

# 20 QUESTIONS



Recently, I had the opportunity to pick the brain of Chris Clark of Magnificent Egos and below you'll see the result of the twenty questions with which he was peppered.

## 1. Who is Magnificent Egos?

We are a little itch in the back of my head that grew wildly out of control like a skin fungus. No, really, this all started when I was at Gen Con last summer. It was my first time there so I transformed into the biggest fanboy you can imagine. I was running around trying to meet all the industry people I could and discovered that quite a few were likable people and more than willing to stay in touch with me.

As it turned out, the people I spent most of my time with were miniatures people. I spent quite a bit of time talking to Jim Johnson, Drew Williams, Kevin Contos and Clint Staples, and I spent a ridiculous amount of time hanging around Sue Wachowski and Jennifer Haley. Neither will ever let me live down painting Confrontation figures by dry-brushing with craft paint. I also met Jason Engle there and started an ongoing discussion about custom art work with him.

Well, I returned from Indy with a pocket full of business cards and so many miniatures that I actually had to purchase a new bag to get them all home in. As I gleefully unpacked and started assembling my new purchases (many still await in their boxes nearly a year later), my wife prayed that my obsession with miniatures had piqued. As I "played" with my large and growing collection, I realized there were things I would like to change about some of them. I also was continually running into the problem of having a thousand miniatures, but none that came close to player characters or important NPCs in my role playing games. I now had the contacts and the cash to get Jason to draw some pictures and some of the sculptors I knew to do some custom stuff for me, and being obsessive and spoiled, I went for it. When I figured out I could sell a few figures online to cover my cost, I set up my little company. When the response to our stuff became overwhelming, I decided that maybe we should do a few more and see what happened. Things just spiraled out of control from there. Thus, Magnificent Ego's.

## 2. What is your philosophy or guiding principle about what kind of miniatures to make?

Our main goal is to be unique and barrier breaking while still appealing to the fantasy gamer and painter. I believe we still have a way to go to reach the pinnacle, but we are getting closer with each new design. Our philosophy with figure design is to make it as outrageous as you can, then take it up one more level. On the other side, I push the sculptors who work for me. We hand them detailed concept art and pages of guidelines. Then we tell them that what they have is considered the minimum for the piece and they are challenged to make it their own. The guide-

lines we give them do contain engineering specifications that need to be met by each piece, but most of the content is basic standards and suggested steps to free the sculptor to use their imagination as much as they like. For instance, rather than telling them what to do, we give them a list of what not to do which includes things like stereotypical gear, rank troops, basic monsters and static poses.

## 3. Speaking of sculpting philosophy and figure design, which current miniature gamers/enthusiasts do you see being most drawn to the ME line of figures, and why?

Well, I'm mainly hoping to catch the attention of the painters and hobbyist who collect, model and paint miniatures that ignite their imagination. I also hope to attract role-players with the character and style of our figures. I am not ignoring anyone group, but these two are my focus at the moment.

## 4. Are Magnificent Egos miniatures the precursor to a ME miniatures game or are they really intended for use in your favorite rpg or miniatures game, whatever that may be?

Yes!

## 5. Will there be Magnificent Egos rank & file troopers or just individual characters?

Yes and no. We are committed to making each piece we do unique and will never produce generic bowmen or spearmen for example. However, there is a game in the works that will allow for our characters to be grouped into small units for skirmishing and we will be producing support troops for this, only in the form of less experienced characters.

## 6. Lesser experienced character, hmm. Sounds sort of like a dungeon-crawl type game with parties of characters and hirelings. Close?

But no cigar. Actually, it's really too early for me to know.

## 7. Who are some of the sculptors that are working with Magnificent Egos?

Deep inhale: Sandra Garrity, Chaz Elliott, Drew Williams, Gael Goumon, Sylvain Quirion, Tim Prow, Bobby Jackson, Jim Johnson, Kevin Contos, Todd Harris, Jason Wiebe, Gene Van Horne, Tom Mason, and the list keeps growing. Seriously, I have been blessed to get to work with such a tremendous group of talented people.

## 8. What made you want to start a miniatures company?

Insanity? Megalomania? Selfish desire to see my own ideas brought to life? The world and my wife may never know.

## 9. What has the response been to Magnificent Egos so far?

It has really been great. Sales are not quite where I would like them to be, but that is never the case. However, fan support is

tremendous. I've received comments, compliments and orders from seven different countries. When we opened for business, we started taking pre-orders and had a great showing. A few major problems slowed our production to a standstill, so we offered refunds to those who were waiting for their minis. We had only one taker, and he re-ordered within a few days.

The industry seems to be welcoming us as well. We've gotten interest from retailers and distributors in several countries and online and I've received shows of support from just about every miniature company in the US as well as a number of game publishers.

**10. So, when will we see an aged human wizard in flowing robes wearing a pointy hat?**

The answer is never. You will see a young wizard in no beard and wearing pants though. You might even see a war wizard in armor. But there will be nary a pointy hat to be found.

**11. Any interesting horror stories about going into the miniature business that you can share with our readers?**

Never get into a land war in Asia. Never go in against a Sicilian, when \*death\* is on the line. Never outsource your business when quality and time commitments are important to you. There are some talented and honest people in this business, but there are also some hacks. Just be careful.

**12. Since experiencing some "outsourcing" dilemmas early on what changes have taken place in the production of ME miniatures?**

Well, everything is officially in-house. The only thing we don't do ourselves now is printing (and I even do some of that at home). That way we have full control from start to finish and can guarantee the highest quality and control on our own time tables.

**13. Do you plan to do any sci-fi or modern era miniatures?**

Will Steam-punk do for now?

**14. Steam-punk? That will do very well...for starters ;) Any clues as to the first figure concept in this line of miniatures?**

Well, he has a steam-powered arm...

**15. Do you see ME figures being on the higher side of the price spectrum being a problem?**

Not really. First off, the increase in metal prices has hit everyone. Price Creep will be a trend this year, I suspect. Second, we priced the way we did based on a couple of factors: we spend a great deal of time and money developing the figures before they come to production and we need to recoup our costs in fewer sales than a larger company might. That aside, I set our base prices by comparing our figures to character figures from popular games and don't see much discrepancy there. Also, you will find that our larger figures are very competitively priced. Our Mal-ryte figure is the same price as some smaller figures put out by larger companies.

**16. How did the deal with Bastion Press come about?**

Pretty simply. Last year, while I was still just a fanboy, I pestered Jim and Steve to find someone to make miniatures for them. They admitted that they were interested, but had not been able to make a deal. When I decided to do my own figures, I just called Jim up and offered the partnership. He agreed and the rest is history to be made.

**17. Are there plans to increase the line of Bastion Press figures to include more of their monster types?**

Absolutely. Bastion Bestiary figures are scheduled to release at the rate of 4 every other month with two larger boxed sets, including a favorite monster, planned later this year.

**18. Will it become standard for more characters to have sidekicks?**

Yes. Every mage has a familiar. Every druid or ranger has an animal companion. Knights will come with mounted conversions. Lycanthropes with all of their stages... Maybe we should stop somewhere. We'll see how the Cappibarra familiar goes over.

**19. Are you leaning more towards characters on foot versus those on mounts?**

As I said above, characters who would fit with mounts are being produced with mounted conversions. Look for our paladin at GenCon for our first release like this.

**20. What are ME's plans for GenCon Indy this year?**

We will have a 400ft booth celebrating our introduction. We will be premiering a number of new figures including two huge dragons, a new licensed line supporting a new game publisher and a miniature available only for Gen Con 2004 that is a conversion of one of our most popular pieces. We will also be presenting a manufacturers award at the painting competition. We will also be hosting quite a few talented sculptors in our booth doing demos. I don't want to give anything away, but the initials are SG, BJ, GV and one or two more.



The Magnificent Ego



Koyote, Assassin