

THE STAR

DATE: 18/08/2007



Parker keepsake: Tunku Khadijah (with husband Datuk Syed Hussein next to her) being presented with a Parker 61 by The Pen Gallery directors Lai Kim Hoong (far right) and Daniel Seow. The pen is the same kind Tunku Abdul Rahman used to sign the Independence Agreement.

While it is impossible to buy the pen used by the country's first prime minister Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj to sign the Independence Agreement, you can now get the next best thing — a new Parker 61.

The pen is being re-released by Parker, the renowned American pen firm, to celebrate Malaysia's 50th national day. Only 50 have been made.

The original pen is now on display at the Proclamation of Independence Memorial in Malacca where Tunku announced Malaya's independence in 1956 after his triumphant return from London.

Parker's 50 limited edition pens are offered in the same stunning Vista Blue that Tunku used. Two of these pens already have owners. The Parker 61 bearing the number 50 has been given to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, while Tunku Abdul Rahman's daughter, Tunku Datin Paduka Khadijah was presented with pen number 44 by the Pen Gallery's directors Lai Kim Hoong and Daniel Seow.

Khadijah, still energetic at 74, said, "I like the number 44 as four plus four makes eight, which is my father's birth date and eight is my lucky number!"

"I am very surprised and

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Tunku's pen

pleased to know this is practically as good as the original as the parts were taken from the old warehouses holding surplus, unused stock! So this pen is identical to the pen used by my father to sign the Independence Agreement."

Explains Seow, "Each of the 50 Limited Edition pens was made using genuine, reconditioned, new and replacement parts, so each Parker 61 is truly unique since each has one-of-a-kind components different from each other."

The shell of each pen is inlaid with Parker's trademark arrow just above the 18K gold nib. The original capillary filling system has been replaced with an ink cartridge, and this makes refilling a

breeze. The serial number is engraved on the cap and individually numbered on the Certificate of Authenticity.

The original Parker 61 was

launched in 1956 in the US, the same year Tunku announced at Padang Pahlawan at Bandar Hilir, Malacca on February 20, 1956 that the date for Independence would be Aug 31, 1957.

Back then, Parker 61 was the world's most advanced capillary self-filling pen. The pen could be filled without immersing the entire nib into the ink bottle. The dramatic 10-second, self-filling system gave up to six hours of trouble-free writing, which was considered quite miraculous at the time.

It became the bedrock of Parker's fortune.

Each of the limited edition pens is a mere RM2,007, so owning a piece of history is just a signature away on your credit card. Hurry, if you're interested. — **By KEE HUA CHEE**

