

My weekend in Majorca

PUERTO PORTALS, Majorca — When John Kilroy talks, the White House listens — so who was I to say no when he called me in Paris and said, “Eric, you’ve got to come down and have dinner with us and someone very important.”

Down I went to Majorca where Kilroy and his wife Chantal were racing their boat *Kialoa 5* in an elegant regatta that almost put the Spanish Armada to shame. Waiting aboard was my dear pal, the Countess Pamela de Maigret. Dinner, as it turned out, was an intimate and relaxed tete-a-tete with his majesty, the king of Spain. More about this remarkable monarch in another column.

Puerto Portals, a new, chic little harbor away from the package-tour bustle of Palma, was seething with the super-wealthy, their hangers-on and gaggles of yachting groupies of every sort. The kind of place where a vulgarian like Donald Trump would feel very lonely.

I told Australian tycoon Allan Bond that his gargantuan motor yacht was blocking our view of the sea, craned my neck looking for King Constantine of Greece, eyed Spanish movie stars and gawked at the *senoritas*.

Rather better, I mused, than being up in the Hindu Kush dodging mortar fire and hepatitis.

Kilroy, one of California’s leading property developers and a pillar of the Republican party, had actually arrived with his own personal fleet. Next to the racing *Kialoa 5* was moored our temporary floating home, the *Kialoa 3*. Both came fully staffed with crews of tanned, blond, enviably muscular young men who would have made the pulses of any red-blooded woman go into high gear.

And there was danger, too. Sailing yachts are not designed for landlubbers like me. Returning to

Punch



“Oh, no! Here comes that bloody Chicken Little again.”

ERIC MARGOLIS



our nautical residence after a very long evening of sangria and wine was exceptionally perilous. You have to negotiate a 2½-foot wide undulating gangplank and then weave through a mine field of sinister bumps, knobs, winches, lines, invisible cables and other assorted pitfalls, all designed to decapitate or cripple the unwary reveler.

The next day the countess and I, being non-racers, were bundled off aboard a 140-foot motor yacht as guests of a family of Greek shipping magnates. This majestic craft probably cost more than the Canadian Navy. As I sipped champagne and watched the yachts race across the blue Mediterranean, the countess entranced our fellow passengers with tales of her hunts for sunken treasure, mining in the Amazon and adventures in the Mideast as a secret emissary for the U.S. government.

That night brought more partying for the weary mariners. I was sitting next to Olympic athlete Gerardo Seeliger and his delightful wife Maria, when they saw me eyeing a magnificent Spanish lady with flowing black tresses and dangerously red lips. As I protested faintly, they marched me off to meet her. “Eric, meet Paloma.”

She looked at me, and said to the waiter, “Champagne!”

I looked at her and felt what the Italians call *la brucia d’amore*—being seared by passion. It was volcanic love as only the Spaniards know it—at least until I found that there was a *Senor Paloma*. I returned to the yacht charred and smouldering, and almost fell off the gangplank.

Up the following morning and off on the *Kialoa 3* to a dramatic, cliff-bound island where we snorkled, skin-dived and water-skied.

Chantal Kilroy exhausted me. First she went octopus hunting, fighting to wrench the creatures off their rocky perches. Then down to 90 feet for a little cave exploring. After leaving her diving gear on the boat, Chantal swam back to the cliff and proceeded to climb up about 200 feet.

I watched this decathlon while sipping a cold beer and giving silent thanks I wasn’t Chantal’s insurance agent. For her quieter moments, she likes to sky dive and ride motorcycles. Whatever happened to the idle rich?

On the way back, I chatted with Kilroy about how he had made his fortune. He started with nothing after World War II and slowly built up a property empire by a combination of daring finance, careful planning and a brilliant understanding of California’s real estate boom.

Now a great-grandfather, Kilroy has the body and mind of a man 30 years his junior. Tall, white-haired and rather fierce looking, Kilroy would be a duke if America had royalty.

Another dinner and then off to bed. The next day I returned to Paris, a mere shadow of my former self. Enough of perfect bodies and yachts. Back to reality for me. Still, I wondered, wasn’t there some way I could sneak a yacht and crew onto my Master Card?