



# King of camp



Chrome script, none of yer stickers here



Speedo majors on mph figures



You can't fit one of these under the seat

Valencia is so over the top it's good





# Learner-legal road test

Want to get heads turning in the high street? The metallic pink and chrome Lexmoto Valencia should do that...

**125cc scooters face the same problem as modern cars. Your average 2012 hatchback has front-wheel drive, a four-cylinder engine, five doors and five seats. Despite what the manufacturers may say, there ain't that much difference between them, which is why they spend so much on advertising, to try and persuade us otherwise.**

It's the same for the scooter importers, especially of Chinese machines. Underneath the typical budget scoot is an air-cooled 125cc four-stroke motor, CVT belt drive and 10 or 12in wheels. They can't fall back on brand recognition like the car bods can – VW and Renault have a history and brand loyalty, but Lexmoto, Sinnis and Lifan don't have anything like the same high street recognition. How about styling? That too is limited by what's available and practical to use and some Chinese scooters with different underpinnings actually share the same bodywork. For most, attracting customers to your budget scooter probably comes down to price and how close the nearest dealer is.

Unless you're Lexmoto and you have the Valencia, which for my money is the most outrageously over-the-top budget scooter on the market; the cruiser styling isn't exactly new, gaining its inspiration (as Iggy pointed out last time) from the original Aprilia Habana. Lexmoto's version started out as the more sober-looking Tommy and very similar (give or take the odd grille) to the Sinnis Spirit tested in the last issue of *Twist & Go*.

But what makes it stand out is the colour. I can't remember seeing such an eye-watering shade of pink this side of a My Little Pony accessory pack. And it's backed up by chromed metal and plastic



Front disc does the job

Valencia wallows in corners but accelerates well



almost everywhere you look. As well as all the usual suspects – headlight, handlebars, indicators – you'll find the shiny stuff on the grille, the switchgear, the rear 'bumper', the instruments, the front shock casing... everywhere. It's all so shamelessly over the top that you can't help but like the Valencia, though actually, if the colour is just too much, it's also available in plain white or black.

Lexmoto is part of the Llexeter empire, which imports Chinese scooters and geared 125s of all shapes and types, badging them as Lexmos (to appeal to middle-aged commuters), or Pulse (if the target market is younger). It's got 122 dealers and all scoots and bikes come with 12-month unlimited mileage warranty. It also offers a 50cc version of the Valencia at just 10 quid less.

## ROOM TO BREATHE

One advantage of these cruiser scooters is that they offer a lot of room. Big by 125 standards, they are a good choice for the six-footer who finds any other sort of scooter too small and cramped. The Valencia is no exception, with a lot of arm and legroom, though the riding position is a bit odd.

It certainly looks and feels relaxed, with those pull-back bars allowing you to sit upright, but if you want to ride for more than an hour or so, it starts to niggle. One secret of a comfy riding position over long distance is distributing your weight evenly between hands, feet and bum. On the Valencia, it's your rear end that does most of the work and it doesn't get much help from the soft-ish seat. I'm probably overstating all of this because not many Valencia owners will be going touring and for shorter trips into town it'll be fine. But just to give the scooter a little more to do, I did a 90-odd

mile round trip from Lexmoto's Devon base and apart from a slightly numb bum, all was well. Actually, those with long arms and legs can shuffle about on the seat, even all the way back on to the pillion section – which helps. It follows that there's plenty of room for a passenger as well – they even get their own backrest and decent fold-out footrests. The Valencia doesn't come with a screen, but with the performance on tap, that's not a big problem, unless you're planning to commute on it through the depths of winter.

Talking of performance, the Valencia claims a top speed of 105kph (67mph), but something must have been lost in translation, because the almost identical Tommy claims a more realistic 90kph (56mph). Actually, acceleration is very good up to 40mph-or-so. I hopped on to the Valencia straight after riding the sportier-looking Pulse Phantom (tested in last issue T&G) and I reckon it's slightly quicker at these town speeds.

Like the Phantom, acceleration tails off a bit over 40mph and the scoot hits something of a brick wall at an indicated 50mph (though it will creep up to 55-57mph downhill). The test scooter had only 150 miles on the clock, so maybe with a few more you'd get some more mph as well. So it's not quick by 125 standards, but par for the course for a budget 125 and like the others, this one is a basic air-cooled two-valve motor – if you want the latest whizz-bang 125 with four valves, fuel injection and twice the power, you'll have to pay a lot more.

It might be basic, but the motor is very smooth, as is the take up from transmission. What I didn't expect, was the noise. Given Valencia's experience, you expect a gentle purring from the engine room, but it's actually quite a raucous little beast.





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## TECHSPEC:

ENGINE:	Air-cooled 125cc four-stroke
POWER:	8.2bhp @ 7500rpm
BRAKES:	Front disc, rear drum
WHEELS:	Cast alloy
WEIGHT:	93kg
FUEL CAPACITY:	5 litres
SEAT HEIGHT:	780mm
COLOURS:	Pink, black, white
PRICE:	£1050
CONTACT:	www.lexmoto.co.uk

## ALTERNATIVE CHOICE: Sinnis Spirit 125



Price: £1099

So close to the Valencia in spec, you could barely get a Kit Kat wrapper between them. The Spirit is from exactly the same mould of 125cc cruiser scooter with a top speed of just over 50mph and a similar fan-cooled motor. It's also got the same sort of style (albeit slightly more subtle) which some buyers may prefer. It doesn't have passenger backrest though. It's got the same level of warranty and only costs £49 more – for most buyers, it might just come down to which one has the closest dealer.

The Aprilia Habana inspired a whole raft of Japanese lookalikes



## PRINCE OF WHALES

What you don't get is taut, sports scooter style handling. The long wheelbase, soft suspension and fat little 3.50 x 10 tyres create a very different animal, and after the Phantom it felt like a rudderless whale. You do get used to it after a bit, and of course it did increase the comfort factor, but the soft suspension and lack of damping makes for progress that is floaty at best and vague at worst. Fortunately, the 10in Duros grip well, at least in the dry. And as with the performance, the handling is fine around town. The brakes are, as you'd expect on a budget scooter, an unbranded front disc and rear drum, but they work well enough, as they should, given that the scooter weighs only 93kg.

Somehow I don't think the Valencia's details were designed with the everyday commuter in mind. There's very little underseat space – I squeezed in a small road atlas and a packet of digestives, so overtrousers and lunch would fill it completely. As for helmet storage – forget it. But there are some useful touches. The mirrors are large and clear, there's a chrome (of course) luggage rack and the instruments are readable – the speedo even comes with the mph figures biggest,

hooray! And like most four-stroke 125s, this one is good on fuel. I averaged 108.4mpg, most of that on the open road rather than round town, so squirting the scoot between traffic lights might not get so much. The tank holds five litres, which would take you about 120 miles, enough for most folks' weekly commute.

## VERDICT

Despite the colour, despite the chrome (or maybe because of it) I came away liking the Valencia. One of the best memories was cruising along a country lane and seeing the trees and hedges flash past in the reflection on the big chrome headlight. I could almost have been cruising on an Electraglide down the Santa Monica highway – well, maybe.

But the Valencia does have some practical points as well. It's economical, certainly quick enough around town and has room for two. And as Lexmotos usually are, it's very keenly priced at £960 with a 12 month unlimited mileage warranty. Add registration, number plate and road tax to that and it should come out at around £1050 on the road. As for the colour... metallic pink... would you dare?

WORDS & PHOTOS: Pete Henshaw

On the beach



Even the switchgear comes chrome plated