



THE VESPA 90 SUPER SPRINT IN DETAIL

V9SS1 1965 –1971

V9SS1T 1001 - 6309 = 5309 UNITS

The 90 SS (as it is usually known) was introduced to the world at the Brighton show in October 1965 and made available on the British market immediately. This contrasts with the more usual situation of a new Vespa model debuting at the Milan show (also held around October) and finally reaching these shores the following Easter.

Clearly aimed at a specialist club competition market, the 90 SS is based on a Vespa 90 frame with narrowed down legshields. The wheels with separate finned hubs were shared with the 125cc VMA1 introduced around the same time. Unique features included the mudguard, a narrower headset with larger light, a bigger carb and a distinctive expansion chamber. Lastly –and most obviously – there was a dummy motorcycle-style fuel tank (acting as a toolbox) with a spare wheel mounted underneath it.

The dummy fuel tank was always a controversial feature since it appeared to stretch the very definition of a scooter. It took a ruling in its favour by the governing body of scooter sport in this country before it could be competed with over here without fear of protest.

The 90SS was unknown to the general public when it was new, and that situation remains unchanged to this day. Within scootering circles, however, it has always had a cult following both here and abroad. It is possibly the only scooter never to have gone out of fashion completely. This, coupled with the low production run, has tended to keep prices high. This model attracts a following even from those who otherwise do not especially like Vespas. Possibly this partly a consequence of there being no direct Lambretta equivalent.

During its six-year production run, changes were limited to the Piaggio badge on the front changing to the later type in 1967, and the “SS” transfers on the toolbox

becoming proper badges. Only made in red and blue, there have been periodic reports of white ones over the years. However, this may simply be a mis-identification of the rather similar looking 50SS which was made in white.

The 90SS is a real oddity amongst scooters. It has no apparent connection with the Swinging Sixties despite being produced during them. It looks like no other scooter (save its 50 SS brother), and these looks must be largely responsible for its die-hard following. If you want to join in the fun, you will have to dig deep.