



**THE VESPA T5 CLASSIC AND T5 MILLENIUM IN DETAIL**

The original T5 with its free-revving 5-port engine never met Piaggio's sales expectations, only being a success in Britain and, to some extent, Spain. By the beginning of the nineties they had pretty much given up on the idea of a range of sporting traditional Vespas, so the unique body tooling was sold off to LML allowing Piaggio to keep going with the normal P range and not have any further distractions from developing the forthcoming range of "twist and go" Vespas that we know today.

However, in Britain the performance of the T5 (if not the styling) was greatly admired, so strenuous representations were made to Piaggio to keep the T5 going. After at first refusing, Piaggio eventually caved in and re-introduced the T5 to the UK market only in late 1992. Since Piaggio no longer had the body tooling, this second version of the T5 utilised the regular P Range item. This was no great loss as the rather odd squared-off rear end and sloping horn casting of the original T5 were not greatly liked. Some, however, were a little sorry to see the loss of the original mudguard and headset with integrated screen.

Apart from the engine, a few other original T5 features made it onto the resulting "T5 Classic". Specifically, they were the "drinks holder" above the toolbox, the floor mat, the black fork link cover and the wheel discs. The archetypal colour for this model is metallic red, but black and yellow were available and possibly other colours too. The T5 Classic sold a steady 1000 units per year in Britain.

By 1998 Piaggio were bringing out the disc braked version of the P Range, and no doubt thought that this would be a convenient time to let the T5 die. As it turned out, there was an even bigger furore in Britain than the first time. After saying that there would definitely be no more T5s, a somewhat bemused Piaggio gave in (again!) and produced a final run of 400 disc-braked models for the British market in 1999. The "T5 Millennium" was finished in white with a tan seat, and had the latest P range features such as a headset with a hydraulic brake fluid reservoir and the old-type Vespa scroll on the legshield. The drinks tray, floor mat and wheel discs all bit the dust at this point. After these models, though, it really was the end of the T5.

The publicity photo of the T5 Classic in metallic red is the only one that could be found, and there doesn't seem to be one for the Millennium at all. Since there are no references to these models in any Italian book, outside of Britain they really are quite obscure. The T5 engine was very up-to-date when originally introduced in 1985, and it seems rather a pity that its potential was never to be fully utilised in a range of engine sizes. All the effort that must have been put into the design of that engine just for it to end up as a cult item in Britain.