

Remove the left-hand panel and you can see the cartridge-type air filter, carburettor, points cover, toolbox and 1.78 gallon tank



Under the other panel you'll find the "works". Oil filler, level and drain plugs, plus suspension unit are reached from this side

Ken Corkett rides and reports on the latest 200 cc Lambretta with . . .

GRAND PRIX

► If you want a mount with good acceleration, a top speed of nearly 70 mph and a high degree of weather protection, then the Lambretta Grand Prix 200 could be the one for you.

Gone are the days when scooters were merely handy runabouts. The earlier GT and SX models proved by their popularity that there was a real demand for fast, safe scooters. That demand still exists and this latest 200 from Lambretta should satisfy it.

The accent is on acceleration, I feel, on this particular model. Well-chosen gear ratios allow the power to come in from tickover speed and not tail off until the high fifties. This made town riding a joy, except for a slight stiffness in the gearchange mechanism, possibly due to its newness, which made my left wrist ache after a spell in dense traffic.

Having no positive stop, it was possible to find a neutral or select the wrong gear if you tried to hurry too much. But this happened less often as the test progressed.

STARTING

While we had the Grand Prix the weather was atrocious; black ice was followed by snow, sleet and torrential rain. But in all weathers starting was a first or second kick affair. On the very coldest mornings the choke lever was used briefly. As soon as the motor started the lever was returned to its normal position. This lever should only be used from cold.

Handling was generally very good and no frightening moments were experienced on the machine. However, it is essential to get tyre pressures right for your particular weight and increase the rear pressure when a passenger is carried or the scooter becomes rather unwieldy.

Front suspension is by trailing links carrying two helical springs. This gave a reasonably firm ride and only when fast cornering was tried on long bumpy bends was there any tendency to wander off line.

BRAKING

At first the much-vaunted front disc brake seemed very disappointing. There was no bite and the rear brake seemed much the better of the two.

However, after examining the front brake, it was found that only one pad was operating and in fact we were getting under half braking efficiency.

With both pads working properly the front disc proved to be a first-class stopper.

Both units had plenty of "feel", and although both wheels could be locked in an emergency stop, very delicate application was possible when conditions warranted it.

The highest speed attained on the track (electronically timed) was 67 mph with a 12-stone rider in full riding gear. On the road, 50-55 mph could be held indefinitely if conditions permitted. The engine seemed at its most comfortable at about 50 mph. This speed could be held without difficulty

even two-up. Drop-off in power on hills was not as much as on earlier models.

STYLISH

The GP 200 and smaller brother, the 150 are even more smoothly styled than previous models. The panel-locking handles, for instance, have disappeared and now a simple sprung retaining clip holds the panel in position on the underside.

While this latest method of securing panels definitely improves the appearance of the machine, it is worth mentioning that you can no longer tell, at a glance, if the panels are in fact locked in position. A small point, you may say, but not so small if one of the panels drops off.

Nevertheless, overall appearance was very pleasing and finish was well up to normal Lambretta standards, which is pretty high.

The toolbox is a lockable compartment situated, as with other Lambrettas, just below the front of the dualseat. The kit supplied was enough to change a plug, check oil level and not much else. The tool compartment was big enough to carry spare overtrousers or other odds and ends and came in handy several times during the test.

Rider comfort was good but, as is usual with scooters, too much attention has been paid to styling and not enough thought gone into pillion comfort. Short journeys were fine—long ones were a strain on

pillionist first, then the rider, as he sat on the front of the seat to accommodate his passenger more comfortably.

Handlebar layout was normal for Lambrettas. Gearchange and clutch on the left, throttle and front brake on the right. The speedometer in the headlamp cowling looked stylish but after about 35 mph was so erratic that it became no more than a fascinating ornament—maybe we were just unlucky with this machine—let's hope so!

The lights were better than average scooter lights. In fact the rear unit must be as good as any on the roads anywhere. It could be easily seen from a great distance and must be a tremendous safety factor on any two-wheeled vehicle.

The front light was good, as I've said, but could be better if performance is to be used to the full at night.

The dipped beam was such that it allowed town riding without causing offence to other road users—something which was long overdue—and still illuminated the road ahead safely.

ECONOMY

Two-strokes have never been noted for low fuel consumption, especially if you have an itching throttle hand and the best mpg figure returned by us was just under 80 mpg. Average consumption, taking in town and country rides, worked out about 70 mpg. This could drop to 55 if the stops were pulled out though.

The manufacturers claim that



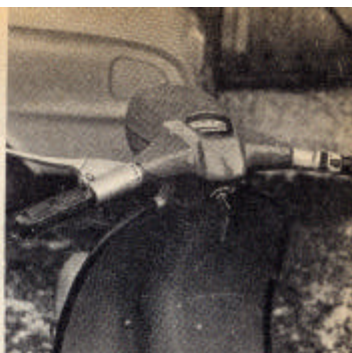
Fuel tank cap is tucked safely away under the hinged dual seat. 25:1 petrol mixture is used during and after running-in period



The toolkit was sparse, but the lockable compartment was large enough for overtrousers or any other oddments you might need



Correct adjustment was essential if the front disc brake was to be at its best. The brake allowed plenty of feel and worked well



Handlebar layout is unchanged with clutch and gearchange on the left, throttle and front brake on right. Levers could be closer

PERFORMANCE

90 mpg is possible with gentle usage. It probably is, but if you ride that gently, why buy a high-performance scooter like this one?

For the forgetful, there is a useful reserve on the three-way petrol tap which gives about 1 3/4 pints' distance in which to find a garage.

Being covered in, the GP 200 was a quiet machine to ride and the exhaust was effectively silenced so it is unlikely to offend prowling members of the Noise Abatement Society or anyone else for that matter.

Needless to say, the nut which secures the tail-pipe soon came adrift and the pipe began to wave about until a suitable piece of wire was produced. A common enough fault really: one only wonders why Lambrettas have never done anything about it.

On the merit side, the plastic mudguard flap which is fitted under the rear number plate was a useful extra and the steering lock, too, has become an accepted part of the make-up of a modern scooter.

Wheels are, of course, interchangeable. Removal of four domed nuts takes only a minute or so and makes wheel changing a very easy task.

The scooter always behaved well and it was a pleasure not to have to dress up too much before leaving for the office in the morning.

Priced at £243 10s. inc. P.T., the Grand Prix is truly good value for money and must prove popular with scooter enthusiasts everywhere.

