

# ALAMAR

a film by  
**Pedro González-Rubio**



Mexico / 2009 / 73 min

Spanish and Italian with subtitles / 1:85 / Dolby Digital / Certificate: tbc  
Release date: 10<sup>th</sup> September 2010

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## SYNOPSIS

Jorge and Roberta have been separated for several years. They simply come from opposite worlds: he likes an uncomplicated life in the jungle, while she prefers a more urban existence. He is Mexican and she is Italian, and she has decided to return to Rome with their five-year-old son, Natan.

Before they leave, Jorge wishes to take young Natan on a trip, hoping to teach him about his Mayan origins in Mexico. At first the boy is physically and emotionally uncomfortable with the whole affair, and gets seasick on the boat taking them to their destination. But as father and son spend more time together, Natan begins a learning experience that will remain with him forever.



## FESTIVALS AND AWARDS

### WINNER

Tiger Award – **Rotterdam International Film Festival 2010**  
Audience Award - **Morelia International Film Festival 2010**  
Feature Film Competition Award – **Morelia International Film Festival 2010**  
Jury Award – Iberoamerican Prize, **Miami International Film Festival 2010**  
New Director Award - **San Francisco International Film Festival 2010**

### OFFICIAL SELECTION

**Edinburgh International Film Festival**  
**Toronto International Film Festival**  
**Berlin International Film Festival** – Opening Night Generation K-plus Section  
**Minneapolis International Film Festival**  
**Sarasota Film Festival**  
**Washington DC International Film Festival**

## CREW

<b>Director</b>	Pedro González-Rubio
<b>Screenwriter</b>	Pedro González-Rubio
<b>Cinematography</b>	Pedro González-Rubio
<b>Editor</b>	Pedro González-Rubio
<b>Production Management</b>	Fiorella Moretti
<b>Post-production Supervisors</b>	Joakim Ziegler Øyvind Stiauren
<b>Underwater Photography</b>	David Torres Alexis Zabé
<b>Direct Sound</b>	Manuel Carranza
<b>Online Production</b>	Manuel Carranza Kim Ley
<b>Consultant</b>	José Luis Fernández Tolhurst
<b>Music</b>	'Unidad' - Fausto Palma & Juan Andrés Vergara 'Dualidad' and 'Trinidad' - Diego Benlliure & Uriel Esquenazi 'Caminando' – Salvador Zepeda Mendoza
<b>Producers</b>	Jaime Romandía Pedro González-Rubio
<b>Production Companies</b>	Mantarraya Producciones Xcalakarma Films

## CAST

Jorge	Jorge Machado
Roberta	Roberta Palombini
Natan	Natan Machado Palombini
Matraca	Néstor Marín "Matraca"

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Full details, downloads etc at

<http://tinyurl.com/2e8pvpt>

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Six years ago I moved to Playa del Carmen, probably driven by my childhood experience. Many things had changed, what once used to be a fishermen's village now was the epicentre of the fastest growing urbanization in Mexico. At this tourist oriented development area, I've witnessed the lack of environmental awareness, the destruction of an extensive coral reef to make a long dock for cruise ships, the destruction of hectares of mangrove along the coastline to build big chain hotels, polluting the sea with sewage water, hence affecting the whole ecosystem of the area and pushing many of its species to an ill-fated future.

Banco Chinchorro, the main location where the film takes place, was declared in 1996 a Natural Reserve of the Biosphere by UNESCO, and serious efforts are being made to make it a World Heritage Site. It is home to thousands of different species and the biggest coral reef extension in our country.

By photographing and developing a story based on the current relation between man and his habitat in Chinchorro, I intend to portray my love for this region and the admiration and respect I have towards the lives of its fishermen.

I didn't want to make a distant or intellectual approach in this film. What I wanted to achieve was a visual experience that could trigger emotions of empathy with the characters. During the time of research, I was working on a story based on a father and son relationship. Alamar was inspired by the simplicity of happiness.

The day to day activities at Chinchorro and the interaction with Matraca, the old fisherman, resulted in a perfect experience for Natan to learn about an ancestral interaction between man and nature. He is a child who moves between both worlds, the one of an austere life while spending time with his dad, and one in the urban society along with his mother. One reality is not better than the other, they are simply different and the child is able to be himself in both, free from any preconception or judgment. I tried to focus on the boy's point of view, to accomplish a pure feeling in every way.

The main location embraced the characters naturally as if they belonged there, in a timeless sense to the environment. But the idea of impermanence is present in the characters' reality from the very first moments of the story until the last frame. The father's decision is to go back to his origins in order to teach his son the true values in life.

## INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR (at the Morelia Film Festival)

### *How did you become interested in the theme of the film?*

I wanted to explore the love between father and son at the same time as I explore the harmony between humans and nature. [I wanted] to tell a story that evokes the return to humanity's origin, and to get into the basic activities of life – with fishing being one of the most ancestral of human beings'. I decided to use Banco Chinchorro as the main location because of its minimalist sceneries. This simplicity allowed me to focus on the relationships among the characters.

### *What was the biggest challenge you faced making the film?*

Doing everything with such a small budget and with a crew of two (Manuel, audio, and myself, camera). Nevertheless, this story could not have been filmed in any other way. The dynamic was very intimate - the camera should not even have been present in order to capture the pureness of the reality.

### *What kind of films, in terms of genre and subject matter, would you like to keep making?*

A hybrid between documentary and fiction.

## PEDRO GONZÁLEZ-RUBIO

Pedro González-Rubio is a Mexican filmmaker born in Brussels. His initiation to visual arts came at the age of 16 while living in New Delhi. He studied media in Mexico before attending the London Film School. He worked as a cinematographer on the film BORN WITHOUT (2007) by Eva Norvind. His directorial debut, TORO NEGRO (2005, co-director), received several awards including the Horizontes Award for best Latin American film from the San Sebastian Film Festival. ALAMAR is his feature film debut, which nonetheless remains true to real life.

### **Filmography**

2005-**Toro Negro**, Documentary. (Co-Director/ Director of Photography/Producer)

2007-**Common Ground**, Documentary (Co-Director/ Director of Photography)

**Nacido Sin** (Born Without, Additional Cinematography)



## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The Banco Chinchorro biosphere reserve covers an area of 144,360 hectares, with only 0.4% of dry land. The reserve is divided into three principal zones which cover a total area of 4,587 hectares and is surrounded by a ring-like reef which extends over 139,773 hectares. Banco Chinchorro is an atoll — an island consisting of a circular reef formation surrounding a central lagoon. There are three small rocky islands (Lobos, Centro and Norte) and the atoll is surrounded by seawater.

Banco Chinchorro's ecosystem is extremely complex and unique in Mexico. The reef shelters a great number of species and multiple ecosystems. This variety results from the atoll's complex and irregular underwater topography and its geographic orientation relative to coastal currents, tide and waves. The ecosystems which reproduce, propagate and are bred here are of great ecological and economic value. These ecosystems thrive in the surrounding coral reefs, seagrass meadows, shoals, small rocky islands, shrubs and sandy beaches. In addition, Banco Chinchorro harbors a species of larvae of great importance both ecologically and economically, which are carried by marine currents to coastal areas.

Research carried out on the atoll documents about 778 species, of which 58% are marine fauna, 14% terrestrial fauna, 18% marine flora and 10% terrestrial flora. The marine life includes the corals, some of which comprise the reef structure of Banco Chinchorro. There are 95 species of coral, including hexacorallias, octocorallias and hydrozoans. These corals contribute significantly to the creation of a heterogeneous environment. The greater the structural coral complexity, the greater the diversity and number of species. This diversity, typical to complex coral reefs, favours relationships between the feeding habits of organisms in a food chain.

Fishing, which has been the most important economic activity of the Banco Chinchorro reserve for more than 40 years, has been subject to regulation since the reserve's creation. In addition to other crustaceans, the Queen Conch (*Eustrombus gigas*) and Spiny Lobster (*Panulirus argus*) are of great economic value.

## CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

The archaeological and historical importance of Banco Chinchorro is due to the many shipwrecks on the barrier reef, on both the eastern and western sides. Of the 44 wrecks located in the zone, 33 are documented in various bibliographical sources. These ships, from different countries, date from the 16th to the 20th centuries.

Banco Chinchorro is regarded as a large "boat cemetery" whose historic and natural attributes are inseparable. The diversity of cultural and archaeological wealth contained in each individual shipwreck is unique. The riches of this underwater cultural heritage call for protection, conservation, research and widespread consideration.