



Renegades Extra!



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**Former Yankees' Star – Turned Musician
& Wine Enthusiast – Bernie Williams
Builds Relationship with Millbrook Winery**

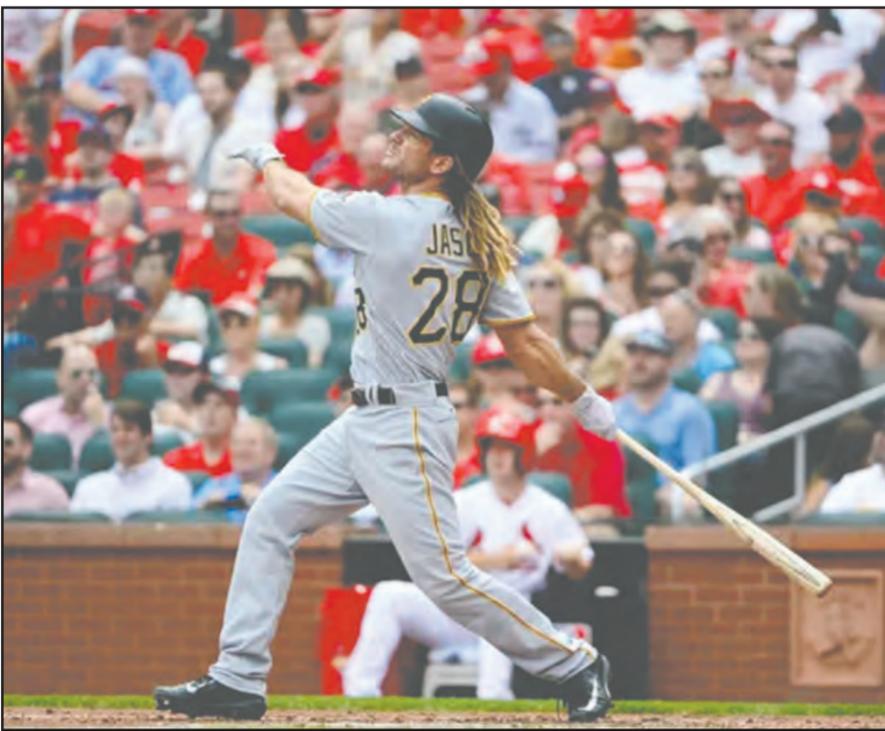


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Former Renegade, MLB Star John Jaso is now 'at home' sailing and exploring



Above: Former MLB star John Jaso is pictured swinging with the Pittsburgh Pirates and, right, aboard his catamaran with partner Jayden, a former collegiate volleyball player at the University of North Alabama.

-Courtesy photos

By Morgan E. Maier

Peaceful, calm, leisurely. The many meanings of “lasai” in Basque are the language spoken by a people of the same name, across France and Spain.

When The New York Times published a February 2023 profile on former MLB player John Jaso, he was gearing up not for spring training, but to sail the French Riviera. Seeking a change of landscapes and consumption, John, who began his 14-year professional career as a Hudson Valley Renegade, traded first base for the ballast.

To John, it’s the peace he spoke of with the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette in 2017. Teasing his retirement from baseball, he said, “I have a sailboat, so I just want to sail away.”

In 2003, John found himself on the opposite coast from his native California, playing for the Short-A Renegades (then affiliated with the Tampa Bay Rays). That summer marked the first year of a 14-year professional baseball journey, a voyage that stretched coast to coast, north to south. A 2004 post-season All-Star, John was promoted to AA after hitting .302 for Hudson Valley and debuted for the Rays in 2008.

With two stints in Tampa Bay, a season

with the Seattle Mariners, and a spell with the Pittsburgh Pirates, John’s career had a nautical pull, if only by name in the moment. Every road trip and hotel room overlooking breezy, billowy bodies of water brought him closer.

“Baseball also provided me the financial freedom and the early retirement to be able to live this lifestyle at such an early age,” said John. “I am forever grateful for that.”

Two monohull (sailboat) seasons later, plus three on Lasai, John now spends the bulk of baseball season on the water. With prime sailing months now upon the European seas, he’s spending this summer in the Aegean Sea with his partner, Jayden, with whom he’s embarked on five journeys since 2021.

John and Jayden, both competitive athletes, are constantly on the move: diving, hiking, exploring. Jayden, a four-year collegiate volleyball player, twice led the Division-II Gulf Southern Coast in assists and led the country in average sets per game at the University of North Alabama.

Much planning goes into the itinerary. Fuel stops and groceries, necessities. Local cuisine and culture are next. Once they arrive at the destination, John and Jayden take any

opportunity to explore landscapes, people, and islands in their entirety, from Venice to the Virgin Islands.

Even globetrotters have small-world moments. At a pizzeria in Antibes, France, a random celebrity sighting turned anonymity into a memorable encounter. As John’s ‘Hey, Kenny’ greeting reached the only soul in the parlor, jazz legend Kenny G showed pleasant surprise to be known by someone in the old coastal town. “It was cool to meet him in that setting,” John reminisces. “He inspired my short-lived saxophone career when I was nine.”

Knowing when to ride it out is key to success in sports and sailing. At sea, the victories are not in box scores, but bays. With wind and water acting as guides, Jayden feels a victory each time they touch down in a new destination, a feeling she compares to sports.

“You enter the game with a strategy, but things rarely go exactly as planned. You have to stay flexible, adapt your mindset, and shift your approach in real time to still reach your goal—a win,” she said.

Half of an athlete’s season is spent away from home. Sightseeing in MLB cities showed John what could lie beyond team

hotels and baseball stadiums. It’s the learning, the appreciation for the greater world that comes with sailing that keeps their journey afloat.

As John and Jayden sailed the Mediterranean on their catamaran in 2024, Hurricane Beryl devastated the Caribbean nations they had visited just two years prior. Docked in Grenada’s Prickly Bay, the couple’s damaged monohull washed ashore with other vessels in the aftermath.

With functional kitchens, beds, and room to house individuals who lost everything, the grounded boats in Prickly Bay were repurposed as a refuge for the hurricane victims. A glimmer of hope in a land ravaged by destruction.

“We have been through calm, serene paradise, and we have seen panic and scary situations... We love sailing, we love the lifestyle, and appreciate that we both have this opportunity to live it and discover more about ourselves through it all,” said John.

The world, and the people in it are designed for learning. Abroad, on the baseball field, land and sea, everywhere! Check out the local spot you haven’t made time to visit – better yet, find someone to ride the wave, and appreciate the beauty together.

Late-game reliever Hueston Morrill shuts down hitters for Renegades

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Nearly halfway through 2025, Morrill boasts a 2-1 record and a .87 earned run average (ERA) in 16 minor league

appearances. In three innings over two appearances with Double-A Somerset Patriots, Morrill gave up two hits, one run, and three walks. Over nine May outings, Hueston held batters to a .147 aver-

age, including those faced with Somerset.

Atlanta Braves fan Morrill hasn’t pitched against the Rome Braves (formerly Emperors) since last summer. But when

they come to the Hudson Valley from July 22-27, Atlanta’s High-A affiliate might be reminded why Morrill is a favorite arm to emerge from the bullpen.