



**AUTOMATIC 125cc VESPAS 1983-1996 IN DETAIL.**

PK 125S Automatica	VAM 1T	1983-1986
PK 125 XL Plurimatic	VVM1T	1987-1991
PK 125 FL2 Plurimatic	VVM2T	1991-1996

By the early nineteen eighties Piaggio could see that the long-term future of the scooter market –especially the commuter one – would demand a reliable and affordable fully automatic scooter. It was, therefore, imperative that the Vespa be developed in this manner if it was ever to regain the mass market, and not continue its gradual descent into the constraints of the enthusiast one.

For over a decade Piaggio engineers did their level best to adapt the traditional Vespa design to the new world of the future. You can be sure that nobody wanted d’Ascanio’s masterpiece to disappear, and it must have been a bitter pill to swallow when realisation came that the small sales of the automatic Vespa were never going to improve and that it was time for another approach.

All 125cc automatics were based on the current normal PK125:

#### PK125S Automatica

Compared to the otherwise similar looking PK 125S, this had distinctive angled grills incorporated into each side. The rear indicators were also mounted lower, though this feature was later standardised on all PK models. But of course in was in the area of the engine that the big changes had taken place. There was an automatic clutch operated by pulleys attached to a hydraulic actuator. Other changes included a reed valve induction system (replacing the long-established rotary valve), a higher compression ratio and a larger carburettor. With no clutch to operate, the left-hand lever operated the brake-meaning that the pedal could be eliminated. All this must have represented a considerable financial investment for Piaggio, so it’s not surprising they were a bit miffed that mass

sales were not forthcoming. However, they were not yet ready to give up, so along came the...

### PK XL125 Plurimatic

Although this may look like just the Automatica with the bodywork changes of the XL (and other models), in fact this is not quite the case. There had been more changes to the engine, the hydraulic actuator giving way to a mechanical centrifugal device. The slight loss in smoothness was compensated for by less power being absorbed and fuel consumption improving. It was also cheaper to make. As for the rest of the scooter, the changes mirrored those of the rest of the PK range. Piaggio appeared to be in a permanent state of dissatisfaction with the styling of the PK, and were always messing around with it. This time around there were the changes first seen on the ETS 125 – a sloping horn casting, a new headset top and speedo, and a bigger toolbox. There was also a rather unsuccessful attempt at disguising the slightly clumsy rear by styling the bottom of the seat as part of the bodywork.

### PK FL2 125 Plurimatic

Once again there was another raft of styling alterations the same as other PK models. The headset, speedo and toolbox all changed again, and this time there was a plastic section above the rear light that attempted to disguise the frame shape. There were no significant mechanical changes. By now it was clear that Piaggio had given up the fight – development of the four-stroke ET4 was already under way. It is hard to get production figures or even a firm date as to when production ceased. Even the official publicity photograph (shown here) is probably the non-automatic FL2 since there is no grill on the side. Some publications list both automatic and non-automatic FL2s as VMX7T.

In the wake of the ET4, production of the automatic 125cc Vespas (and the parallel range of 50cc versions for that matter) rather faded away unnoticed. Although these Vespas are completely unlamented by enthusiasts, if they had been more successful then the subsequent range we have now might have been closer in design to the traditional Vespa. An ignominious end for a project that must have promised so much

(Captions)

(AUTO 2)

The original toolbox as fitted to the PK125S

(pk125s)

The PK 125 S

(ENGINE)

The engine detail of the PK 125S looks radically different from that of a normal Vespa

(fl2)

The FL2 Plurimatic

(toolbox)

The third type toolbox as fitted to the FL2 Plurimatic

(headset)

Third type headset and speedo on FL2 Plurimatic

(XL125)

The XL125 Plurimatic with second type toolbox and speedo and dodgy seat design