



That 70's show

We reacquaint ourselves with the definitive scooter brand

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People call us the generation Z. We grew up with MP3s, gameboys, iPods, text messaging, Playstations, Xboxes, WiFi and countless similar luxuries. But in the process we missed out on rock and roll, the summer of love, VW buses, discos, tie and dye clothing and flower power. There is one other thing that was as much a part of the 70's as dreadlocks and peace pipes – a little scooter that almost always had flowers painted on them. Those of us who missed out on this whole era have always looked longingly at pictures and videos of these little machines that were all but killed by the arrival of Splendors, CT100s and Activas. But not anymore, because Piaggio has just made

this summer our summer of love. It marks the return of the wasp in all its glory.

And this time it's not disguised as a frugal consumer. This time it comes to the Indian shores as a fashion statement.

As far as fashion statements go, the Vespa is like a Fendi clutch that compliments your Salvatore Ferragamo dress or a Duchamp tie that goes well with your Armani suit. Everything from the round headlamps and the chrome plated mirrors to the bright colours (right now it comes in black, red, yellow and white) stand out like Ursula Andress on a beach full of hairy men. The Vespa (having dropped the LX 125 moniker in favour of just 'Vespa' in India) is the classic retro shape meeting the modern designer look. The switchgear

did not look like they were of very high quality and had gaping panel gaps. But this might just be a pre-production niggle. Hopefully. The instrument cluster is clean and has a speedometer, odometer, fuel gauge and a clock. There are lots of storage spaces with a lockable glove box behind the front apron and underseat storage is good enough for an open face helmet. The entire monocoque frame is made from steel with some fiber thrown in for the fender and headlight housing.

Despite the entire frame being constructed of steel, the scooter is extremely light and this can be felt the moment you take it off the stand. It is extremely nimble and can be flicked around by just twitching your behind. To put it into perspective,



Plain Jane clocks do the job well. Underseat storage is just enough to fit an open face helmet. Quality of the switchgear could be better. 125cc motor makes 10.06PS and 10.6Nm



imagine the pizza delivery scooter from the Grand Theft Auto series and you will know what I'm talking about. It uses a single sided trailing arm at the front and dual hydraulic shock absorbers at the rear. Ride quality is really good and the worst that most Indian roads can throw at you are disposed of without breaking a sweat. The biggest let down though are the tyres and the front brakes. The 150mm drum feels like a brick. Squeeze it hard and the scooter slows down, er, slowly. But squeeze it harder and the wheel locks up. Add to this mix, tyres that look a lot like it came from my dad's Bajaj Chetak from some twenty years ago and you have a serious problem.

This lack of stopping power however is not so much of a worry because the Vespa's 125cc mill is not in a hurry to go anywhere. The 125cc, three-valve engine makes 10.06PS and 10.6Nm. This means the Vespa is not ideal for power hungry, performance freaks. Then again, if you belong to that bracket, you wouldn't be looking at a Vespa anyway. However I did feel that a bit (just a bit) more punch would have made this scooter immensely more fun. While the Vespa is perfectly happy trundling along at 50-60kmph zipping through traffic, refinement is what this motor scores full marks for. Comparisons to a hot knife slicing butter won't be too far off. Piaggio claims a fuel efficiency of 60kmpl for the Vespa, which (if it makes a similar figure in real life conditions) makes it one of the most fuel efficient scooters in the Indian market.

Then again, those who want to stretch every last drop of fuel for all its worth is not the ideal Vespa rider either. The folks at Vespa are very clear about where they are placing the Vespa brand. It is not meant for the performance hungry or the economy conscious. It is a lifestyle product and it will most likely be priced with this in mind. Read as around ₹ 55,000-60,000. For my fellow generation Z peeps, this means that for roughly the price of three Xbox 360s we can get to experience a piece of history we missed. A price worth paying if you ask me. [\[D\]](#)

SPECIFICATION

TYPE	Air cooled, 125cc single cylinder
Max power	10.06PS@7500rpm
Max torque	10.6Nm@6000rpm
LxWxH	1770x690x1140
Price	₹ 60,000 (Estimated)
+ Brand name, looks, refined engine	
- Tyres lack grip, brakes lack bite	