BETTA GETA 'BRETTA

Brian Smith gives all the gen you need to know for buying a scooter

KNOW YOUR BIKE

If you're a scooter enthusiast, you will no doubt know that the Lambretta is the leader in the field. The bikes have been on the market for nearly 20 years now and all along the line the Lambretta has been one step ahead of all competition.

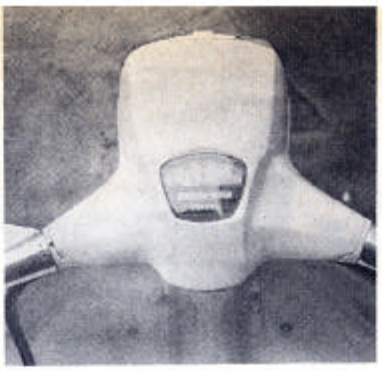
The performance, handling, braking, lighting and design are really good and hardened motorcyclists now reluctantly admit that these scooters aren't the pathetic things they were in the fifties.

The scooter started originally as cheap runabout transport, which it still is, but over the years there have been many scooter races and rallies and scooter enthusiasts are just as dedicated to their racing as are motorcyclists.

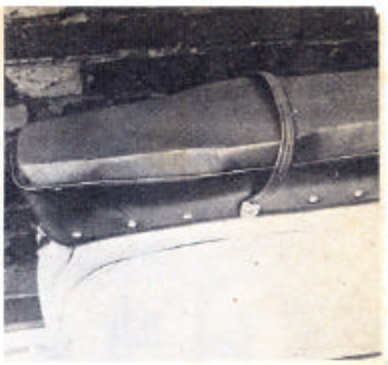
Perhaps the most important feature of the Lambrettas since 1959 has been their reliability. Both owners and dealers comment on this and if a machine is regularly serviced it should go on for many years even if driven hard. If you're in the market for a scooter, turn the page and find some of the tips on buying and running a Lambretta model.

NEW BIKE FEATURES

Latest Grand Prix machines are very smooth in styling and are also easy to clean. Note the non-rust plastic horn cowling



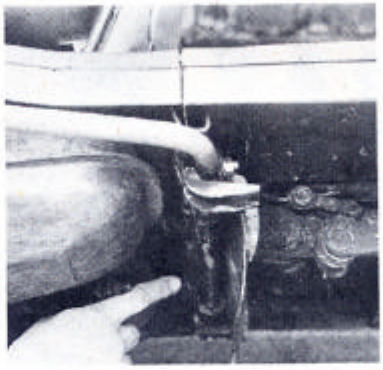
The handlebar layout is simple and uncluttered with just the speedo in the casing. Twistgrip gearchange is standard unit



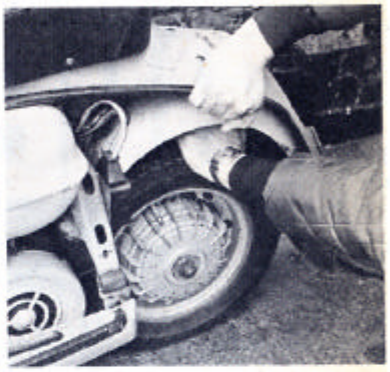
The latest dual seat looks good and is comfortable for one rider, but is a bit short to take the pillion passenger comfortably

S/HAND CHECK POINTS

If the exhaust smokes like this using full throttle uphill when hot, the crank seals are probably gone —check transmission oil level

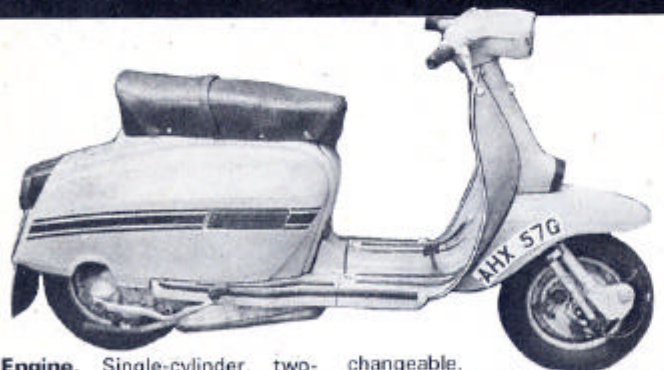


Check that rust or accident has not damaged the weld in the top hat section of the frame. If so, the stand may be loose as well



If there's play when you pull the back wheel as shown here, it is usually because the gearbox back plate is loose—may by expensive

SPECIFICATION



Engine. Single-cylinder, two-stroke with 57 × 58 mm bore and stroke giving 148 cc capacity. Compression ratio 8.25:1. Claimed power output 9 bhp. Cooled by crankshaft-mounted fan with ducting and lubricated by 50:1 petroil.

Gearbox. Four-speed with cable operated twist-grip change. Fully enclosed oilbath final drive chain.

Suspension. Front by trailing links with helical springs. Rear by swinging crankcase with telescopic spring/damper units.

Wheels and tyres. Pressed steel wheels with 3.50 × 10 tyres front and rear, interchangeable.

Brakes. Front and rear are drum type with single-leading shoes. Disc brake fitted to front of 200 model only.

Electrical equipment. Direct lighting with 6 volt battery and coil ignition.

Capacities. Fuel tank 1¾ gallons, with 2 pints reserve.

Dimensions. Length 71 in., width 27 in., height 40 in., ground clearance 5 in., unladen weight 264 lbs.

Manufacturers. Innocenti, Milano, Italy.

Importers. Lambretta Concessionaires Ltd, Purley Way, Croydon, Surrey.

"a popular scooter for

As far as the buyer of a used Lambretta is concerned, we are going to start the story from 1959. There are earlier machines around, but by now they are nearly all tired and rusty and cannot really be recommended as a good buy. You could easily end up spending more on repairs than you paid for the scooter!

1959 saw the first of the Li range. This Series I had the headlamp fixed into the body shield, which was inconvenient when cornering at night, and was sold in 125 and 150 form. The TV 175 (Tourismo Veloce) model was similar.

In 1960 Lambretta introduced the Series 2 models, which had the headlamp mounted on the handlebars. The engines also had different porting and shorter conrods and it's worth noting that the Series I engine can only be converted to the later spec. by changing the crank and rod complete.

The Series 3 models happened for 1963. These were called the Slim-style range and were again made in all three capacities, although the 175 had a front disc brake and front suspension damping as standard.

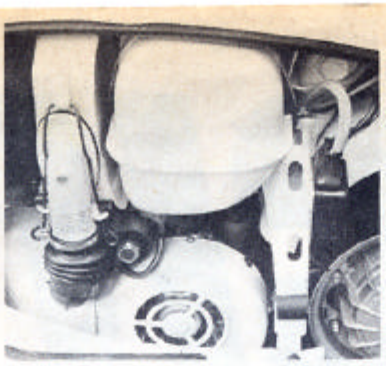
Shortly after this, the GT 200 replaced the 175 model, although most of the features were the same. The 200 did tend to vibrate a lot at low revs and had a habit of shedding its exhaust until rubber mounting cured the problem.

Late in 1963 Lambrettas also introduced the Special Pacemaker 150 which was a mildly tuned version of the Series 3 Li 150.

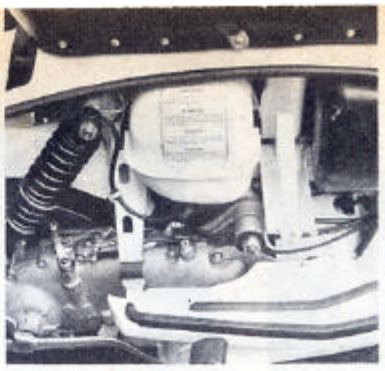
The following year the Li 125 was dropped. Lambretta still made a 125 based on the different and smaller Cento model, but this was nothing like as popular as the Li and most owners are better off with an Li 150.

In March 1966 the SX 200 model replaced the GT. This was a restyled machine with lower compression ratio, lower gear ratios, and an extra silencer mounting. A year later came the SX 150 which had very nearly as much power as the larger model, although it looked more like the previous GT200.

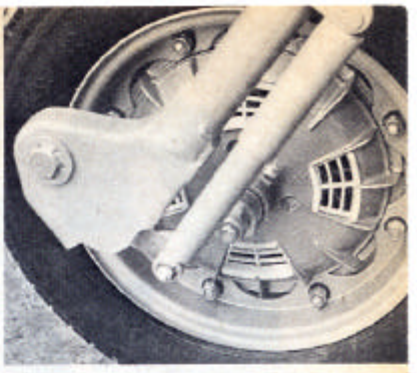
Another view showing the easy-to-clean lines. The whole rear lamp unit and the air outlet grille above are made of plastic material



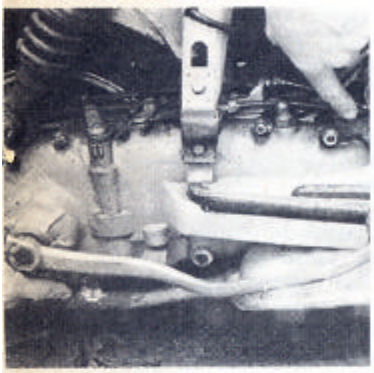
Left side of the machine shows the cooling fan and ducting, the cartridge-type air cleaner and the weatherproofed regulator unit



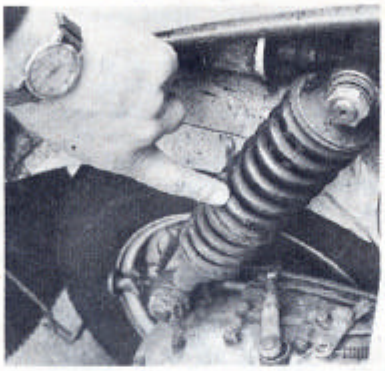
The right side shows where the battery normally lives, between the fuel tank and tool box, where it's quite easy to do topping up



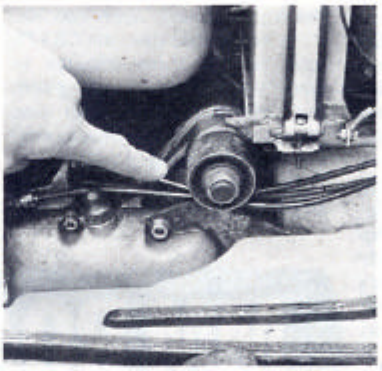
The 125 and 150 Grand Prix models have drum front brake and no hydraulic damper, but this 200 has both front disc and damper



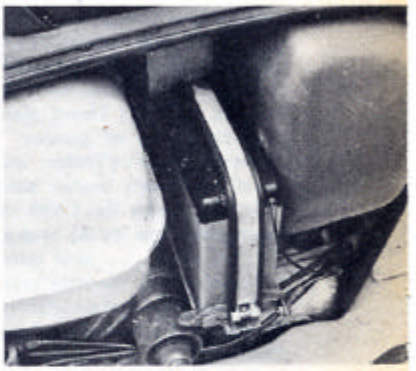
The exhausts tend to vibrate and fracture the two mounting brackets. Check both as shown, as a new exhaust system is expensive



The rear springs are dual rate type and give little trouble, but check that the rear damping is working correctly by bouncing it



The Silentbloc bushes on the engine mount/swinging arm pivot tend to get play in them particularly if any oil gets on to them



Check that the machine has a battery fitted and that it's in good condition. If terminals are oxidised, it's probably in bad state

small wheel enthusiasts"

For 1968, the Li 150 Special was introduced. This was an economy model based on the Pacemaker, but with direct lighting and no battery.

In April 1969 the latest GP 150 and 200 models replaced the SX range, the 200 still being the only one with front suspension damping and disc front brake, and in December of that year a similar GP 125 model was introduced.

The last model to be introduced was the new, Spanish-built 150 Special, which sells for just under £180—£5 cheaper than a GP 125 and nearly £35 cheaper than the GP 150.

Of all these models, the 150 is the only one which has remained in continuous production. It is also reckoned to be the best all-round buy for reliability and economy. You would only buy the 125 for the ultimate in economy or the 175 or 200 for the ultimate in performance.

For some of our information on the Lambrettas we went to Scoota-Mobile of Purley who have been selling, servicing, repairing and tuning these models for many years.

If you want to make any Lambretta go better, it's well worth asking them about tuning gear, because they have a full range of road and competition mods and parts which have been well-proven in the past. They also have all the factory leaflets, manuals and most special tools, which may be hired.

On the subject of manuals, the owner's handbook has somehow been quoting incorrect tyre pressures. These in fact should be 18 lbs. psi front and 20 lbs. rear for solo work with the rear going up to 35 lbs. if a pillion passenger is carried. This is very important for good handling.

Routine maintenance is quite straightforward on all models, but there is one important point which must be mentioned. The front hub and speedo drive must only be greased very lightly and very rarely or the grease will melt and get into the brakes and ruin the linings.

Generally, the Lambretta models since 1959 have been good, reliable machines and if scootering is your scene, you can be sure that you're getting one of the best.

BUYING PRICES

	125	150	200		125	150	200
1960	£25	£40	—	1966	—	£95	£130
1961	£30	£50	—	1967	—	£110	£145
1962	£35	£55	—	1968	—	£125	£165
1963	£50	£65	£90	1969	—	£150	£190
1964	£60	£75	£100	1970	£150	£175	£215
1965	—	£85	£115	New	£185	£213	£265

NB. All used prices for overhauled machines

ACCESSORIES

Spare wheel	£3·75
Windscreen	£5·92
Rear luggage carrier	£3·75
Backrest	£2·50
Front safety bar	£5·75
Rear safety bar	£4·87

TUNING

No manufacturer's tuning parts are available, but Scoota-Mobile offer numerous competition-proved performance parts some of which are listed below.

Hyperformance 30 mm Amal carb kit	£10·25
Hyperformance race porting mods	£6·50
Racing Dykes-ringed pistons	£3·35
Head profiling	£1·30
Racing brakes shoes	£1·20

SPARES

Piston	£2·20
Clutch plates (set of 4)	£1·35
First gear pinion	£5·35
Front brake shoes (pair)	£0·88
Standard silencer	£3·55
Speedo head	£3·05
Service guide	£1·05

INSURANCE

Fully comprehensive cover for experienced rider aged 21–24 living in Metropolitan Police Area (District 8)—£10 p.a.

PERFORMANCE

Maximum speeds in the gears:
1st 15 mph 2nd 35 mph
3rd 52 mph 4th 64 mph
Acceleration:
0–30 4.8 sec. 0–40 9.4 sec.
0–50 16.0 sec. 0–60 26.0 sec.
Standing quarter-mile: 23 sec.
Fuel consumption: 70 mpg with average riding.
Braking: Stopping from 30 mph on dry roads using both brakes, 36 feet.

OUR EXPERTS

Scoota-Mobile Ltd,
40-42 High Street,
Purley, Surrey.