

Royal director for a royal epic

Director Prince Chatrichalerm Yukol and cinematographer Stanislav Dorsic create a Thai blockbuster.

King Naresuan is a biographical film with lashings of action that traces the rise to power of King Naresuan the Great of Siam, now known as Thailand. During his reign from 1590 until his death in 1605, King Naresuan oversaw the biggest territorial expansion in Siam's history. With an extensive period of principal photography that befits such a vast story, from the end of 2004 to October 2006, *King Naresuan* was directed by Prince Chatrichalerm Yukol (*The Legend of Suriyothai*), with cinematography by Czech-born cinematographer Stanislav Dorsic. The film is the biggest budget production to be shot in Thailand, costing some 500 million baht (over US\$13 million).



as a general softening filter. For me, filters are like herbs in a recipe, they provide that subtle addition to the imagery that makes it come alive!" The cameras used on *King Naresuan* were an ARRIflex 535 B, ARRIflex 435 ES and Moviecam Compact.

Apart from the normal vagaries of a movie set mainly in exterior locations, such as constantly changing weather conditions, a particularly challenging location was the King's palace as it is decorated with gold paint which acted like a mirror reflecting all the lights. The problem was solved through judicious placement of HMLs outside with a few appropriately gelled tungsten lights inside providing the warmer tones. The main location was the Surasiha Military Base in the Kanchanaburi province, the

largest province in central Thailand and well known for being the location of the infamous bridge over the river Kwai.

Given the considerable size of the production, many of the crew were sent overseas for training and industry professionals with experience on blockbuster films acted as consultants. Director Prince Yukol says that "The generous assistance we got from international professionals equipped the Thai crew members with the knowledge and skills for them to work at their fullest potential thus raising the Thai film industry to new heights. Our aim is to compete on a global scale!"

"The best thing about being a cinematographer is when I've shot a film that I'm really proud of it is good to see the buzz in the newspapers and on the internet that the audiences enjoyed seeing it nearly as much as I did shooting it!"

The production company for *King Naresuan* was Prommitr, the producer was Mom Kamla Yukol and the film was released in December 2006. ■

Above: Director Prince Chatrichalerm Yukol
Below: Scene from the film

