

11/07/2004

Pinto, Tiara and Puteri Gunung Ledang

A HORSE named Pinto is set to join the Animal Hall of Fame alongside such four-legged Hollywood luminaries as Trigger and Fury.

Pinto, who tragically passed away recently, has just been nominated for his outstanding galloping performance in the eagerly awaited Malaysian big-budget movie, Puteri Gunung Ledang.

Pinto, as you might have already gathered, is no ordinary horse. The much-loved animal belonged to Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Got your attention? Frankly, the award nomination for Pinto is a fib. There's no such award. It doesn't make him less of a star, though. Pinto played a crucial role in Puteri Gunung Ledang and helped the movie's lead star, Tiara Jacquelina, overcome her fear of horse riding.

One of the key scenes in the movie required Tiara, who plays the fabled Javanese princess, to gallop at full speed alongside the love of her life, Hang Tuah (played by M. Nasir).

"I used to ride quite frequently and was very comfortable with the horses," said Tiara.

"But one day, while out riding with my husband, he was thrown off and was injured quite badly. Ever since, I was simply too frightened to get back on the saddle."

For Puteri Gunung Ledang, however, the actress was required to be an expert rider and it was time to confront her fears.

"Pinto helped me regain my confidence with his calm and gentle nature," recalled Tiara. "I trusted him completely knowing that he would not behave erratically."

Pinto was an Argentinian polo pony, and Puteri Gunung Ledang was his first experience working on a movie.

"He worked incredibly hard as it took almost an entire day in the extreme heat to get the right shots for the galloping scene," said Tiara.

It was all worth it, though, and Pinto enjoyed his brief spot of fame and stardom. The cast and crew adored Pinto. He received so much attention from them, and he was by far, the most well behaved talent on the set.

When he was not acting or exercising, Pinto's favourite pastime was eating (he was certainly a true Malaysian). His favourite food was carrots.

Unfortunately, due to his untimely death, Pinto's cameo role in Puteri Gunung Ledang was his first and last big screen appearance. He could have been a contender. He could have been a star.

Maybe it was the heat. Or maybe he was old. And then again, it could have been all the excitement of working with some of Malaysia's top-ranked stars like Tiara and Nasir.

Pinto had his day in the sun. And now he's on celluloid, too! Don't miss Pinto's magical performance in Puteri Gunung Ledang when it opens in Malaysian next month.

(END)