnival will prevail, bringing our community together in celebration."

When asked to weigh in on the challenges that have faced the festival of late, she said, "Undoubtedly, the challenges facing Carnival organisers and booth-holders can pose significant obstacles. However, I believe that by coming together as a community and working collaboratively, we can overcome these challenges and ensure a peaceful and enjoyable event for everyone involved. Clear communication, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to the spirit of Carnival are es-

sential in navigating these uncertain times and preserving the magic of this beloved island tradition."

Be sure to check out Switfood when you're in the village!



## 'DA RITE CORNER' BOOTH #37: A CELEBRATION OF CULINARY DIVERSITY

*Da Rite Corner Booth #37 in the Carnival Village will showcase the appetizing side of St Maarten and the Caribbean with its vibrant menu, offering a taste of the richness of the melting pot that is represented on The Friendly Island.*

Paco Isenia, a born and raised St. Maartener with Latin background, who will be operating the booth, said "Da Rite Corner" was inspired by the rich heritage of the Dominican Republic, Curaçao, Aruba, Dominica, St. Maarten and many other nations that call The Friendly Island home.

"The name 'Da Rite Corner' signifies the perfect gathering spot where people from all walks of life can come together to experience the warmth and hospitality of Caribbean culture. As you step into our booth, from the rhythmic beats of multi-cultural to the authentic Caribbean cuisine, every aspect of Da Rite Corner embodies the spirit of inclusivity and unity," he said.

Isenia felt inspired this year to contribute to the Carnival tradition by bringing something unique to the Carnival village. "Operating a booth allows me to share my passion where people come together to embrace joy, laughter, and a sense of togetherness with others and create memorable experiences for both locals and visitors alike. I'm excited to be a part of this lively event and to contribute to the festival spirit."

This will be Isenia's first year operating a Carnival booth and he sees it as a new adventure and one he and his team are ready to make memorable for everyone involved.

Da Rite Corner will offer a memorable cookery journey that will showcase cuisines from multiple cultures. Isenia said the menu will feature a fusion of traditional dishes and innovative twists that capture the essence of Caribbean cuisine. "Unlike other booths, we pride ourselves on offering a diverse selection of dishes that reflect the cultural melting pot of the Caribbean. From mouth-watering Dominican mofongo, to Curaçao Jambo and savoury Aruban keshi yena, each bite at Da Rite Corner is a cookery adventure that transports you to the sun-soaked shores of the islands. But it's not just about the food; it's also about the experience. At Da Rite Corner, patrons can engage with our friendly staffers, who are eager to share the stories and traditions behind each dish," he said.

He said Da Rite Corner will stand out in the crowd due to its unique blend of cultural unity, interactive experiences, and exceptional hospitality. "Our booth pays homage to St. Maarten's size, measuring 37 square miles, symbolizing the island's compact yet full-of-energy charm. Overall, Da Rite Corner offers more than just food. It offers an unforgettable journey through the sights, sounds, and flavours of the Caribbean, creating a truly standout experience in the Carnival village."

The team at Da Rite Corner has been busy readying for Carnival by planning and preparing its menu, training its staff, decorating and setting up its booth, doing promotional and outreach activities, budgeting and seeking sponsorships. "Overall, our goal is to create an unforgettable Carnival experience at Da Rite Corner, where patrons can not only enjoy delicious food, but also engage themselves in the culture and hospitality of the Caribbean. We're excited to welcome everyone to our booth and share the magic of Carnival with them," said Isenia.

While as booth holder, Isenia may not have direct experience in the food industry, he said Da Rite Corner is backed by a team with extensive experience and expertise in cuisine arts and hospitality. "Our team includes family members and teammates who bring a wealth of knowledge and skill to the table, ensuring that our booth delivers an exceptional dining experience during Carnival. Furthermore, our team is deeply rooted in Caribbean culture, with a strong connection to the traditions and flavours of the region."

The booth will be supported by a team of four and a main cook flying in from abroad: "The main cook, flying in from one of the Leeward Islands, will take the lead in the kitchen, bringing their passion for cooking and expertise in Caribbean cuisine to the forefront. With a background rooted in the region, they'll infuse each dish with authentic flavours and techniques that showcase the best of Caribbean cuisine traditions. Alongside the main cook, the booth will have three additional support staff members to assist with various tasks, including food preparation, serving, customer service, grilling and booth management. These support staff members will work collaboratively to ensure smooth operations and a positive experience for patrons. With a dedicated team of four members, Da Rite Corner will be well-equipped to

## COMEDY, ENERGY EXPECTED FOR VILLAGE COOK-UP & COCK-UP CONTEST

~ PDG Supplies on board as main sponsor ~



*A number of booth holders will be slicing, stirring and mixing their way into the hearts and appetites of judges for a chance to win this year's Village Cook-Up and Cock-Up contest set for the Jocelyn Arndell Festival Village on Sunday, April 28, starting at 8:00pm.*

Six booth holders will compete in the Cook-Up competition to see who can prepare the best dish; and six in the Cock-Up competition for best drink. Some are competing in

both segments.

This year's event will be hosted by St. Maarten Carnival Development Foundation (SCDF) official Alston Arcoza Lourens, who plans to inject both humour and fun as booth holders clash it out. "You can expect the comedy and energy that I bring to anything I'm involved with. This is my second time hosting the Cook-Up," said Lourens, who is part of the weekday radio show "Caffeine & Chaos" on X104.3 and is the main

support and positive atmosphere and entertainment. "By prioritizing these elements and working together collaboratively, booth holders, organisers, and participants can contribute to a peaceful and fun event that celebrates community, culture, and the spirit of Carnival, even in the face of challenges."

Isenia, a father of two, said he possesses a strong sense of responsibility and love for family. Outside

anchor for TV15.

Competing in the Cook-Up will be Cameron Edwards from booth 15 "Taste Me Bar"; Anna Marlin from booth 13 & 14 "50 Shades of Bacchanal"; Jose Helliger from booths 68 & 69 "Hot Waves"; Sydney de Weever from booths 3 & 4 "Triple S"; Christine Regis of booth 20 "Delmas"; and Augustus Williams from booth 12 "Chill-Inn".

Cock-Up contestants are Edwards booth 15 "Taste Me Bar"; Marlin booth 13 & 14 "50 Shades of Bacchanal"; Gerda Fortuno from booth 16 "Sexy G"; de Weever booths 3 & 4 "Triple S"; Regis from booth 20 "Delmas" and Nigel Brooks from booth 56 "HotSpot."

This year's Cook-Up contestants will be preparing an entrée of grilled pigtail with a special sauce and a tasty goat meat soup as the appetizer. "The premise of the Cook-Up and Cock-Up [contest] was to celebrate our love for food in our culture. Carnival is where we celebrate us, and a big part of who we are is what we eat. Every year, we choose local dishes and the booth holders compete for the title. The Cook-Up was added after the first year of the Cook-Up, to celebrate the creativity

of Carnival, he is actively engaged in community outreach and service. He is passionate about sports and is not afraid to take up challenges along the way. "My dedication to family, community, and personal growth is admirable, and it's evident that I bring a well-rounded perspective to all aspects of my life," he said. Isenia is grateful to St. Maarten Carnival Development Foundation (SCDF) for giving him the opportunity to operate as a booth holder.



of booth holders' specialty drinks," explained Lourens.

He tipped his hat off to main sponsor PDG Supplies for coming on board again this year to ensure the event's success

PDG Director Jonathan Robitaille is equally excited to be involved in this major event on the Carnival roster. He said PDG Supplies started sponsoring the Village Cook-Up/Cock-Up competition in 2023. "A few of our employees have been involved with the Carnival for several years and they mentioned the Cook-Up to us and we liked the idea," he said.

"Sponsoring the Cook-Up just makes sense for us. It's a great fit with what we do and lets us support our customers who get involved. PDG Supplies feels it is important to stand with the St. Maarten community through the worst of times, such as hurricanes and pandemics; but also during the best of times, such as the biggest party of the year – the St. Maarten Carnival!" he added. "Food is a big deal at the Carnival. It brings people together and showcases our island's diverse local flavours. It's central to the celebration," said the PDG Director.

This year, PDG will support the event by awarding prizes to the winners of both the Cook-Up and the Cock-Up competitions, celebrating culinary excellence and creativity. PDG will also give the 2nd and 3rd place winners of the Cook-Up the opportunity to choose a prize

out of a large selection of culinary items that will be on display during the cooking competition.

The Cook-Up winner will receive a gift certificate valued at US \$1,250 and the second and third place winners will get to select a prize of either an 8-quart electric soup kettle and electric chafer dish; a 22-inch ribbed griddle; a two-compartment countertop fryer; a 36-inch display warm case; a hotdog roller grill with sneeze guard; a commercial microwave; an 80oz. popcorn machine; a Vitamix Blender; a blender and convection oven; or a 6-quart Kitchen Pro Mixer. The winner of the Cock-Up competition will also receive a gift certificate valued at US \$1,250.

The Cook-Up event will be judged by a panel comprising Youry Fleming, Danitza Dormoy and Priya Kadiram, while the Cock-Up contest will be judged by a panel of three judges: Lillian Wathey, Alex Rogers and Devan Roserie.

Always behind the scenes, head coordinator of this event is Vida Boyrard, who brought this idea to fruition from SCDF's first attempt 10 years ago. The event is now in its eighth year. Past dishes and appetizers have included the following: 2014 Bull foot soup and Locri; 2015 Oyster soup and fried fish; 2016 Conch and Dumpling and Curry goat; 2017 Pig tail and Oxtail; 2018 Salt fish and chicken sate with special sauce; 2019 stewed beef and seafood soup; and 2023 Pig feet Souse and Johnny cake with barbeque ribs.



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# SCDF PRESIDENT EDUARDO RADJOUKI: CARNIVAL WILL BE SPECTACULAR



Radjouki said the team has put together a line-up of exciting local shows to fill the slots that became available when some promoters pulled out. The local shows will give the public a chance to experience the best of the best of local talent.

### Culture

One of Radjouki's main goals since assuming the post of SCDF President in August, 2022 was to inject more

cultural aspects in carnival. He believes that carnival has gotten too far away from its roots and too far from what St Maarten represents.

"Carnival has changed over the years. It is no longer about the cultural aspects. It has become a business and I am hoping to change that and put it back in the hands of the people as a cultural manifestation and a cultural festival where we can display our culture," said Radjouki.

Asked about his progress in achieving this goal, Radjouki said it has been an uphill battle, but he maintains that it is not something that he will give up on. He says it is important for the young people to be involved in some aspects of carnival to keep some forms of the tradition alive and also to inspire them to know the importance of having

culture intertwined with carnival. He has not had any success in convincing government of the importance of this.

This year he has sought the cooperation of troupe leaders to include a little more culture in their troupes and will be highlighting a lot of local artistes during the festival. "We still tried to push the cultural aspects in carnival this year, for instance, by bringing more local shows to replace the promoters that had dropped out," he said.

"I am also looking at for each troupe to have a cultural section. We want it to be more cultural than the skimpy Brazilian look. We would like it to look more like telling the people a story of the St Maarten culture. We want people to see what the St Maarten culture used to be and what it can be because at the end of the day we are portraying our identity. Right now, no one can look at the parade and say 'oh that looks like St Maarten.'"

Having been involved in carnival from the tender age of about 10, Radjouki has the carnival spirit running through his veins. He has been involved in many aspects of carnival over the years including playing with a brass band group, playing mass with The Majorettes, Brenda Wathey, Dian Velasquez, Gordon Yee and much earlier with Milton

Peters College (MPC) and Sundial School troupes and others. He also competed in the King and Queen of the Band competitions back in the day and won the King of the Band for five years: 1994, 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999. "This was a big event and that's why when I came back in I wanted to bring it back," he explained.

He had also served in several carnival committees under the leadership of Erno Labega, Fabiana Arnell, Michael Granger, Gina Illidge, Kendall Dupersoy, Stuart Johnson and Alston Lourens until he was given the opportunity to serve as President himself, an opportunity that he embraced.

Giving an insight into the challenges being faced by carnival, Radjouki said although the SCDF has not applied for or received any subsidy from government for carnival this year, the foundation is stable enough to pull off carnival, but with some financial difficulties.

He said the negativities will not dampen the SCDF. "Carnival is all about happiness and interacting with others. It will be very joyful and very cultural and we are not looking back at what has passed. That has been thrown aside and right now we are in the carnival spirit.

He urged everyone to come in numbers and enjoy all that is being planned for a great 2024 carnival. "We are going to do our best to show St Maarten that this year's carnival will be spectacular."

In addition to Radjouki, the SCDF team comprises Vice President Alston Lourens (coordinating the band clash/road march and media enquiries); Treasurer Michael Granger (dealing with promoters, financial, sponsors and pageantry); Secretary Franciane Peterson; Assistant Secretary Vida Boyrard (in charge of booth holders and the calypso show); board member Marie Gittens (assisting with the financial and the parades); board member Roland Rommy (overseeing inspection vehicle, and assisting with the booths); Angela Colli (assigned to membership and Renasha Richardson.

*Despite mounting challenges facing the country's biggest cultural event, President of the St Maarten Carnival Development Foundation (SCDF) Eduardo Radjouki, a 25-year carnival veteran, is confident that this year's celebrations will be nothing short of spectacular.*

He said SCDF will be pulling out all the stops to ensure that carnival will be one enjoyed by one and all. "Come out and see what SCDF under the leadership of my person is doing to make this a great event," Radjouki told The Daily Herald. "We are there to plan for you, the people of St Maarten, to have a good time. We are going to do our best to make sure that this year's carnival will be spectacular."



# Junior Carnival Parade: a flurry of fun

At least three troupes will be gracing the streets this year with colourful and creative costumes and dances, breathing life into the Junior Carnival Parade. The always exciting event is set to take place on Sunday, April 21. The youngsters have been practising for months, and the costumes are as whimsical and flamboyant as ever.

Local culture gets special attention this year, in addition to the bright flowers and feathers that we all love. You'll see playful depictions of school life, various old-time games like dominoes and marbles, and underwater/mermaid wonders!

Come out to see the joyful parade, and keep an eye out for Tropical Carnival Jrs, Survivors Production, Alexander's Youth Carnival Troupe, G-iena Hyman and the Majorettes, and the Jr. Carnival Queen winner and runners up Katalina Linzey, Ja'mayah Flanders and Nevaeh Paines. Don't miss this special family friendly event that lets the kids shine like the stars they are!



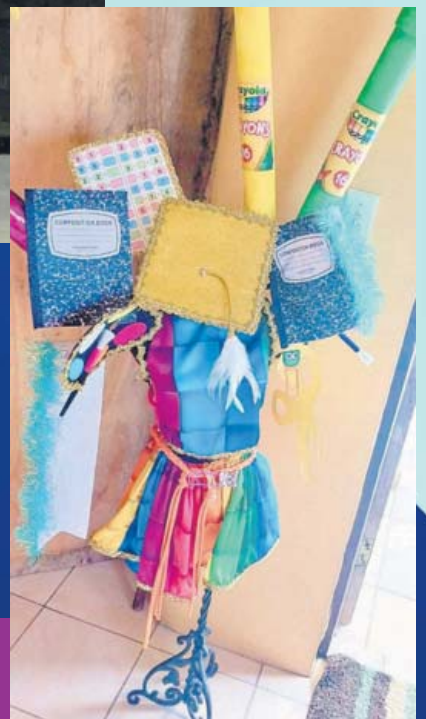
Tropical Carnival Jrs



Alexander's Youth Carnival Troupe



Alexander's Youth Carnival Troupe



Survivors Production

# Survivors Production to feature traditional costumes in troupe 'Rebirth'

**In keeping with the vision of St. Maarten Carnival Development Foundation (SCDF) President Edwardo Radjouki, several troupes are likely to reflect more local tradition and/or culture in their costumes this year. One such troupe is the Survivors Production, which will depict some traditional costumes, themed "Rebirth."**

Survivors Troupe Leader Jasmine Philips, who has been involved in the country's Carnival for more than a quarter of a century, has some strong views about Carnival, its parades and the need to get more children involved via schools to help ignite the love for Carnival amongst the youth. She also highlighted how extremely difficult it has become to get sponsorship, which this year has been zero for the long-standing troupe, since its main sponsor GEBE will not be supporting it this year.

"What are really missing in our Carnival are creative costumes. It [should not just be about] feathers and swimsuits and G-strings. In today's world, Carnival costumes have worked their way around party outfits on a hot day and in St. Maarten, it is no exception."

Asked how she feels about the request from the SCDF to include more culture in Carnival troupes and in Carnival in general, Philips said, "The request is awesome. However, the demand is another thing, especially when you're not contributing in any way whatsoever towards it. We have moved so far away from that goal post, that asking this generation of revellers to embrace this type of costuming is very difficult. We don't need every troupe to have a traditional wear or a cultural wear; and I think you can't wait after 50+ years of Carnival and demand such because a standard has already been set among your people. Twenty years ago, persons

generally wore more clothing, but today it's different. Time has evolved. Don't get me wrong; I respect that it's the G-string without the proper stocking [that is now the norm]. It is totally disgusting. The G-string was there 10, 20 years back, but it was worn properly. I believe if you're a troupe leader that caters to traditional and cultural costumes, then it's very easy [for you to incorporate in your troupe], but if not [then it becomes difficult]."

Philips said the question of injecting more culture into the St. Maarten Carnival always puzzles her. "I never really understood this question [because] culture is the way we speak, eat, sleep, dance, and I can go on and on. So, what are we looking at precisely?" she asked. "We are talking about the costumes; so the only way this can happen is if our young ones are taught and shown the value of loving this country St. Maarten. This has been sung many, many times. Schools – not just elementary schools, but also secondary schools – need to get on board and be taught how to do this. We are seeing the results of this not happening today," she said.

Survivors Production will be doing its part by putting out a selection of traditional costumes for this year's Carnival. It has added two sections to its troupe in which these vibrant and colourful costumes will be featured. "Our traditional section will tell the story of a very important person that needs recognition within Carnival because most persons go to the Village for some tasty BBQ chicken, ribs or even BBQ pig tail," she said, adding that one of the traditional costumes will be depicting a charcoal burner.

She explained that the charcoal burner, who is also referred to as "the coalman" in St. Maarten is an integral part of Carnival, hence this will be depicted in her troupe. "Coal is something that every booth holder traditionally must have during Carnival time. Two of our traditional wears will depict the wives of these men using what they had on hand to create beautiful Carnival outfits. One is with the sticks that are usually piled together before the process [of making the coal] and the other after the process."



Survivors Production has been a staple in the St. Maarten Carnival for many years. "We started off as 'GEBE Children's Carnival Troupe' (with the company being our only sponsor for more than 25+ years). The Carnival group began before the late Miss Veronica Gumbs, who was also a worker at that company, was involved. Most of our revellers from our children section moved on to our adult section and the rest is history. All of our costumes are locally made by co-workers and other workers. Unfortunately, we were not supported by the company this year," she said.

The troupe will have two children's sections and up to press time was still assessing how many sections its adult troupe will have. Philips said sponsorship is very difficult this year with almost no one willing to sponsor. "What I must say is that 2024 has a different wave of involvement in it. Sponsorship is 0.0. If anyone is willing to still assist, please feel free to contact me via email at Philipsjasmine702@gmail.com or via WhatsApp/phone at +17215266384."

The Survivors Mass Camp is open to everyone even those who just want to learn how to make a simple head piece. Philips said persons can feel free to walk in. She expressed hope that everyone enjoys the Carnival festivities and this period of cultural enjoyment, entertainment, seeing folks they haven't seen for a while and having an all-round good time. She urges everyone to make the most of the celebrations because come May 4, the curtains will close on Carnival 2024 and it will all be history.



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## CLEON FREDERICK: A CARNIVAL VETERAN LEADING THE WAY IN ST. MAARTEN

With over 20 years of experience under his belt, Cleon Frederick is a true icon in the world of St. Maarten Carnival. Known for his infectious energy and passion for the festivities, Frederick goes above and beyond each year to ensure that everyone around him has the time of their life during the Carnival season.

One of Frederick's main roles on the Carnival scene is running the popular "Where The Flex" (WTF) booth, located at Booth

34/35. Having been a booth holder for over a decade, Frederick prides himself on offering top-notch service, a welcoming atmosphere and a wide range of signature drinks that keep revellers coming back for more. The booth is especially famous for its mouth-watering BBQ pigtails that have become a must-have for Carnival-goers.

This year, Frederick and his Where The Flex team are taking things up a notch with "The Village Chill" event on Saturday, April 20. Featur-



ing an impressive line-up of DJs and live bands, attendees can expect a night filled with music, dancing and unforgettable moments. Plus, with the chance to win tickets to some of the hottest events in town, including Buss Di Chains Weekend (Ignite and Cooler Fete), Strictly The Best Festival (Reggae Night), Koncert X, Stink & Dutty, UV Neon Glow Fete, Jammin Wid Di NBA, Timo Live in Concert and five 2025 Season Passes, it's an event that no Carnival lover will want to miss.

Frederick has not only made a name for himself with his Where The Flex work, but has also left a lasting impact on various aspects of the annual festivities. His contributions include designing Car-

nival T-shirts for corporate companies, bands, jouvert troupes and the St. Maarten Carnival Development Foundation (SCDF). Frederick has built and managed the Carnival website, created designs for Carnival schedules and international events, and has collaborated with popular jouvert troupes such as Carib, TG Band, Rohie Riddim, Explosion Band and NBA.

In addition to these accomplishments, Frederick has promoted events like Fully Loaded 1 and 2: The Ultimate Reggae Experience, and launched the Carnival magazine "T's Carnival" to showcase and promote the vibrant Carnival product. He is also the mastermind behind the current St. Maarten Carnival

logo and the catchy slogan, "Come Experience Life". Frederick has generously sponsored pageant contestants, artistes, bands and revelers, demonstrating his commitment to supporting and enhancing the Carnival experience for all.

Frederick has delved into the world of Carnival entertainment by hosting a radio programme with Lady Grace titled "Dis Is Where The Flex", and collaborating on Carnival songs with artistes like Ashandi and Vere Hill from House Appliances.

As Carnival has evolved over the years, Frederick admits that there are some things he misses from the past. However, he remains opti-

mistic about the future of Carnival and is excited to see what this year's festivities have in store. With a special focus on safety and fun, Cleon is looking forward to Jouvert and all the other exciting events that St. Maarten Carnival 2024 has to offer.

For Frederick, Carnival is about more than just music and dancing; it's about bringing people together to celebrate life and create lasting memories. As he invites everyone to experience the magic of St. Maarten Carnival, Frederick's passion and dedication to the festival are sure to shine through, making this year's celebration one to remember.

## STRICTLY THE BEST FESTIVAL

Big hitters in reggae and dancehall

*Don't let fetteen season pass without going out with a bang! The "Strictly The Best Festival" is your one last chance to enjoy an amazing, dynamic concert, the night before the sun goes down on Carnival 2024.*

On Saturday, May 4, come out to experience a little something different, with the focus on a fusion of dancehall and reggae. Performing live will be heavy hitters of Caribbean music 450, Gramps Morgan, Wayne Wonder, and Dejour. Adding to the vibrant scene and making it a party to remember, there will also be live deejay-ing and dance performances.

Come out for a last night of vibrant entertainment and see "Strictly The Best Festival" earn its name. Presented by II Brothers Entertainment and hosted by the one and only Suppa, this night of entertainment was formerly known as One Love Reggae Concert.

Set to rock the stage with hit songs like "Journey", "Crawsis" and "Wild & Rich" is

450. Gramps Morgan will be performing hit songs like "A Woman Like You" and "People Like You"; and Wayne Wonder his most popular hits like "No Letting Go" and "Bounce Along"; while Dejour will come with hit songs like "90 Min" and "Red Wine".

Keeping the mood going all night, the DJ line-up includes St. Maarten's very own DeejBlaze, Dj Siw'Roo & Deej Kilo.

Sponsored by Martell, "Strictly The Best Festival" takes place in the Jocelyn Arndell Festival Village from 8:00pm to 3:00am on Saturday, May 4. Available at Abu Ghazi (Madame Estate) Cell Teck by Muffin (Philipsburg), Picture This Studio (Bush Road), Levi's (Simpson Bay and Marigot, and Carnival Village (during Carnival only), tickets are not included in Carnival season passes. Buy tickets in advance to secure your spot, and save: Tickets are US \$35 for early birds, \$45 in advance, \$55 the week of the show, and more at the gate.



Junior Kelly



Kranium



## VIBRANT LOCAL TALENT: KING T-MO AND LEGENDARY BANDS TO TAKE CENTRE STAGE

*Timo LIVE in Concert is the surprise event of the season, swooping in to take centre stage after some unfortunate cancellations. Making the most of the opportunity, the SCDF has dedicated the night to one of local talent and vibrant Caribbean artistry, with King T-MO headlining the event. Legendary local bands will rock the stage, and more surprise performances are in store, making it what will truly be a night to remember for years to come.*

King Timo is one of the island's most awarded and recognised artistes, and the SCDF was delighted to announce this concert, which had been a standing plan for the future. The concert falls squarely in line with the goal of promoting local culture and bringing Carnival back to its local roots.

Timo told us that what he most looks forward to is simply for everyone to come out to the concert and enjoy themselves. Expect to jam to hits like "Suckergarden", "The village burn down", "Vicks", and "KFC". There will also be a little some-

thing new for the fans, but it's a surprise so you'll have to come out and find out for yourself!

Often considered a jewel in the crown of St. Martin's entertainment and music industry, Timo is known for his mastery in genres such as Calypso, Soca, and local folkloric and Christmas music. Combined with his prowess in music composition, lyrical depth, and arrangement, he has been a force to be reckoned with in the music industry. He has earned the prestigious titles of "Calypso Monarch" and "Roadmarch King" – accolades that only a few in the Caribbean can claim. His fame reaches beyond St. Martin to New York Tri-State area, and he has proudly represented St. Maarten across the globe and throughout the Caribbean.

Mark your calendars and don't miss this special event, in the last weekend of Carnival. Timo takes the stage on Friday, May 3. Entrance price is just US \$10.

## Young Kings crowned at Junior Carnival Calypso and Road March Competition

~ King Jojo and King JP take home titles~

*The Junior Carnival Calypso and Road March Competition kicked off with a flurry of excitement as children and teenagers came together to compete for the titles of Calypso King and Calypso Queen. Dressed in elaborate costumes that reflect the rich heritage and traditions of Calypso Barbara, the young performers took to the stage to deliver their original calypso tunes.*

The Junior Calypso Show, which took place on Sunday, April 14, featured a line-up of 10 talented young artistes vying for the title of Junior Calypso Monarch and 10 vying for Junior Road March Monarch.

King Jojo emerged as the winner of this year's Junior Carnival Calypso competition, while King JP took home the title for Road March.

The annual event provided a platform for talented young singers and songwriters to showcase their creativity and passion for music. With catchy tunes, powerful lyrics and infectious rhythms, these young performers captivated the audiences with their energy and enthusiasm. The event also served as a platform for the young artistes to express their thoughts and opinions on a variety of social issues, from climate change to current events. Their performances were a powerful reminder of the important role music plays in promoting awareness and sparking dialogue within the community.

With themes ranging from social issues to cultural celebrations, including "Save the Children", "Vote Me In", "School Fights", "Mandatory Education", "Mind Your Business", "Beacon of Tomorrow", "Love" and "Corruption", each contestant brought a unique voice and perspective to the stage, making for an entertaining and thought-provoking event.

In addition to the Junior Calypso Show, the Junior Road March Competition promised to be a lively and colourful event. The young participants had been steadily preparing for their performances, from choosing their topics to composing melodies and perfecting their stage presence. Participants showcased their skills, choreographed routines and elaborate outfits as they competed for the title of Junior Road March King and Queen.

Both competitions served as a platform for young talent to shine and inspire the next generation of musicians. The organisers of the event were dedicated to fostering a love of culture and music among the youth, providing them with a platform to express themselves creatively and celebrate the rich traditions of Carnival.

Isidore "Mighty Dow" York, Music Director/ President at Dow's Musical Foundation, said all the 2024 contestants were quite outstanding, so the judges had their hands full. The year's event was quite a celebration of talent, culture and community spirit as the young performers took centre stage to share their passion for calypso music with the world.



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# Calypsonians ready to put on spectacular show

~ Reigning King 'pumped up and motivate' ~

Calypsonians that will be competing in the Nagico Senior Calypso Finals on Wednesday, April 24, in the Carnival Village are ready to dish out the issues, in an effort to dethrone reigning Senior Calypso Monarch, Isidore "The Mighty Dow" York. But Dow is coming strong in defence of his title and is hoping to capture the crown yet again. Dow, as well as some of the other contenders, gave insight into what can be expected from them on stage.

## Mighty Dow: 'High quality performance'

Since winning his crown in 2023, The Mighty Dow has had a busy year that included travelling to many destinations. "I travelled to Atlanta, Kentucky, Indiana, New York, Morocco, Ghana and Nigeria," said Dow, adding that his visit to Africa was the highlight of all his trips. "It changed me in more ways than one. I now have a better understanding of what transpired, and what is still transpiring," he said.

Asked what can be expected from him for the calypso finals, he said: "A high-quality performance – something people will talk about for a very long time." He plans to sing about social issues with lyrics relating to the past and present. And there will also be lots of surprises in store for patrons. "I am totally pumped up and motivated,"

said Dow about his readiness for the show. He urges everyone to come out to watch the calypsonians perform live. "The performance I am to deliver will be spoken about for many years and I am sure the other participants are equally prepared."

## Beau Beau: 2x4 – Will it last?

Due to a number of issues, King Beau Beau is not yet sure whether he will be competing in the calypso finals or performing as a guest artiste, but warned that if he does compete, he is coming like a big truck to knock down any participant in his way.

"I am still contemplating being a guest artiste," he said. "Between lack of interest and lack of confidence in SCDF, I've only been able to write one song so far. As you are aware, the requirement is two. I may or may not participate," Beau Beau said, adding that he has taken on quite a lot of projects this year.

The song he had already written up to the time of this interview is called "2x4" (Two by Four), which is about the new coalition and whether it will be a strong, committed and lasting government. "It's mostly humorous in substance, but yet serious about the state of the island and whether real and consistent progress will be made," explained Beau Beau.

"As for going straight to the finals and skipping the eliminations, we originally started out with some 19 entrants, but due to lack of funding and confidence in the state of affairs (of Carnival), many of the entrants have withdrawn. If I do ultimately decide to compete, calypso lovers can expect a thrilling performance filled with lyrics, music and stage presence. And, of course, the Beau Beau's acting team always brings joy and laughter to the crowd," he said.

As for surprises, Beau Beau said he always tries to get the local politicians up on stage with him, noting, "So let's see which of them will take up the challenge."

He does not necessarily have to win this year, but made it clear that "the rest of the guys will have to come extra good to beat me, because when I let loose, I knocking down anybody who stands in my path cause ah coming like a big truck (hint)."

He urges Carnival lovers to come out and support the local artistes. "Without their presence and participation, the art form will slowly wither away. We cannot allow

that to happen. It is our own indigenous culture, so we need everyone to support it."

In 2022, Beau Beau won his 12th Calypso crown. Closest to his record is Kaiso Brat with 10 crowns. "Calypso is our culture, so please don't be offended when we sing. We pick on politicians because they too often fail to do the right thing. Just like garbage men need people to litter to make an honest wage, calypsonians need politicians to falter to light up the Carnival stage," said Beau Beau.

## Fish the Mega Boss: 'Four Tyres'

Fish the Mega Boss does not plan to mince any words on stage for the calypso finals fusing political commentary with a humorous tone in the first song that he will perform called "Four Tyres."

"This year was really a trying time for the country and with all that has happened politically and socially, I've decided to fuse the political commentary with a humorous tone in 'Four Tyres'. I think the public will appreciate and love this one," said Fish. His second offering is called "Forget My Name".

He explained, "I was termed a sell-out for doing a political jingle and accused of taking a bribe for doing such in a chat on social media. So, in light of all that was said, it was better to forget my name and attack the politicians. These things happen sometimes where you have 20 to 25 calypsonians competing in one year and the following year not enough for an elimination and this is one of those years, but we can guarantee that the show will be competitive this year no matter what," assures Fish.

He plans to take the stage by storm. "On competition night, I will be punching in both rounds. I think I should change my name to De Krusher," he said. For Fish, while winning is always the ultimate goal, being able to deliver both of his renditions is more important for him on competition night. He underscored the importance of the support from the public. "We need the support of the public where Calypso is concerned and we need to take it to the big stage to show that we have top notch calypsonians competing with quality songs. Plus, seeing the show live is better than anything you can imagine."

Fish the Mega Boss is a five-time Calypso monarch, winning the crown in 2003, 2012, 2013, 2015 and 2017.

## His Majesty Baker Jr.: 'St. Maarten is a real place'

His Majesty Baker Jr. says calypsonians have a wealth of material to offer the public this year and he is confident that the calypso finals will be a resounding success and will draw significant interest from the audience.

"The message I'll be conveying serves as a stark reality check, shedding light on the societal landscape of St. Maarten and beyond. In today's era, a new phrase has emerged, resonating not only locally, but also throughout the Caribbean: "St. Maarten is a real place." This rendition aims to dissect the occurrences that unfold before our very eyes, reflecting the evolving nature of our society with the passage of time," said Baker Jr. about his first song. "Touching upon various topics, the song serves as a potent blend of social commentary and political discourse, aptly titled "St. Maarten is a Real Place".

His second song will be a fiery political documentary, and what he calls a hallmark of his musical repertoire. "In addition to this, I have already penned two more compositions delving into social commentary. Each piece is meticulously crafted, aimed at resonating with both my devoted followers and the broader masses. These selections reflect my earnest endeavour to both entertain and enlighten through the power of music. As previously highlighted, the anticipation for a sold-out showcase is palpable, fuelled by the ongoing tumult of gutter politics and pressing societal issues permeating St. Maarten, all of which continue to dominate social media platforms. In light of these circumstances, we are poised for an extraordinary calypso spectacle, destined to captivate audiences and garner widespread acclaim."

While he is yet to gain the Calypso King title in St. Maarten, Baker Jr. said he has been an uncrowned king on three separate occasions since embarking on this journey at the age of 18.

"Beyond the confines of St. Maarten, I am a force to be reckoned with, commanding respect and admiration in foreign lands. It is said that a king is not revered in his own domain and I stand as living testament to the veracity of this adage. Despite the challenges faced within my homeland, I continue to thrive and contribute to the musical landscape, both locally and internationally," he said.



Baker Jr.



Ebony  
Empress



# Junior Carnival Queen 2024 crowned in spectacular pageant performance



Winner Katalina Linzey.

*The sounds of laughter and excitement filled the air as the Junior Carnival Queen Pageant took centre stage at this year's Carnival. Three young girls showcased their talent, beauty, and grace as they vied for the coveted title.*

In the end, it was Katalina Linzey who dazzled the judges and the audience to be crowned Junior Carnival Queen 2024. Her performance was nothing short of spectacular, earning her not only the title of Queen, but also several other awards including Miss Popularity, Ambassador Wear Contestant, Talent, Costume, Performance in Costume and Princess Wear.

Ja'mayah Flanders and Nevaeh Paines also shone brightly on stage, earning the titles of first- and second-runner-up, respectively. Flanders wowed the crowd with her photogenic smile and heartfelt speech, earning her the title of Miss Photogenic and Speech.

The prizes for the contestants were impressive, including cell phones, gift certificates and even school fees paid for the upcoming year for the Queen.

The Essence and Mind Foundation, in partnership with St. Maarten Carnival Development Foundation, did a phenomenal job organising the pageant, ensuring that each contestant had proper training and support. The return of the Carnival costume segment and the addition of the Ambassadorial wear segment gave the event an extra layer of excitement.

As the pageant came to a close, organisers expressed their hopes for increased community involvement and support for future events. They encouraged everyone to spread the word and continue to support the young contestants as they represent the culture and spirit of Carnival.

The Junior Carnival Queen Pageant was just the beginning of the Carnival season, setting the stage for the festivities to come.



1st runner up Ja'mayah Flanders.



2nd runner up Nevaeh Paines.

Baker Jr. urges the public to rally behind the calypso showcase, starting with the junior performers. "It is imperative that we extend our support to these budding talents, as they represent the future custodians of our cultural heritage," he said. "Many aspiring artistes falter due to inadequate guidance, lacking proficiency in employing metaphors and double entendres, essential elements of penmanship. If stringent guidelines were in place, our compositions would undoubtedly achieve unparalleled excellence."

He urges the SCDF to expedite the disbursement of the financial incentives traditionally granted to competing calypsonians to help them prepare for their performance.

**Lady Nyra: 'Talk to your children'**

Lady Nyra might be a newcomer to the Nagico Senior Calypso show, but there is nothing new about the musical prowess of Shanyra "Lady Nyra" Richardson. She will be taking the stage by storm in an effort to take home the crown.

"This is my first Calypso show. However, I am no stranger to the stage," Lady Nyra told *The Daily Herald*. She intends to impress. "Attendees can expect good entertainment from me and my fellow candidates. As a first-time candidate in the Calypso show, I

was really looking forward to experience the elimination part. However, I am happy everyone will be going to the finals and there's actually a show being held [so I can perform]. For me, that's all that matters. That alone is a positive aspect."

Lady Nyra will be tackling a sensitive and important issue in one of her songs named: "Talk to Your Children." She said the song is a powerful call to action, addressing the pressing issue of children's wellbeing and behaviour in society. Her second song will be released before the finals.

"I have always wanted to sing Calypso as a young kid, but never made the effort to register. As a past Carnival queen and coming from a musical family, singing and performing arts have always been embedded deep within me. I decided to enter the competition because now is the time to continue exploring my talent and I'm ready," says Lady Nyra. "I would encourage the audience to come out to the show and experience what I and my fellow candidates have in store for you on April 24," she said.

**Ebony Empress: 'This is my year of winning'**

Dedicated to the art form, Ebony Empress is always present to deliver sweet kaiso music at the Carnival calypso competitions. This year she strongly believes it is her time to win the crown. "On the night of

Calypso finals, attendees should expect a night of high-level performance. It will be an evening with a lot of great surprises. I should win this year because this year is my year of winning," said Ebony Empress. Her first song will touch on issues faced on the island and her second song will be what she calls "a great surprise".

"In both of my songs, I will be sending out a positive message, which

everyone can relate to. I honestly wish we had the Calypso elimination. It shows the passion for the art form and also creates an excitement leading up to the finals," she indicated, urging everyone to come out

and enjoy the local show. "Carnival lovers should come out to show their support [and]... experience the best show in the Carnival Village this year."



Mighty Dow



Lady Nyra

# MAKE CARNIVAL GREENER WITH ECO-FRIENDLY DISPOSABLES

**St. Maarten's Carnival is already packed with fun and excitement, but it can also be green and eco-friendly if more vendors and individuals make using biodegradable products a standard in the festivities.**

PDG Supplies in Cole Bay can help those who want to make the country's major cultural event more sustainable with its line of eco-friendly disposable products.

Director Jonathan Robitaille says PDG Supplies offers a wide range of eco-friendly disposables, including takeout containers made from sugarcane fibre, wooden utensils, paper cups, and palm leaf plates. PDG also offers what the official describes as unique straws (called StrawFish). Made from oyster shells, these straws are durable, do not get soggy, and will decompose naturally in six months without leaving any harmful residues. StrawFish also makes disposable cutlery out of the same oyster shell based material.

So why are these items better than the traditional non-eco-friendly products that are commonly used? The PDG Director says the proposed eco-friendly products represent a sustainable alternative to traditional disposables. They decompose naturally, reducing environmental pollution and the dependency on plastics and Styrofoam. "Our eco-friendly products are a cleaner choice for the island," he notes.

Asked whether he believes that sufficient people, who sell food, are switching to

eco-friendly disposables, the PDG official said while there's a growing trend of restaurant owners adopting eco-friendly practices, the transition is still ongoing. He said the goal is a complete shift away from single-use plastics and Styrofoam. "Every year, more businesses recognize the importance of this change, moving us closer to sustainability," he asserted.

Elaborating on the importance of people selling food (during Carnival) using eco-friendly products, instead of those that can harm the environment, he notes, "It's very important. Using eco-friendly items helps protect the environment and meets customer expectations. People are increasingly looking for businesses that make environmentally responsible choices."

So, how does the price for eco-friendly food boxes and utensils compare to non-eco-friendly ones? According to the PDG Director, eco-friendly products may initially carry a higher price tag compared to traditional disposables, however, as demand grows and more manufacturers enter the market, the prices will decrease to be on par with the current non-eco-friendly options. "PDG is committed to providing affordable eco-alternatives, by in-

vesting in buying large quantities and stocking on-island and constantly searching for better alternatives; the aim is to bring the cost close to the polluting plastic and Styrofoam alternatives," he said.

He stresses that using eco-friendly products is an investment in the future, adding that

while it might seem costlier now, it certainly pays off in the long run by helping to reduce environmental damage. He said PDG Supplies is dedicated to promoting a more sustainable Carnival experience and the company encourages all vendors and participants to join PDG in making St. Maarten's Carnival greener.



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The St. Maarten Carnival Foundation is a non-profit organisation, and depends on contributions to put forward the best fettein' season possible. We thank our sponsors from the business community for their generous donations. A successful Carnival would not be possible without you!

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## Breakfast galore in Village for Soaking Wet Breakfast Fete April

**Breakfast is the most important meal of the day, and on the morning of Saturday, April 20, the first meal will be served up feting-style in the Jocelyn Arndell Festival Village for one of the hottest early bird fetes in this year's Carnival – the Soaking Wet Breakfast Fete.**

The breakfast fete kicks off at 5:00am on April 20, and will continue until around 9:00am.

St. Maarten Carnival Development Foundation (SCDF) official Alston Lourens said this early morning party is a local band fete where booth holders will get a chance to prepare appetizing breakfast specials for everyone. Meal options will be wide and tasty and the atmosphere will be a party one with lots to eat and drink, as well as music to start the weekend off in the right Carnival party style.

"We've had wake up fetes (day break fetes) twice before, but not under this name," says Lourens. "It's a fete we've done for a few years usually with a Kittitian or Anguillan band involved, but we switched the name this year. The idea is to promote people also experiencing the breakfast side of the village," he explained.

Keep your eyes peeled on the St. Maarten Carnival Development Foundation's official pages for the releases of the line-up of performers for the Soaking Wet Breakfast Fete.

See you there!

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