



THE VESPA VMA, PRIMAVERA AND ET3 IN DETAIL

VMA	VMA1T	1001 – VMA1T	18100 = 17100 units
Primavera	VMA2T	020001 – VMA2T	0240324 = 220342 units
ET3	VMB1T	1101 - VMB1T	154312 = 153212 units

From the moment the Vespa 50 and 90 appeared in 1963 it was obvious that there was potential for higher specification models based on the same frame and engine cases. It was two years before a 125cc version appeared. Although always sold as just a “Vespa 125” it is usually referred to these days by its VMA prefix in order to avoid confusion with the many other 125cc models. The VMA was introduced at around the same time as two other models – the 90SS and the 125/150 Super. With the former was shared the separate wheel rims finned brake drums, while the latter provided the headset with a much larger speedo than the 90.

Apart from the engine being bored out to 125cc, there was a fourth gear and a mudguard crest. There was also a larger engine inspection hatch – though this was soon standardised in the 50 and 90 models.

In 1967 the VMA got a general specification upgrade and also a name – the Primavera. This brought it into line with other models which now had names (e.g. Super, Rally, Sprint) rather than just abbreviations or nothing at all. The changes included a slight increase in power, a toolbox in the left hand “side panel”, a helmet hook and a headlight rim. The frame was also slightly increased in length in the floorboards area (a similar change was carried out on the Vespa 50). In the course of its long production run the Primavera received different badges and a larger rear light.

During 1976 an “ET3” version of the Primavera was also made available. This had a third transfer port added as well as electronic ignition and a large expansion type silencer a bit like the 90SS one. All this combined meant that output went up from 5.5 to 7 bhp, which combined with such a light weight meant a good performance – better than the 90SS in fact. There was a larger seat, and on the very first models this was covered in a sort of denim finish that looked a bit silly. Speed stripes on the mudguard and side panels mimicked those found on the Rally 200, while the shock absorber and flywheel cover had a matt black finish.

Determining when the Primavera and ET3 actually ceased production is no easy matter. Although it might be thought that they disappeared following the introduction of the PK range in 1982, it is quite possible that CKD kits were sent out to the Far East after this time. In fact the large production figures for these models suggest that this may be the case. Then there is the fact that the ET3 (in unchanged form other than indicators mounted on the ends of the handlebars) was still being churned out at Pontadera for the Japanese market at least as late as 1999. Whether this is indicative of continuous production throughout the eighties and nineties is not certain.

All of this family of models enjoy a good reputation in the UK, many appreciating the combination of the fine handling and compact 50/90 frame with sufficient power to keep up with modern traffic. Douglas only imported a handful of the ET3 versions, so for a while these were considered to be collectors items in this country. However, large numbers of private imports from the mid nineties onwards have changed all that, and now there are plenty around to satisfy appreciative buyers.