



THE GERMAN GS 160 IN DETAIL

VSB1T 500000 –502199 (S1) = 2000 Units

VSB1T 502000 – 502336 (S2) =337 Units

Total = 2337 Units

In Germany Vespa Augsburg GAMBH replaced the GS150 with the new GS160 model as Piaggio had done. The production methods remained as before- i.e major components imported from Pontadera with a degree of local content added. That local content was much as would be expected. Dernfeld seat, Hella electrics and different side panel trim incorporating indicators. The speedo (or at least the face) was also German made. The new model was finished in white and designated the GS4.

Unfortunately the GS4 was introduced to the market at a time of sharply declining scooter sales. Unsold stocks of the GS3 (which until recently had been selling strongly) were sold alongside the new model for quite a time. In the event, the GS160/GS4 had a very extended sales period –new ones were still being registered in early 1969. By this time the rest of the scooter world was onto the Rally, let alone the SS180.

It seems certain that the frames and other main components were manufactured in Pontadera no later than 1964. It is probable that the Germans had committed themselves to an initial certain volume of parts, and faced with reduced demand they simply assembled GS4s from their stock of 1964 parts more-or-less to order until those parts were finally used up.

This rather limited the scope for spec changes, but there was a change to a Series 2 version along the way that mirrored Piaggio production with a squared off rear end and the toolbox moved to in front of the rider. Both versions were known as the type 382 as well as the GS4. There have been reports of GS4s being found in Germany

with the earlier “stem” type Hella light and also the usual Italian Siem one. However, these parts are easily switched and there is no contemporary photo showing any rear light other than the rather “flat Hella” type shown here.

Unlike the GS3, the GS4 is almost completely unknown in the UK despite the great popularity of the GS160 over here. It is a bit of a mystery why none have been imported – though of course far fewer were built than the GS3. However, in the absence of any first-hand experience it seems reasonable to assume that both the electrical system and the finish were better than on those machines coming out of Pontadera. This time around there were no quirky German styling “improvements” either meaning that this should be a scooter that it is very hard to fault. As usual, the German records are a bit suspect so it is possible that the production figures quoted may vary very slightly.

(captions)

(gs402)

Original publicity photograph

(gs 403)

Unique Hella rear light fitted to this model.

(gs404)

The 1966 Cologne show featuring the German Vespa line up for '67. The GS160 is still there.