



ask most sailors where the best steel boats come

A from, and the chances are they will say

'Holland'. Whether you are looking for a superyacht or a robust steel motor cruiser of more modest proportions, the long established and much respected Dutch yards should be on your list of places to go.

Of course some might argue that modern production line fibreglass cruisers are capable of doing the job at the smaller end of the market. But there are plenty of others who still prefer the look and feel of good old-fashioned steel; especially now that modern epoxy paints can provide such an excellent (and durable) finish.

Pedro Boat BV – based in Zuidbroek in North East Holland – has been building motor cruisers for around 35 years and still remains under family ownership. The Pedro range has undergone a gradual expansion, and now stretches from the Pedro Marin 30 through 32, 35 and 38 foot models, up to the new Pedro Levanto 44 flagship. A workforce of around 55 people produces 60 boats a year. Most of these models feature a stern cabin (situated under a raised aft deck) and share a reassuring 'traditional' look. These steel cruisers are not aimed at the 'flat out planing brigade' – rather, they have an enduring appeal to those who like to enjoy their cruising at leisurely displacement speeds in boats that bring an approving smile to the face of knowledgeable onlookers.

The model I stepped aboard at the 2007 Southampton Boat Show was the new Pedro Levanto 44. By getting up early, I was able to be aboard, go for a spin and be back on the pontoon before the crowds were let into the Show. At first sight, this handsome craft looks more like a small ship than a leisure cruiser. Even from a distance – the deep lustre on her royal blue topsides and white superstructure set her apart from the GRP boats around her. Somehow one knows that she is steel (rather than plastic) - even before setting foot on her. Her builder explained to me that each hull is grit blasted spotless and gleaming clean then immediately painted with Awlgrip epoxy – all in a single day. So the finish is beautiful, tough and durable.



PEDRO

Levanto 44

The first thing to hit you when you go below is the warm feel of the teak joinery, accentuated by the ample natural light flooding through the deck saloon windows. Peter Poland goes aboard the Pedro Levanto 44 at the 2007 Southampton Boat Show.



"Standing or sitting, the helmsman has an excellent around view"

Boarding is from astern, via a stern platform and central teak stepped stairs that lead up to the aft deck above the stern cabin. Large steel framed hatches either side of these stairs break up the large expanse of transom – and of course do wonders for the airiness of the stern cabin. And the split colour scheme – with white above the sheer and blue beneath – visually reduces the height of this stern cabin. Even from behind – which is the least flattering view of many boats – the Pedro Levanto 44 looks good.

The aft deck is big enough to be a real 'social area'. Top quality stainless steel guardrails make it very secure, and a clever steel framework around the stern rails provides a base for removable aft seats. The helm position is on

the centreline at the forward end of the deck, and is protected by a substantial canopy (supported from the radar arch and the windscreen). When not required, the whole lot can fold away and this reduces the air draught (to 2.7m) for negotiating bridges. The helmsman has a comfortable double seat with a hinging backrest, and all the controls sit on a nicely styled dashboard. Thanks to the height of the aft deck above the waterline – visibility is excellent. If you want the option to helm from inside the deck saloon, a second steering position is also available.

The first thing to hit you when you go below is the warm feel of the teak joinery, accentuated by the ample natural light flooding through the deck saloon windows. The long U shaped settee (to starboard) wraps around a movable table and a long run of cupboards (topped by a sideboard) extends down the other side. The hull's generous beam adds to the spaciousness. There's plenty of room for free

standing armchairs if you want to add to the sitting area. Overhead halogen lighting is recessed into the neatly fitted headlining panels, and more intimate lighting comes from movable table lamps. There's no doubt about it; this is an extremely comfortable living area – by day or night.

The galley and dining areas are down a couple of steps at a lower level, but still 'open plan'. This means that the cooking/dining crew is not cut off from those relaxing in the saloon. The joinery work is top quality, and the galley has everything one needs. The dinette (to port) seats six and the blue upholstery goes well with the surrounding teak panelling and furniture. You can choose from a wide selection of fabrics if you prefer something less traditional than blue.

Ahead of the galley is the forward heads compartment. The guest cabin in the bows is again larger than one might expect. Two berth

continued ►



top left: "The deck saloon is comfortable, with a fine view of the outside world"
Bottom left: "Everything to hand and ample stowage in the well finished galley"
Right: "The dedicated dining area is to port, opposite the galley"

options are available – twin bunks running along the hull side or a big double bed on the centreline. Lockers and cupboards (under the bed and on the hull side) provide plenty of stowage, and – as elsewhere in the boat – the abundant teak joinery makes for a relaxing atmosphere. There's no way this Pedro 44 could ever be confused with a GRP production line boat – even when you are lying in bed.

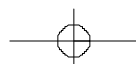
The real surprise – however – comes when you descend the steps into the master cabin aft. You immediately see the benefits of the aft cabin format. Opening ports along both sides and two opening hatches in the transom provide plenty of natural light (and ventilation). The double bed (on the centreline) is big, but there's still plenty of space to walk either side of it to get at the cupboards, drawers, wardrobes and ressing table that make this into more of a

bedroom than anything as prosaic as a cabin. That's not all. There's enough space to provide an en suite heads on one side of the boat and a separate shower cubicle on the other. This is preferable to the 'all in one' heads found on most boats of this size. It's all made possible by the 'aft cabin/raised aft deck' design.

The Pedro's well insulated engine room is beneath the cabin sole. There's ample space to



left: "Master cabin aft - a room with a view" **right:** "The second heads is forward"





left: "Well executed and easily accessible electrics"

right: "There's plenty of space to work around the engine in its spacious compartment under the cabin sole"

move around the engine and all the important filters and sea cocks etc are easily accessible. It's reassuring to see the steel hull plating (5mm) and extensive steel stringers that help give this boat its strength. This Pedro was fitted with a single Perkins Sabre 150 hp diesel - ample to push the boat along at its maximum displacement speed of around 10 knots. Various engine sizes are offered, and you can have twins if you prefer. I doubt that many do.

So what's she like under way? The first thing you notice – as you cast off the mooring lines – is that the cleats and fairleads are chunky and beautifully made in gleaming stainless steel. UK agent Jim Cole eased her gently out of the Boat Show berth, gave a squirt of bow thruster to turn hard right, then headed for the open spaces of Southampton Water. Not surprisingly for such a solid boat, noise levels are low. And not surprisingly for a displacement hull, progress is easy and directional stability first class. At around 1000 rpm, she made a sedate 4 knots or so. 1500 rpm brought up around 6 knots and 2,500 rpm pushed her up towards 10 knots. Hull trim remained unaltered and about the only visible difference between low speed and top speed is the bow wave – which of course you can't see from onboard. The Pedro's turning circle is good, thanks to the large rudder positioned behind the prop and supported on a protective steel skeg. The steering feels precise. When it comes to performance, that's about all there is to say. Which is the appeal of the Pedro. She's a no nonsense motor cruiser that is as happy pottering on inland waterways as she is making passages on the open sea. If you want to burn fuel and charge around on the plane at high

speeds, this is not your boat. But if you want a versatile and reliable displacement cruiser, take a closer look.

When it comes to price, the benefits of an efficient workforce and production process show through. Remember - there are no pop-out inner GRP mouldings making up the furniture modules in this boat. She's hand built from steel and teak. What's more the builder's experience and attention to detail shows – be this in the form of a neat hatch to give access to the chain locker, spare conduits to take extra cabling for possible

'retro-fits' or the fine finish to the abundant teak joinery. So how much do you think for the standard boat, bearing in mind she is 44ft worth of finely finished steel boat weighing in at around 16,000 kg ? I was expecting over £300k, so was surprised to see £238,500 inc VAT on the price list – and even more surprised to see £252,227 to include the extras fitted to the boat as tested. "The Pedros also have high resale values", the builder added. Now that does not surprise me.

Pedro Lavanto 44		Specification & Pricing	
LOA	44ft 13.4m		
Beam	13' 10" 4.3m		
Draught	4' 3" 1.2m		
Weight	16,000 kg		
Fuel tank	750 litres		
Water tank	600 litres		
Holding tank	350 litres		
Standard engine	Perkins Sabre M150 Ti (150 hp diesel)		
Standard price	£238,500 inc VAT		

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