

Yachting World

A high-angle, dynamic shot of a red Pegasus 50 sailboat with dark sails, sailing on a vibrant blue sea. The boat is leaning slightly to the right, creating a white wake. A person is visible on the deck. The registration number 'KP-4567' is visible on the hull.

PEGASUS 50

**BLUEWATER
BRILLIANCE**

ON TEST // PEGASUS 50

TOBY
HODGES



Where: Izola, Gulf of Trieste, Slovenia
Wind: 4–14 knots
Model tested: hull No6 with a very full spec – all standard – including carbon mast, four sails, electric winches, solar panels, watermaker, induction cooking and B&G package

PEGASUS TAKES OFF

MIXING NEW AND PROVEN IDEAS, PEGASUS HAS CREATED A SHORT-HANDED FAST BLUEWATER YACHT WITH A MARKED DIFFERENCE, AS TOBY HODGES DISCOVERS ON A TWO-DAY TEST SAIL

Three towering masts pierce the skyline off Trieste, where the impounded *Sailing Yacht A* lies forlorn at anchor like a crippled leviathan. The Russian-owned Philippe Starck design makes a fittingly stark reminder of how going so big has its drawbacks – never could the now shackled hulk, an empty floating metropolis, be more evidently impractical.

I can't help but think it makes for a neat contrast when viewed from the Pegasus 50 as we sail out of the pretty Slovenian town of Izola nearby. Don't get me wrong, I'm not calling a €1m 50-footer simple, but it is designed particularly well to manage easily short-handed, and is notably different to most other monohulls, particularly in layout. It's also a design typically chosen so far by 'downscalers', as Pegasus co-founder Miha Breskvar describes them – those who've previously had larger yachts and become put off by their complexity or need for crew.

If you find the Pegasus design faintly reminiscent, it's from the hand of Marko Paš, who (with J&J) was responsible for developing the Shipman carbon cruiser designs around 20 years ago. You might notice influences in the Pegasus's superstructures, cockpit and galley layout.

The Pegasus 50 is a powerful-looking yacht. The large coachroof runs into the arch and hardtop dodger

ON TEST



Left: power reaching. Mainsheet is out of harm's way on the roof and lines are led aft – this means lots of line tails to manage, but there are useful deep bins below the benches and helm seats

Below: the easy connection between this highly protected cockpit and the galley/saloon is a real trump card of the Pegasus 50

‘We enjoyed beautiful, early spring sailing’

protecting the deep cockpit. The general layout is also quite different, making you question assumed needs. For instance, in my house the kitchen and living room are larger than my bedroom, and rightly so I feel, yet that's rarely the case on today's yachts which typically have suites for master cabins. Here, the Pegasus gives the bigger proportion of space to the cockpit, saloon and galley, and boasts a superb amount of stowage space – prime considerations for bluewater cruising.

The Pegasus has an individual look, and despite the practicality of the hard dodger it won't appeal to all. Equally, the pinhead mainsail and raked stem seem a little old-fashioned now, but ocean cruisers may prefer the practical gains here over current style fads.

I was taken with the design from when it first came to light in 2020 and have waited some time to sail it in testing conditions. In the end the two days and nights we had aboard in March were benign, with calm seas and light winds. I was about to add 'unfortunately' there, but what if such a yacht, with its easily managed sail plan, pilot station and capacious stowage, a design that ticks so many boxes for long-term cruising, could also deliver engaging sailing in such conditions. What if...

ARMED FOR LIGHT WIND

On both mornings, we left Izola's marina once the first ripples began to disturb the glassy Adriatic. I found docking and manoeuvring simple, intuitive, and reassuring, while setting and handling sails is easily done from the cockpit. You quickly reach an engaging sailing mode. The enjoyment levels obviously rise with the breeze, but even in the lighter single-figure winds the Pegasus has the sail power and slipperiness to make the experience rewarding.

We averaged 6 knots in 8-8.5 with the genoa, tacking through 80-85°. But we predominantly sailed with the Code 0 in these conditions for the best speeds and enjoyment, as it helped us to almost match the single-figure winds fetching. The Pegasus really comes alive once the breeze is into double figures, where we averaged 8.5-9 knots in 12-13 knots.

Not that you want or have to watch the numbers. Helming is a pleasure, with only a finger needed on the wheel. The twin rudders give plenty of control and the feeling is direct, thanks to minimal steering linkage (a marked difference over most centre cockpit designs). This Jefa system connects quadrants with a rod, so if you lose steering on one side you can use the other. It's also light work for an autopilot.

We enjoyed beautiful, early spring sailing, largely to ourselves. Once the breeze nudges into the teens, you get a nice sprinkling of weather helm. I really enjoy helming right from the aft quarters – granted it may be different with a large following sea, and I would rather not sit next to a loaded snatch block and aft winch. That said, it's easy enough to lead the sheets to the winches in front of the wheels. There are blind spots from here, but you learn to move around to check sightlines (plus the navstation has a view out over the foredeck). Adding the cushions to the helm seats also helps by providing some elevation. These cockpit cushions are a good fit and comfortable.

The sail plan provides plenty of choice to get the most out of the boat, and to reduce sail most effectively and efficiently. As standard, the 50 comes with main, staysail, genoa, and even a gennaker, while most choose a Code sail too. The self-tacking staysail is particularly useful when the wind is up, and can fill the slot between the main and reaching sail.

Below: tall sailplan! Wide boom brackets help for the lazybags and the gooseneck is kept low despite the coachroof height



The Pegasus is well set up for short-handing. Indeed, the owner of the third hull sailed it solo in the Ostar – which he won – before he then sailed around Africa, the wrong way, alone! We tested hull number six, which was 14 months old and had already sailed 10,000 miles.

SECRET WEAPON?

A reason for feeling like it was sailing on rails comes from what's beneath the Pegasus hull. Paš favours a tandem keel with twin centreline fins connected by a bulb, which he calculates gives better directional stability, and less wetted surface for a low centre of gravity. He found it helps reduce leeway and brings better performance for its weight, while allowing the twin rudders to be kept relatively small.

A fixed 600W hydrogenerator is sited slightly offset from this keel. Once sailing at over 7 knots you can hear it vibrating, but there is the comfort that it's putting a healthy 7A+ at 24V into your battery bank. Pegasus also offers an electric hybrid option, with twin Oceanvolt 15kW drives (a €150,000 upgrade for the drives, genset, batteries, extra solar etc).

This brings us to pricing, a subject that deserves spotlighting. Unusually the standard price is for a phenomenally well-equipped boat, which includes the ▶



carbon mast, Hydranet sails, electric winches, solar, watermaker, induction cooking, washing machine, B&G instruments, a gimballed settee, and an electric telescopic table! That's everything on the test boat except the Code 0. Rarely have I come across a yacht that offers so much included in the price – around €200,000 of typical 'options'.

"If you are using the boat as much as our clients do, you want to have all this stuff included," Breskvar reasons, adding how it makes more sense to install it all from the outset, including the associated electric and plumbing runs. Keep scanning the specs list and you'll note the dinghy and its Torqeedo outboard, bed linen, cutlery and crockery, tools, a vacuum cleaner etc are all included. It also helps you appreciate how all the stowage spaces have been optimised so this kit doesn't fly around at sea.

COMFORT ON PASSAGE

The Pegasus is designed for passagemaking in comfort and safety. The ease with which you can get around the boat is notable. The protected cockpit is superb, with a big fixed table and seats with proper high backrests. It links via a sliding door to the interior, which includes a pilot station and that gimbaling settee to reduce fatigue.

The arch is in full composite, made in one piece. The fabric central bimini section rolls away, cabriolet style, and the windscreen includes sliding glass sections for ventilation. Pegasus also has a solid bimini version, which incorporates extra solar panels (716W as standard on the coachroof) and a Starlink marine antenna – a consideration most large/super yachts still don't have designed in. The cockpit can also be fully enclosed to keep cushions dry.

Remembering there is no accommodation space aft or below the cockpit helps you appreciate the abundant stowage that the deep technical cockpits bring. These are intelligibly laid out with electrics to starboard, including AC and DC distribution, genverter etc, and plumbing such as watermaker, pumps and compressors to port. The philosophy here is that easy access promotes proper maintenance. It also keeps the engine and all noisy items well insulated away from the interior.

These lockers have long rails for hanging warps and fenders and they also include large panels into the engine bay which, combined with the cockpit hatch (the table hinges out of the way aft), provides almost

Right: the chart table provides a deck-level position you only normally see on pilot saloon boats, with almost surround vision. Below: light and airy interior



'The gimbaling settee cants 10° either way'

unhindered access to the engine and genset.

Pegasus has conceived neat solutions aft, using the composite gangplank as an aft bench to enclose the top of the transom. The aft winches double up well as mooring winches for getting tension on stern lines. And, when lowered via a simple purchase system, the large swim platform also helps you appreciate the long, low single-level cockpit. The garage can fit a 2.5m inflatable dinghy and is separated from the technical lockers by a watertight bulkhead.

Windows are all in tempered glass, including the offset companionway door which features a safety lock for when heeling and helps keep the cockpit connected with the interior. Here, the layout is refreshingly different, with the accommodation all forward of the saloon's main bulkhead in two or three cabins.

I like the U-shape galley configuration and its stainless steel finish which makes so much sense on a yacht. It's only one step down, at eye level to those seated in the cockpit. There's plenty of natural light, plus ventilation through the large sliding door. Should you run out of worksurface, you can hinge the pilot seat forward to reveal more, above an extra fridge or freezer.



Far left: practical stainless steel finish to the galley. Left and below: excellent access to the well insulated engine bay through the cockpit sole and well laid-out technical lockers





Accommodation is comparatively compact but practical in the owner's cabin (left) and open pilot berth (below). The passageway leading forward to the third cabin forward has separate heads, shower, and stowage/laundry areas



I also appreciate the practicality of the stowage, including the bespoke cutlery drawers and the crockery and glassware cabinets. Opposite, the saloon is light and bright.

While a gimbaling settee may seem gimmicky, the concept grew on me. As it's all in carbon it only weighs 40kg and uses an electric actuator on a ram so there is little extra complexity. At the push of a button it cants 10° either way, which could make a difference to those who get seasick or are spending days on one tack. The table lowers to fill in, the outboard backrest then folds over to fill this section and create a massive bed. The result is a great den – indeed our photographer, Samo, confirmed that his kids happily played cards there while they sailed in 30 knots.

The gloss panel at the forward end of the saloon is like a car's dashboard, with a smart Simarino switchboard hidden beneath. The surrounding leather stitching is a bold style feature – the upholstery and veneers are all customisable to a certain extent.

A DIFFERENT VIEW

The pilot station works brilliantly. A 27in screen in the navstation shows B&G data, doubles as a computer display, and has a swivel mount for use as a TV that you can view from the saloon. The seat gives a prime protected place to sit a night watch with views over the foredeck, but can also be used for chart or office work. And with an angled cushion as a backrest, you can sit side-on to rest or converse with those in the saloon or galley. There is a hatch above for ventilation and viewing sails, and a deep pilotbook shelf outboard.

Although just two shallow steps down, it feels comparatively low and slightly cramped going forward. The accommodation starts with an ideal pilotberth to port. The headboard for this and the master cabin to starboard are in line with the mast base, in the heart of the yacht and area of least pitching. Stowage here is excellent, but headroom is only around 6ft 1in.

Pullman bunks can be chosen here instead, or the space given over to a two-cabin version, with a full beam central master cabin including a large shower compartment. In the three cabin/berth test boat, this master cabin can be configured as a twin or double, as the beds are on tracks so can be joined. However, it is of modest size and stowage is limited – long-term cruisers would need to use

other areas for clothes too. The en-suite with its wet heads shower area also feels relatively compact in this format.

While the passageway forward is seaworthy and boasts large lockers, it's low and the doorways are narrow. To port is a shower, with washing machine and rail, which makes a useful space for wet hanging, but there's no hatch so it's dark and relies on a vent. The heads further forward is much brighter. Headroom then drops again in the forward cabin, where it's more purposeful than luxe, with a V-berth and some stowage, but few frills.

The 50 has an impressive composite build, including Vinylester hull and PVC core, and with deck, inner



Left: a bold metallic, glossy red finish – Pegasus paints each hull to the customer's own colour choices

structure and structural stiffeners all in carbon fibre.

The outer skin is in glass, which the yard considers less vulnerable and easier to repair. Weight is kept central and low including the tanks.

The hulls are laminated across the border in Italy, before being fitted out in Pegasus's yard, one hour inland from Izola in the mountains. Building boats here is normal in Slovenia, says Breskvar, citing Elan and Seaway as examples. Thus far owners have come from all over the world with hull number 10 currently on its way to the US. A 66ft Pegasus is in engineering phase, again designed for short-handed use.

"We have no dealers, no brand presence, no history, and we're Slovenian so we can't compete if we just bring the same thing as everyone else", thinks Breskvar, who, with Paš, is one of three partners who established Pegasus five years ago. "After 30 years of sailing this is the boat we built for ourselves – for comfortable, enjoyable cruising."

OUR VERDICT

I increasingly turn a keen eye to multihulls for their social and stowage spaces, yet here we have much of that. Stash the surfboards under the aft bench, sails in the forepeak, bikes and toys in the tech lockers and garage and off you go!

The modest freeboard and layout reduces accommodation volume compared to many modern cruising yachts. And the Pegasus is still a lot of money – though a substantial amount is included for that price. Maybe, its bold colourways and detailing won't be to everyone's taste. But this is one of very few new boats I've stepped aboard that I'd be happy taking off cruising straight away. The P50 makes you feel comfortable and puts you at ease instantly. And, crucially, it's rewarding, even in light breezes that other bluewater cruisers may struggle to sail in. It's also easy to change through the gears, which you'll need to do keenly with its generous sail area, and it has a superb cockpit to protect its crew.

There's a lot to get excited about – rarely have I thought about a yacht so much after a test sail. 'Pegasus' was named after the mythological horse with wings as it's strong, durable and can take flight. Fitting, then, that photographer for the test, Samo Vidic, is a regular for Red Bull extreme sports – as this bright red bull we sailed proved, it can indeed give you wings. ■

PEGASUS 50

WATCH THE VIDEO
youtube.com/yachtingworld



SPECIFICATIONS

- LOA 14.94m 49ft 0in • LWL 14.30m 46ft 11in
- Beam (Max) 4.82m 15ft 10in • Draught 2.35m 7ft 9in
- Displacement (lightship) 11,700kg 25,794lb
- Ballast 3,900kg 8,598lb
- Sail area (100% foretriangle) 124.8m² 1,343ft²
- Berths 6-8 • Engine Volvo Penta 75hp saildrive (or Oceanvolt ServoProp 15 Dual Propulsion system)
- Water 740lt 163gal • Fuel 480lt 106gal
- Sail area/disp ratio 24.6 • Disp/LWL ratio 111
- Price: (ex VAT) €1,085,000
- Design Marko Paš - Marine Designs
pegasus-yachts.com

ALSO CONSIDER

AMEL 50

Similar in having a hard top and full spec included, but a central cockpit design – more luxury, less sailing connection.
€940,000 ex VAT. amel.fr



MOODY 48DS

Very much a decksaloon yacht with similar accommodation layout but much heavier and more voluminous. €864,900 ex VAT.
hanseyachtsag.com



XC47

Another aft helm yacht with reassuring performance and a large coachroof, but more conventional layout.
€795,000 ex VAT. x-yachts.com





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