

John Gilpin has been influenced

Last seen sitting cross-legged on the ocean bed under two metres of water off Phi Phi, Gilpin surfaced last night (Wednesday) at the stellar party at Kata Beach Resort. No sooner had he focused than he fell in with a band of rapscallions and rascals who sail aboard the good ship Loreto and call themselves Escaped Aussies (www.escaped-aussies.com), which they say is up there with AOL, Google and all the big boys.)

What drew him to this motley crew was the sheer bedazzlement of their shirts. Stylish, slick and elegant, each shirt displayed 45 years' worth of Playboy magazine covers, each image no bigger than a miniature playing card. No doubt about it, these were the finest shirts yet seen by Gilpin at any of the KC parties so far. The crew of Patrice is now stamping its collective foot as it languishes in second place in the best-shirt-of-the-regatta stakes.

The Escaped Aussies are a band of blokes of various nationalities who all met in Australia. They now live in various countries and get together to "do regattas".

So how does the King's Cup compare to other yachting gatherings?

"Mate, during Cowes Week it was 15 degrees Centigrade and there were 32 knot winds," said Darren Shipard. "There are a thousand boats and the racing is very serious. They have good par-

ties and thousands of people, but the racing is so hard we were all in bed by about 7.30 each evening."

"The King's Cup in Phuket is similar to Antigua," ventured another tar, formerly from Oz.

"They're both warm but Antigua has more wind and Phuket has better parties."



Nice shirts, guys. Oh, by the way, they cost US\$60 a piece from Playboy.com, though rumour has it that the Escaped Aussies got a special deal because they have a former Playboy bunny in their crew. If the lady would be kind enough to make herself known to Gilpin at the next party she will receive a free copy of Spotlight.

Former Playboy bunnies? Stylish shirts? It seems that the King's Cup is heading right in the direction that principal sponsor, Gulu Lalvani of Binatone Royal Phuket Marina Resort and Spa, wants it to be going. No sooner had Gilpin finished sucking info from the Escaped Aussies, than Gulu was making a speech on stage saying "we need a touch of glamour" in the event. Gilpin wonders what he has in mind for next year?

As JG pens this piece in the cupboard by the Committee Room at the Kata Beach Resort, King's Cup President, Andy Dowden squeezes in and rummages through boxes on the floor.

"This presidency thing's not what it's cracked up to be," he growls "I've spent the whole day looking for T-shirts."

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