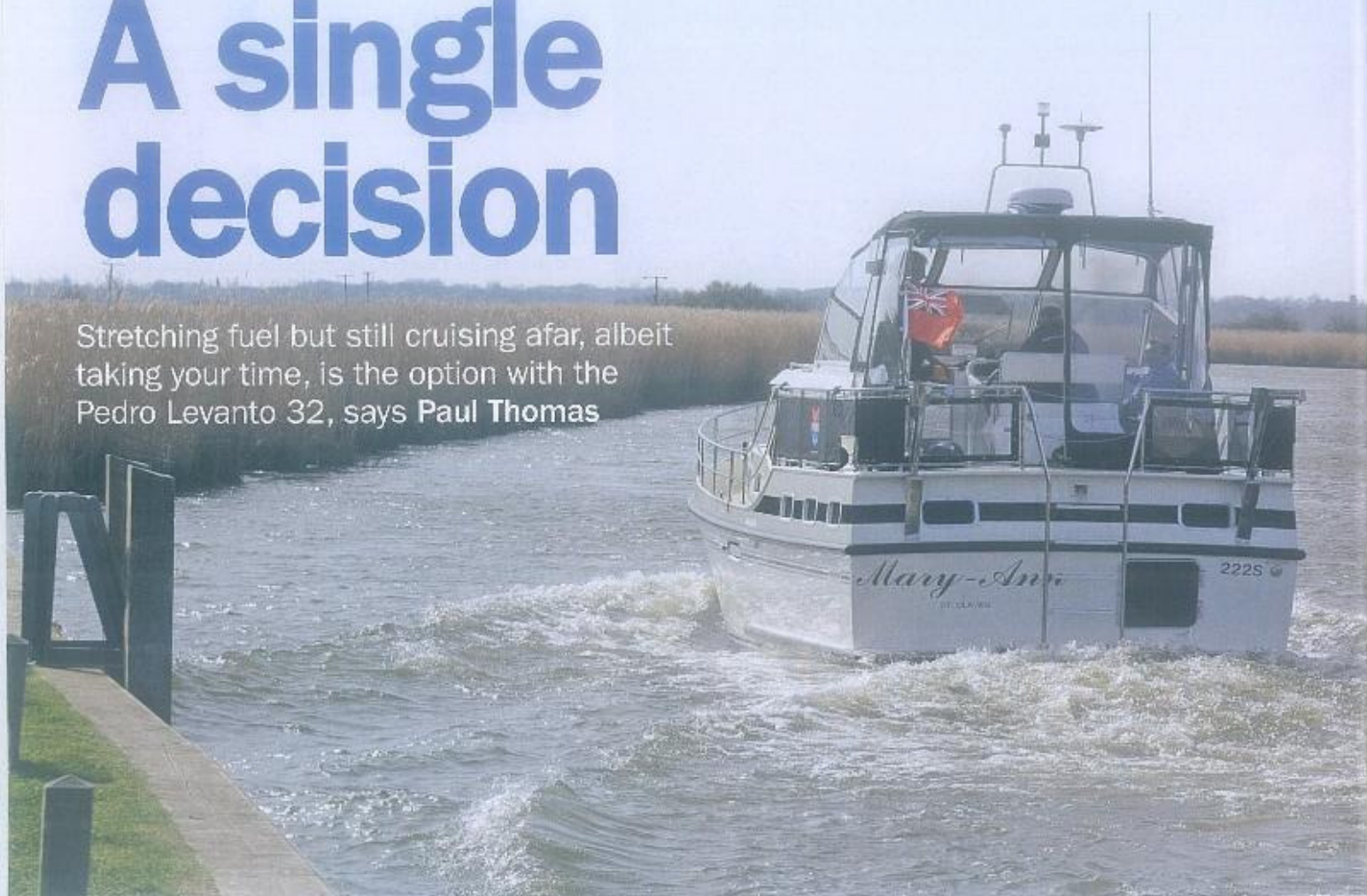


A single decision

Stretching fuel but still cruising afar, albeit taking your time, is the option with the Pedro Levanto 32, says Paul Thomas



Davits and steps down to a bathing platform make the Pedro even more versatile.

THE NEEDS OF cruising motor boaters on the east coast of England, plus the Norfolk Broads, are changing. While they are currently only minor, the swing will increase as financial and environmental pressures mount. As surely they will.

This is why the Dutch Pedro Boats range of spacious single screw steel motor cruisers, designed for use on inland waterways but also perfectly capable of coastal use and passages across the North Sea, are increasingly practical.

I have just met two couples who have recently invested in Pedros and who, I suspect, will be demonstrating this practicality.

Retired engineer Keith Cowan and his wife Fiona, a GP, have just bought a Pedro Levanto 32, a design just updated, and one of a Pedro range sold in the UK by Jim Cole, a seasoned marketeer who knows a thing or two about what boaters want.

The second couple are former airline pilot Paul Lejeune and wife Carol, who also bought from Jim a Pedro Marin, a 30 footer with a quaint bluff bow and loads of accommodation, like the Levanto 32.

Both couples moved to Suffolk years ago and live a few doors from each other in St Olaves, overlooking the Waveney river and marshes – with their boats each moored in dykes at the bottom of their long gardens.

They got into boating through holidays on the Broads, like so many, and are now raising their ambitions to coastal cruising – indeed Cowan and Lejeunes were due to be cruising to Harwich on the Levanto as we went to press for this edition.

Their aim was to complete qualifications as Day Skippers including their international certificates of competence (ICCs) heading then next month for the Anglia Afloat Cruise in Company.

We'll be delighted to have them with us – and they will make their mark, not only with their new qualifications but also as advocates of the increasing numbers opting for single screws and single figure cruising speeds at sea with resulting economy and reduced

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environmental impact over we twins!

All of which brings us back to the Pedro brand.

While they win few awards for beauty, spaciousness of accommodation and versatility of usage top the Pedro qualities.

Currently 30 feet is the smallest and 44 feet the largest – a Levanto. The Levanto range itself goes 32, 38 and 44 and is traditional Dutch style

This naturally majors, like the race, on value, practicality, application (including to their own inland waters) and a conservative but convincing design.

The boats are built in Holland as primarily inland waterways craft but with ample capability, strength and reliability to take on coastal, and in some weather conditions, passages across the North Sea.

They major on single engines, to which increasing numbers are now turning to minimise the high cost of running twin-engined, high speed planing boats – if you want to cruise long distances which many still do.

Putting this in perspective is a typical cost of £3-5 a mile for a twin boar at say 20 knots or more – against perhaps half or even less than that per mile, albeit at also less than half the speed. It all depends on how you value your time.

Take twice or even thrice the hours to make your passage but at half or even a third of the cost. That is the quandary. Other points that would-be cruisers question include trust in reliability of twin



Big windows, ports and wide decks mark the Pedro. Below: Keith Cowan on his boat.



engines being double that of a single – a weak argument, say some (particularly existing single-engine types). Also that should you lose one screw when you have two there is always the second drive to get you there. And finally the extra speed of high performance engines will get you into port quicker should weather deteriorate fast.

All of which demonstrates you can't have it both ways. But should one consider the environmental aspect too? Big twins obviously pollute dramatically more than a smaller single.

To put this in perspective, Jim Cole suggests, without commitment, that the 32 foot hull with single will typically consume three litres of diesel at 1000 rpm giving two to three knots; use six litres at 1500 rpm and 10-15 litres at 2000-2400 rpm delivering up to maximum cruising speeds of eight to nine knots. Pedro have not done full performance data but you get the economy message?

And for inland waters the performance of the Perkins M92B producing 86 hp is fine to get you round at a slow speed stretching a 400-litre tankful through the season and not upsetting any Broads Authority speed checks! Plus some short, easy passages at sea.

Or more and in spirited conditions if necessary – the boat is reasonably beamy, 3.50 metres, it is RCD (Recreational Craft Directive) and CE Marking B – for offshore voyages where conditions up to, and including, wind force eight and significant wave heights up to, and including, four metres may be experienced.

Enough said on performance and economics.

Accommodation is one of the Levanto's attributes – a choice of four layouts for from four to seven berths and the layouts with open bows accommodation stretch the 32's brilliance as a day cruiser for up to eight people.

When you step aboard the 32 space is the impact. On an aft bridge with central helm seat and controls, room for guests seated around you – then down steps to accommodation which you could easily believe was set in a 35 or even 36 foot hull. →



The standard layouts (varying prices) are from conventional aft and forward double cabins plus dinette and saloon amidships through to one double cabin with lots of day use accommodation for guests not staying the night. They are all offered in teak with a wide range of curtains and upholstery to choose from.

Or if you are not buying a boat out of stock, the builder will hear your needs and design your interior specifically to help if necessary.

Keith's Levanto I tested is the dearer of two versions – the Cruise edition which starts at Euros 153,300 plus VAT and the Comfort edition from Euros 176,900 plus VAT. Keith's Comfort is further enhanced by an excellent navigation package with auto-pilot, plotter and radar.

It comes with bow-thruster, vital in my mind with a single, particularly at low speed positioning and mooring should there be high winds. Although it should be stressed the 32 turns brilliantly, virtually in its own length, at low speed and on full lock, albeit with the slightest list.

If you are likely to go to sea it includes complete anchor winch, sunlog and depth sounder – plus Webasto hot air heating, 45 litre hot water boiler, shore power and battery charger, foldable windscreen (easing Broadland bridges) and canopy.

The canopy is two stage – a spray hood front section which allows in sun and air for the helmsman at lowish speeds while allowing the back section to remain for passenger shelter – or all down for ideal summer weather, probably at moorings.

Side decks are wide and easy with excellent rails and working space and a bathing platform with ladder down to the water.

Portholes feature in bow and aft cabin and saloon windows are large, great for vision, contributing to the Pedro's inimitable Dutch look.

Layouts offer dinettes both for extra berths but also dining and the galley may be positioned forward, opposite the dinette – or in one case all with the main cabin in the bows, an unusual layout but very spacious.



Open twin berths in the bows - just one of the layouts.

The galley includes a three-burner cooker, refrigerator with freezer compartment and plenty of space including room for optional microwave, etc.

For a live-aboard, occasional cruising – or days out – any of the layouts have distinct advantages depending on how many people sleep aboard. Perhaps the best is the aft or forward double cabin layout with the rest of the boat open, the option still existing for an occasional couple to sleep aboard too, albeit in relative "public".

For versatility, the Levanto 32 has much to commend it. The



Keith's boat has the right navigation equipment.



A good double berth in the cabin aft.

Cruise version at Ruro 153,300 excluding VAT suffers with the exchange rate but still produces a very good boat at approx £156,600 including VAT at the rate as I write.

Whether or not you opt for all the good features the Levanto 32 offers for this price will return to that equation: how much time is spent inland and at slow speeds, and how much do you want to spend at sea, again below ten knots. As ever, how far, how fast, and how much is the issue?

Times, as I say, are changing. And so will be those answers. 

“...the 32 turns brilliantly, virtually in its own length, at low speed and on full lock”

Pedro Levanto 32

The Levanto 32 can be delivered in two editions and four different layouts. It can also be fitted with numerous individual extras or to your own specification.

Overall length:	9.70 m
Beam:	3.50 m
Draught:	1.00m
Air draught:	+/- 2.45 m
Fuel tank:	400 litres
Fresh-water tank:	320 litres
Holding tank:	280 litres
Berths:	4 - 7
Weight:	8,000 kg
Engine:	Perkins M92B 64 kw (86 hp)
CE Category:	B

Contact:

Jim Cole at: Pedro Boats (UK) Ltd., Brundall, Norfolk,
Tel: 01603 716555, www.pedroboats.co.uk

Price: Cruise edition from Euro 153,300 plus VAT

Comfort edition as per test boat: Euro 176,900 plus VAT (£180,700 inc VAT) and plus further navigational gear.

Delivery: Some Pedro boats are in stock so dependant upon your needs, delivery could be a month or two. Or specify your precise requirements and wait a while.