



A Sassy ride

PICTURES: KINGSHUK DUTTA

As the plane taxied on the Kochi airport runway under heavy downpour, I was wondering if the weather Gods would remain in this mood for the next 24 hours. I was fussing over the possibility of a ruined shoot and the ride. I guess, my prayers were answered as the heavy rain turned into a likeable drizzle. Piaggio had invited us to Kochi to ride out the Vespa S and also sample the Vespa "way of life".

There is no doubt that the scooter segment in India is witnessing growth at a good rate. Manufacturers are increasingly turning their attention to this segment and introducing products

The Vespa S is drop dead gorgeous

that cater to the much required needs of efficiency and practicality that the Indian commuter wants. This is where Piaggio deviates, and does so considerably, from the established norm. For three years now, they have had the most expensive scooters in

We ride the new Vespa S in the scenic backwaters of Kerala and try to find out what makes this Italian brand the most expensive scooter

their line-up. The LX125, the VX125 and now the Vespa S.

Truth be told, there's not much of a difference between the VX125 and the Vespa S. The S gets a boxy, rectangular headlamp from the '70s, which in our opinion, combines the chic with retro. The gauges are housed in two separate pods, encased in a piano black panel. Also, it sports rectangular mirrors, which distinguishes the S from its cousins. Nothing much then? Well, these changes make the Vespa S by far the best-looking scooter in the country. Adding to that are the stunning colour options they have. The Arancio Taormina (bright orange) coloured scooter featured here is a show-stopper and stands out from the crowd



The headlight has been changed to a retro box design instead of the round headlamp



Above: Vespas are one of the few scooters that still make use of a monocoque chassis design. Below: The rear, three-quarters is the same as that of its siblings apart from the Vespa S and the S125 badging



The Vespa S is a nimble handler with good balance and a stiff ride much like its other siblings



no matter where you go. There is a classy-looking matt black option along with red and a white colour paint job. So, if you want a lot of gaping jaws, surprised looks and a feeling of a supermodel (for ladies that is), the S is what you should have on your shopping list.

Coming to practicality, the S gets two cubbyholes on the front apron and a foldable hook. The under seat stowage is large enough to gobble up a small full-face helmet. The floorboard is the same as on other Vespas, meaning the spine runs down

the centre, which reduces the usability of the footboard. The seat is pretty comfortable, but there is no grab rail for the pillion. Although the omission makes the S look sportier from the rear, pillion riders might find it a bit unnerving. Though,

one can buy the grab rail and footrests for the pillion rider as optional extra.

The S is powered by the same 125cc, 10.6bhp engine that's on other models. This means that there is ample power and the S touches the 80kmph mark



The clocks look well-finished in piano black. The switchgear is the same as on the LX125 and the VX125



The engine also is the same as its siblings and retains its fun character. The disc brake ensures the rider has serious stopping power

Piaggio Vespa S

quickly. The handling of the S is as good as the LX and the VX. One can zip in and out of traffic easily, and the scooter remains stable at high speeds. The S sits on a single-sided trailing link suspension and a mono-shock at the rear. The ride, though on the stiffer side, is measured and not uncomfortable. The 200mm disc brake upfront has a mean bite. Braking is progressive

The engine is peppy and fun on the go

and the stopping distances are short. The overall fit and finish is decent, but the switchgear still feels ungainly and not very ergonomic. One has to take the palms off the handlebar to use the switchgear.

So, I will end by saying if you want to make a statement that you have arrived in life, have deep pockets and is a ladies' man, then you certainly need to be seen zipping around on the Vespa S.

↑ What we like

The looks The Vespa S is a good looking scooter and there's no debate about it.

↓ What we don't

Quality of plastics For a pricy scooter like this, better plastic could have been used.

! What surprised us

Seat The seat on the S is more comfortable now.

Verdict

The Vespa S is a premium scooter and Piaggio wants it to be like that. It comes with good looks and peppy performance. The Vespa S is for the uber-cool youngsters, who have the money to spend and want a ride that's easy and has loads of attitude and pose value.



Kingshuk Dutta



Plaggio Vespa S

Engine: 125cc, single cylinder
Max Power: 10.6bhp@7,500rpm
Max torque: 10.6Nm@6,000rpm
Gearbox: CVT
Wheelbase(mm): 1,280
LxWxH(mm): 1,770x690x1,440
Top Speed: NA
0-100kmph: NA
Price: Rs 75,424 (ex-Delhi)

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