

Cinematographer Leslie Garchitorea recently won the Kodak Vision Award for Technical Excellence in Cinematography for a commercial entitled **Downpour** promoting the Chowking food chain. "It's a real privilege receiving this type of recognition," says Garchitorea, who also won an Araw Awards (Philippines Advertising Congress) for Gold category in Cinematography. "I was ecstatic, this whole experience is like winning the Lotto twice, on the same day!"



It never rains, but it pours

"The basic concept for the commercial was really simple," Garchitorea continues. "We used images of bad weather to imply melancholia and sadness. These scenes were then contrasted with shots of food products that emphasize the heat of the steaming food. These visual cues presented to the viewers the warmth and secure feeling that you get inside a Chowking outlet."

Downpour involved three night shoots and two days in the studio. Prior to shooting, Garchitorea and director Stephen Ngo discussed moods, movements, the motion of each frame, blocking and choice of lenses. "We focused on the fluidity of the motion and how each frame interrelates with the other. Being an ex-editor, I usually look at a project more as a whole rather than going through it per vignette."

"Visually, we drew upon the movie **Hero**, specifically the fluidity of the characters' movements and motion. Every scene in the commercial was shot in high-speed, in the range of 300 to 500 fps. The pressures of time and money for a production of this scale were a big consideration, shooting at 500 fps means a significant increase in lighting and all the logistical issues that involves."

"An example of this is a scene in which the action involved a throng of umbrellas moving in unison down a slope. We lit the umbrellas with large soft indirect light, only we had a large area to cover and we were also using rain as an effect. The solution was to rig together four 20ft x 20ft Silk Butterflies and secure them on four 40ft scaffolding towers. Eight 6K Parlights were then bounced into the silk to create a large soft source."

Garchitorea used Kodak VISION2 500T 5218 and Kodak VISION2 500T 7218 film for the whole project. "The 16mm stock was used in the Photosonic High-Speed camera. I used a 500 ASA stock because of the amount of exterior night work that we were shooting, and I needed the extra stop for all the high speed scenes. The 35mm and 16mm versions of the 500T match very well, the tones, colors, blacks and specially the grain. I've used this stock on most of my projects, so I find that there's often little need for testing. I'm really confident that the stock can handle pretty much any situation I throw at it!"

Downpour was shot on an ARRIflex 435 and a 16mm Photosonic for the high T-speed shots, with a set of Zeiss Ultra Prime lenses. "I chose the Ultra Prime lenses because it's very easy to catch flare with 16mm if you're not careful, but the Ultra Prime provided me with that extra edge of safety."

"We took a lot of chances for this TVC, but I always do my best work when I'm being challenged in new ways." ■

