

New Jersey *LICA* member is the



Nothing intimidates the King of Dirt. With 30 years of landscaping experience under his belt and a rough-and-tumble, no frills personality, New York City native Gino Panaro is not one to shy away from a challenge. Which is exactly why DIY Network handed him the reins on its new amped up lawn makeover series “King of Dirt,” premiering April 6 at 9:30 p.m. ET.

DIY Network’s “King of Dirt” is a family affair, as Gino, his wife Gina and brother Ralph team up to create high-end landscapes, hardscapes and outdoor spaces. They forego computer landscape design programs for old-fashioned, pen-and-paper style planning and trade hired help for family teamwork. “King of Dirt” is less about a business and more about bringing imagination and quality designs to the family trade. “I don’t believe in doing a job just to make money,” Gino said. “I believe in doing a job to make the job outstanding.”

In the first episode, the King of Dirt “Gino” faces off with his new clients, a married couple who don’t want to part with their beloved plum tree. He must convince the homeowners his approach to landscaping and that “the customer isn’t always right.” When Gino sends his brother Ralph to the pick out new shrubs and trees, Gino can’t believe what Ralph brings back.

The second episode “A Curving Patio for My Wife” Gino’s latest project has him dealing with his toughest client, his wife, Gina. She wants Gino to finally finish the landscape around their backyard pool at their family’s home. On top of not being able to decide which pavers he wants to use,



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Gino discovers a serious problem with his house that adds more time and stress to the job. Between his brother Ralph’s complaining and his wife Gina’s constant nagging, Gino soon realizes that this job was more challenging than he expected.

The third episode “An Oasis in a Tiny Backyard” a newly renovated townhouse in Williamsburg, Brooklyn needs a beautiful backyard oasis to go with a brand new modern interior. With a small yard to work with, a surprise rainstorm,



Left: Brother Ralph during the filming of the third episode “An Oasis in a Tiny Backyard.”

Above: Ralph sitting on the new stone wall as he takes a break from filming the third episode “An Oasis in a Tiny Backyard.”

Gino’s loss of his voice, and trouble with the water feature, the project nearly comes to a screeching halt.

Gino and his brother Ralph own and operate the New Jersey-based landscaping company Panaro Services, which tackles everything from lawn maintenance to drainage construction to landscape and hardscape design. And it all started with a rototiller.

Rewind to 1978. After taking a high school horticultural science class, seventeen-year-old Gino was inspired to borrow his father’s rototiller and start a lawn business from the trunk of his 1969 Cutlass with a buddy. “We had fantasies, sitting back on my friend’s porch, saying, ‘This is great. Can you imagine if we had 100 customers?’” Gino said. “And of course I surpassed my dreams of ever having 100 customers to having the fortune of being on television.”

But, it wasn’t a straight road to stardom for Gino. A toll-collecting job for the New York Port Authority led to gardening gigs at Staten Island Bridges, La Guardia Airport and Kennedy Airport. After two years with the Port Authority, he took the plunge and started Panaro Landscaping, later called Panaro Services, with his brother and father.

The family business started small as Gino earned his landscaping certificate and Ralph wrapped up his turf management degree. Eventually, they struck it big with high-end landscaping jobs like the re-creation of the terrain of the Pacific Northwest for a New York Aquarium exhibit.

After decades of getting their hands dirty and letting the world know that they don’t mess around, the brothers landed a spot as landscapers on MTV’s show “Trailer Fabulous.” For the next year, they transformed motor homes to “cribs-on-wheels” and established themselves as “Gino’s Crew.”

After attending trade shows for years, Gino further expanded his landscaping reach by joining the New Jersey Landscape



The King of Dirt being filmed installing a walkway in an up coming episode.

Contractors Association and the Land Improvement Contractors of America. Last December, Gino was elected Regional Vice President for the Monmouth/Ocean County region of NJLCA. “It’s quite comforting to know no matter where you

are you have an affiliation. I hate to use the word brotherhood, but that’s what it is,” Gino said. “The membership is strong, and we look at each other not as competitors. We’re peers.”

But, for Gino, landscaping is not only about professionalism. It’s about a passion for landscaping as an art and also an opportunity to bond with his family and business partners. Gino is committed to protecting his clients’ investments by choosing plants that match their wants without sacrificing their lawns’ needs. And he couldn’t do it without the help of his family. “[On ‘King of Dirt,’], I’m working with my brother, who has been my business partner since birth, and my wife, who has been my partner in life for the past 21 years,” Gino said. “Now she’s working with us and seeing what we’re up against, so I’m getting all the compassion I didn’t get for 21 years.”

Gino is a man who lives up to his name. He’s willing to get down and dirty and take on the toughest of turf, all with a healthy dose of attitude and New Jersey style. Gino Panaro truly is the King of Dirt.