

Inside the grand Vespa meet-up in Dhaka

ARFIN KAZI

Vespa, a reliable, small and economical scooter from Piaggio, originated in Italy around 1946, to reconstruct the country's shattered economy after World War II. Vespas were mainly used to commute around the city in the most cost-efficient way possible. With easy-to-fix, modular parts, the Vespa has been a favourite among riders for decades. These days, the Vespa has grown a large cult following, mostly around the old models - some of which are kept in pristine conditions by enthusiasts all around. Some of the old models also get restored from the ground up, where, if parts are not available, new parts are remanufactured for their scooters. Newer Vespas have been nibbling through pop culture with collaborations with singer Justin Bieber as



Gentleman's Ride is inspired by an international two-wheeler event, namely 'The Distinguished Gentleman's Ride', which raises awareness for men's mental health. It is mainly for classic two-wheeler enthusiasts, and all that is required to join is formal attire and a two-wheeler - which could be anything and not just specifically Vespas or mopeds. The Gentleman's ride in Bangladesh is hosted by Vespa Club Bangladesh. Founded in 2013, the club started as a collective which then grew with more enthusiasts with more organised events. The latest Gentleman's Ride had about 100 motorcycle enthusiasts from around the country - joining under one roof to share their love of all things Vespa.

Arranging meets post-pandemic

As 2022 saw the world shifting from the lockdowns and entering the post-pandemic era, many public events started being physical again - with this Vespa meet being no exception. According to the organisers, keeping Covid in mind while arranging the event meant keeping precautions in check. However, the meet still urged everyone to be careful and follow hygiene practices, such as wearing a mask and having a bottle of sanitiser. The organisers also discouraged anyone to attend if they have symptoms that fall under the category.

Types of Vespas present

There were primarily 4 eras of Vespas seen in the meet, ranging from the 1960s to the

design. Moving to the 1980s and 90s, this is the era when plastic entered the picture. The horn cover, headset and certain parts were manufactured with plastic. These models are also larger as far as size is concerned.

The most recent array of Vespas, which have opted for a more modern design, stems from the 2000s, and comes with automatic CVT gear and completely different design dimensions from past iterations. As any Vespa fan would admit, what renders Vespas timeless is their mechanical simplicity, featuring elegance that is built to last generations. Witnessing so many classic Vespas together in Bangladesh was a memorable occasion for any local two-wheeler fan.

Future of the club

According to the organisers, the Vespa Club Bangladesh strives to progress in making communication between all Vespa riders, enthusiasts, mechanics, parts sellers and anyone in the community more convenient. As they have been organising more event contributions in multiple aspects of this ecosystem for the past decade, spare parts have become more available locally. Local technicians have also become more active, with the vintage Vespas beginning to receive the value they truly deserve.

Vespa Club Bangladesh is a hub connecting all Vespa enthusiasts. They are, at the core, a niche group composed

PHOTOS:
AKIF HAMID, BHANGARI

well as with luxury fashion brands such as Christian Dior.

On December 30, 2022, Vespa Club Bangladesh hosted their Gentleman's Ride event in Shimanto Square. Being one of the last automobile meets of the year, a plethora of Vespas and mopeds showed up, each having their own special character and stories attached to it - resulting in a hugely versatile meet with a lot to see. The meet featured models starting from the 1960s to more recent models, as well as some other mopeds such as the country's only Yamaha Vino and much more.

What exactly is 'Gentleman's Ride'?



2000s. The oldest models are the Vespa 150 VBB, which are the most common vintages from the 60s, featuring rounded designs and curved chassis. In the 1970s, we saw VBC Vespa 150 Super and other models which became more angular in

of true 'gentle' people connected with their love of Vespas. Anyone who shares a common interest is welcome to join their events. All they have to do is find a stunning formal attire and wear it to the next Gentleman's Ride!