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Summering in Saint-Tropez with
J CRAFT'S NATALIA

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Touching down in Aéroport Nice Côte d'Azur is always filled with expectations, whether about an upcoming yacht show or other special events. For this arrival, we were primed to experience a perfect summer holiday in and around storied Saint-Tropez. Of course, we joined masses of other visitors -- and residents -- in the high summer season's notorious traffic jams on the way to our base in Port Grimaud. At least our route was wonderfully scenic. Not wanting to waste precious seconds once we arrived, we unpacked and got ready for an adventure.

Port Grimaud is a beautiful community developed over an old fishing town half a century ago. It maintains its historic ambience with picturesque mazes of small canals amid two-story houses that recall the region's traditional architecture. Here, every house has its own berth or two. Our house was located in the southern part of the town, with a ground-level layout ideal for socializing. Upstairs the more private *chambres* boasted stunning views. Outdoors, a beautiful garden, became the perfect setting for meeting NATALIA, our J Craft Torpedo R, a 42-footer yacht. Port Grimaud and J Craft often make ideal partners. In fact, King Carl Gustav XVI of Sweden, who commissioned the first boat built by the Swedish brand back in 1999, has often been seen at the helm of the 38-foot J Craft Polaris around Port Grimaud.



NATALIA was admittedly low-key, owing to her streamlined stature. She is, however, anything but demure. She and her sisters are designed and refined by skilled crafters famed for nautical works of art in the ancient town of Visby on the island of Gotland. Torpedos are sturdy, powerful runabouts that hide their Viking heritage behind an array of powerful modern tech, garbed in head-turning, refined luxury. These include exquisitely classic analog dials at the helm, which conceals a retractable digital display, gleaming eco-friendly mahogany varnished 18 times, and a hand-carved Nardi steering wheel inspired by classic 1963 Ferraris. Super-stealthy twin Volvo Penta IPS engines provide a 35-knot cruise speed, 50-knot top speed, with a 350-nm range at 43 knots. Below, in the cabin space, nothing is overlooked: from stylishly designed adjustable berths to a head with a sit-down shower, all surrounded by that rich, warm mahogany. You might be tempted to spend time down in the cabin, but all the excitement is topside. With myriad customization options, the J Craft Torpedo is quickly becoming an icon of design, artisanship, and tech in the yachting community. She and her sisters move with both a power and style capable of taking on destinations as diverse as the striking limestone sea stacks of the Baltic or the picturesque coves of the French Riviera. Our expert captain, Tibor, had NATALIA waiting for us, primed to reveal the latter.





Saint-Tropez is the ultimate destination along the Côte d’Azur. From our house, we followed the canals until we reached the open sea. The sun was beginning its descent and we discovered what a perfect time the early evening was to visit. From Port Grimaud, NATALIA made her entrance into the gulf of Saint-Tropez like a leading lady. The sea was calm, the breeze was barely a whisper, and the sun was illuminating everything with golden rays. We thought it would take us time to get to Saint-Tropez as we’d been told that driving, for example, in the summer would take well over an hour; we imagined by boat it might take longer. We were utterly wrong.

Beyond Port Grimaud’s 5-knot speed-limit zone, NATALIA entered the open waters, reaching up to 50 knots in no time. Suddenly we were flying over the water, but with a sense of both security and supreme comfort not typically found at this speed. With a comfortable swing, NATALIA maneuvered around the fantastic superyachts anchored in the gulf while their tenders were preparing to join us for the evening. Just ten minutes later, we were arriving in the legendary port of Saint-Tropez.

Entering Saint-Tropez aboard a J Craft is a unique experience, especially if it’s undertaken during the golden hour. The sun’s slow descent transforms the colors of the town’s traditional houses and the yachts in the harbor to amber. Suddenly, all eyes are focused on you and NATALIA, with her regal lines barely concealing her immense power.

The port space was packed, with everything from minuscule dinghies up to 60-meter superyachts. Any available space was occupied. But we quickly discovered that J Craft owners enjoy a unique benefit: a dedicated pontoon. J Craft owners are lucky

in more ways than one and never encounter a problem visiting Saint-Tropez. In addition to its exclusive dock in Saint-Tropez, J Craft also has a dedicated local service team to resolve virtually any situation, ensuring your vacation is as tranquil as the gulf’s waters. Tibor expertly maneuvers NATALIA, employing the joystick provided by the state-of-the-art Volvo Penta IPS propulsion system. The system is so simple and intuitive that even a child could dock this boat successfully.

Despite an aura of flashy glamour, Saint-Tropez is a beautiful old town that rose up from an old fishing port. Its historic citadel was first erected in the early 1600s to protect the Provençal coast from Spanish invaders. And while Don Jon (as the stronghold is called) could withstand the pelting of cannonballs, by the late 1800s, it was unable to keep up with more modern forms of warfare. Over the years, it has been maintained, restored, and in 2013 it opened the Maritime Museum to preserve the rich heritage of the town’s fishermen and sailors. That said, it rightly boasts the most incredible views over the Gulf of Saint-Tropez, the home of legendary Brigitte Bardot, whose villa is nearby, and some of the world’s most renowned yachts in this enchanting harbor.

We journeyed from the once-strategically important citadel down to the Old Port through a winding maze of charming streets around the Eglise Notre Dame de l’Assomption, one of the most iconic sights in town. Its red ochre clock tower serves as a compass for navigating Saint-Tropez, and the surrounding neighborhood is home to a variety of galleries that deserve a visit if you are a passionate collector. Small sidewalk cafes offer further respite, if you need it. And, of course, the gorgeous boutiques highlighting the best in fashion, jewelry, and design fill these streets with glamour, luxury, and style.





Mythical **Hôtel Byblos**, located two blocks from the harbor, has many amenities, one of which is undoubtedly **Cucina Byblos**, helmed by the inveterate collector of Michelin stars, Alain Ducasse. There was no question about where we were dining that night. Located within the hotel's lower-level garden, Cucina Byblos boasts an exceptional setting for dining under the stars amidst the garden's beautiful foliage. We were expertly received by the exceptional staff who readied us for a memorable meal. The Italian-accented menu is tempting, highlighted by a wide variety of entrées, with pastas, fish, and meat taking center stage. We enjoyed the crisp, but heady 2019 Vincent Girardin Chassagne-Montrachet the chief sommelier recommended. It perfectly complemented both the lemony octopus salad and the creamy and spicy *Pizza n'duja* we chose to start our meal, as well as the *Ravioli del plin al tartufo* and *Escalope de veau à la Milanaise* which followed. As always, we found ourselves surprised and inspired by Ducasse. We ended this evening of gustatory delights with a traditional tiramisu, followed by a perfect espresso before walking down to the port where NATALIA waited, ready to whisk us home for a welcome rest. Here is where it's once again apparent how J Craft's splendid design overlooks no details. Boarding NATALIA is perfectly simple with a remote-controlled retractable hydraulic gangway which can be extended, lowered, or raised to the perfect position for easy access.



The next morning, we arose early and prepared for a full day at sea, quickly grabbing coffee and assorted ocean gear. Tibor had NATALIA prepared for us. We hopped aboard and headed back to Saint-Tropez. Arriving at the port we were greeted by seven other Torpedos, docked at the Sportmer-managed J Craft dock. We walked a few meters from the pier to the **Saint-Tropez Lounge Club** where we joined the other J Craft owners for a delicious breakfast. Organized by the shipyard, the gathering emphasized and celebrated the interconnectedness of the J Craft family. This small group represented nearly a third of the world's Torpedo owners. At once similar to, and far beyond, Italy's legendary Mille Miglia convergence of cars, this was a gathering on both water and land of what has been dubbed "the Rolls Royce of boats." The group was friendly and passionate, and it was energizing to be part of a lively yet intimate gathering, before sailing out to continue the full day ahead.



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Île de Porquerolles is a charming and unspoilt car-free oasis off the coast of Hyères. For sailors on the Med, it's a dream destination. For our group, as well as others in the immediate area, it was a visually stunning sail: all the J Crafts running free on a perfectly flat ocean on a perfectly beautiful day. A cinematographer could not have conceived a more beautiful vision: each Torpedo flanking her sisters at a majestic 25 knots. In just under an hour, we had reached the island with the team at the harbor awaiting us with huge welcoming smiles that matched those on our faces. It was a sight -- and experience -- not soon to be forgotten.

The **Port de Porquerolles** is well-protected and large enough to receive all kinds of boats. The island is also home to a picturesque village and fantastic beaches like **Plage de la Courtade, Plage Notre-Dame, and Plage de la Galère**. In port, we regrouped and strolled down a beautiful road shadowed by trees until we reached **Villa Carmignac**, the location of Fondation Carmignac. The Fondation promotes contemporary art as well as investigative photojournalism with the prestigious annual Carmignac Award. Over 300 works of contemporary art, as well as award-winning photos, are on display at the villa which opened to the public in 2018.

Villa Carmignac also hosts an excellent restaurant nestled beneath the trees. A long table was already set for our group, making the perfect venue to wind down, relax, and socialize after the adrenalin rush of our arrival. After a beautiful lunch, we headed back to the entrance of the Fondation for a guided tour of their impressive art collection. In the gardens, we moved amid spectacular sculptures, interventions, and interactive pieces. Inside, the villa's saloons were filled with works from artists around globe, and included photographs, paintings, sculptures, and installations.

After finishing the tour, we headed back to the port for a refreshing ice cream before boarding our J Crafts to take us to Plage de Courtad for a reviving swim in the perfect azure waters. There is never enough time to enjoy all that's available on the island. We are again interrupted most pleasantly by the golden glimmer of another approaching sunset. We departed as we arrived, in unison, entering the Gulf of Saint-Tropez before moving ahead at 40 knots. Waving good-bye, we sail back to our individual bases, wherever they might be. We sail back to Saint-Tropez relishing the magical symbiosis of machine and nature where, later in the evening, we could reminisce about our exceptional day.

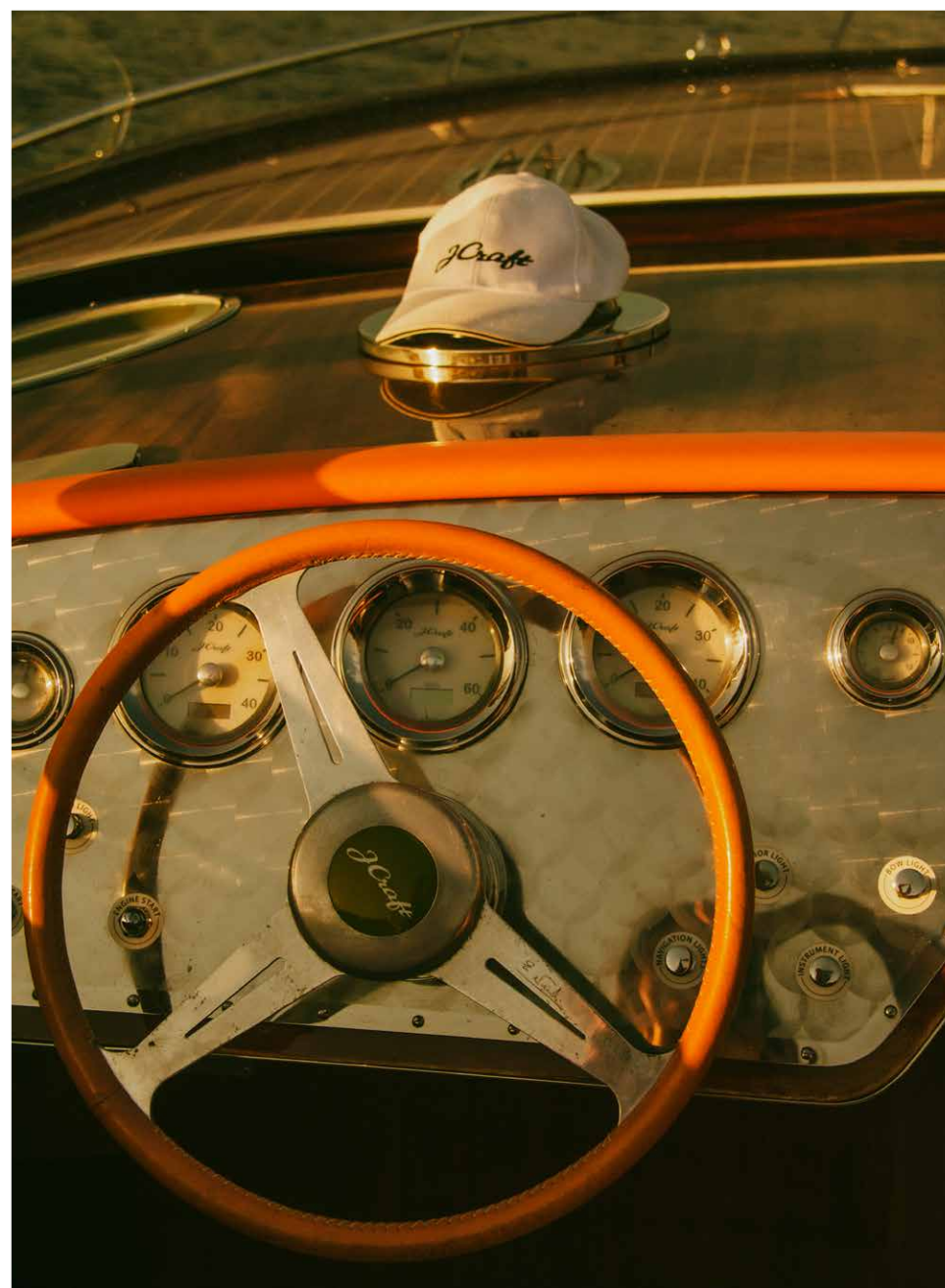
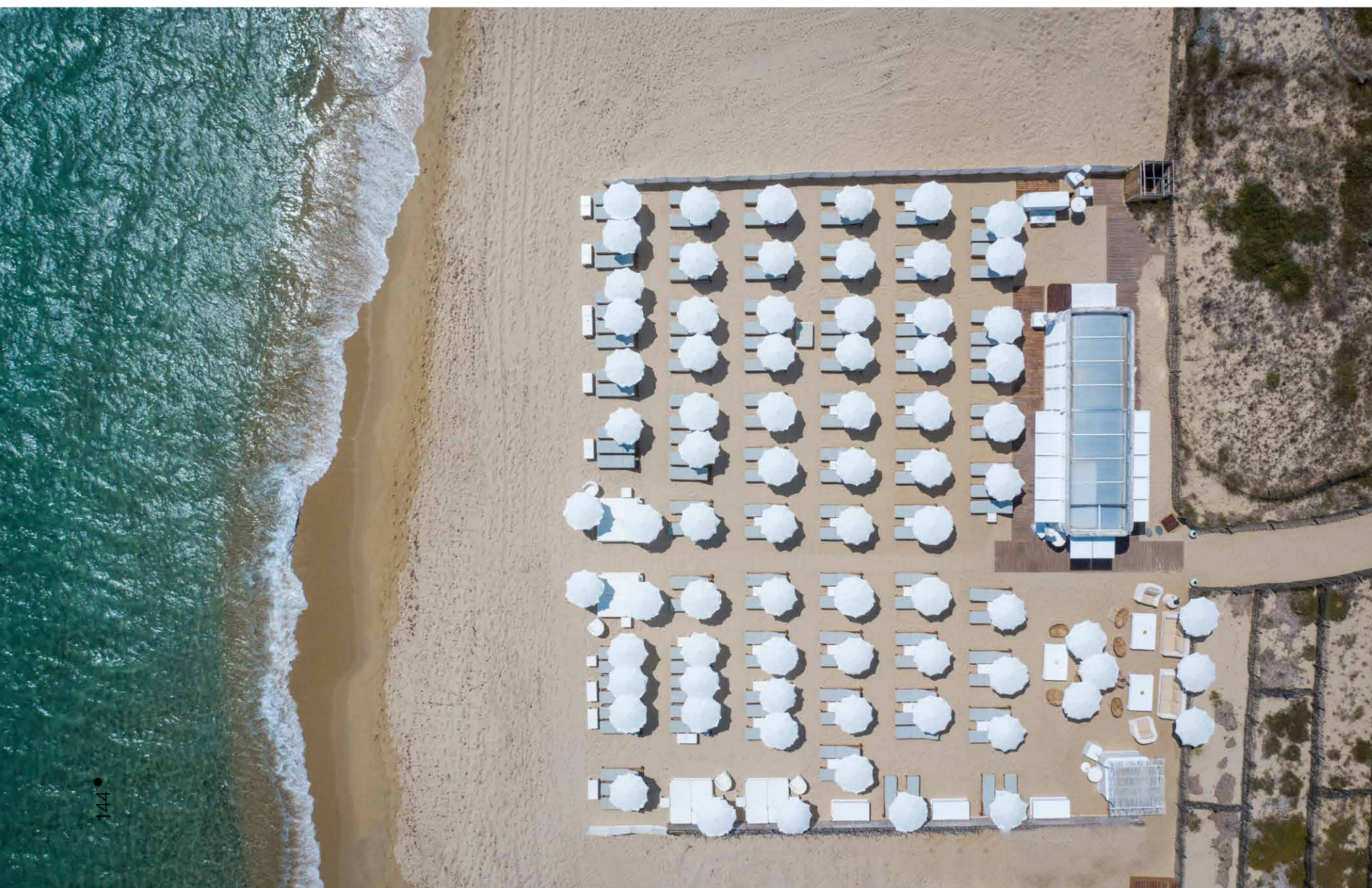
Thankfully, summer doesn't soon end in Saint-Tropez. With five more glorious days to enjoy NATALIA, there was so much to discover that early every morning we were ready to experience a brand-new adventure. Beaches, restaurants, art galleries, shopping, markets...everything is within easy reach along Côte d'Azur, and more so if you own a yacht like a J Craft Torpedo. For us, the days ahead were filled with memorable experiences.







Plage de Pampelonne in nearby Ramatuelle is a destination not-to-be missed. This beautiful long beach with perfect sand is ideal for relaxing and enjoying the sea, easily accessible with an agile conveyance like our NATALIA. The extensive seafront is awash in exclusive, stylish beach clubs, each poised to fulfil one's every imaginable need. For those seeking an informal ambience, the historic **Club 55**, is ideal, taking center stage along the beach. It is still owned and managed by the same family hired to cater – on a single gas cooker, no less -- the 1955 film production of Roger Vadim's directorial debut *And God Created Woman*. The film also sealed the “sex kitten” persona of his then-wife, Brigitte Bardot, making her an overnight sensation. Everyone eats at Club 55; “The customer is not king here...because he is a friend,” as the management is fond of saying. The food here is not gourmet, it is purely and simply delicious, thanks to the abundance of fresh produce coming straight from their nearby farm or the sea beyond. For those seeking more excitement, there's always **Les Palmiers**. Here you'll find a live DJ to pair with a very lively dining experience, which includes high-energy music, dancing waiters, even a fashion show. It's ideal for those who want to party, dance, and dine, all in the same place. Les Palmiers is beautifully located a few meters from the shore with a fantastic kitchen focused on fresh dishes from the sea. These are just two of Pampelonne's diverse highlights. It's essential to know that you can anchor or tie to a buoy right in front of these or any beach venues, and a dinghy will come to retrieve you, so you arrive perfectly ready for the party. No need for a car.



While a blissful day on the water demands an evening celebrating in Saint-Tropez, there is a splendid detour a few minutes south on **Plage de Canoubiers**. Easily accessible by smaller craft, it is nestled in a protected bay with calm waters that swimmers will enjoy. Canoubiers is also a preferred locale for resident celebrities. It's possible to find yourself swimming in front of Brigitte Bardot's house or the summer retreat of the Ford family.

Back in Saint-Tropez, the sunset is, as always, exquisite. A stroll through the narrow streets of the Old Port, past alluring shops and façades that take on a deepening golden hue is a unique experience. Find a bar, savor an Aperol Spritz, and just absorb the scenery: take in the many yachts, superyachts, and tenders, all vying for a docking space. But if you own a J/Craft, you can just relax and congratulate yourself on your foresight, wisdom, and excellent taste. ⊕

