

## Butchered: An insane custom Vespa scooter from Russia



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Butcher Garage is not a familiar name around these parts. But they specialize in a genre we'd love to see more of: extreme custom scooters. And judging by this pseudo-scrambler Vespa PX 150, they've got the imagination for it, too.

Based in Saint Petersburg, Russia's second-largest city, Butcher Garage is run by three friends: Alex, Mitya and Miha. They've been operating for eight years now, repairing, tuning and tweaking scoots.



The crew rely heavily on the German scooter parts specialists SIP Scootershop. "In our country, you can't just go to the store and buy everything you need," Alex explains. "We can only dream about what we could build with access to the full SIP catalog. In the workshop, we call it 'the bible'."

SIP and Butcher started talking two years ago about building a custom to showcase the skills of both brands. And it was around that time that "scrambler" had become the style du jour for customs.

"Following the fashion in the custom world, almost every motorcycle manufacturer presented a 'scrambler' at EICMA that year," says Alex. "We saw it as an opportunity to take advantage of the trend, and build a Vespa in the same style."

"At that time, there were also custom projects designed for cross country or desert racing. But in our opinion, they served functionality to the detriment of style. We decided to take a risk and to combine off-road qualities with urban design to create a bike to escape from the city."

SIP Scootershop green-lit the project. Butcher Garage grabbed the super popular two-stroke Vespa 150, and proceeded to make it unrecognizable.

The squad have taken their cues straight from the desert sleds of the 60s and 70s, and called their project 'Escape' with a nod to the 1963 Steve McQueen film. It started with a 1970s Husqvarna fuel tank which surprisingly wedged right into the Vespa's chassis with minimal fuss. Right behind the tank is a seat designed to mimic the BSA perches from back in the day.

When it came to the PX 150's chassis, the team called in help from specialists Metal DIY. Together, they worked out the geometry they wanted, then modded the frame and chassis to match. Much of the original monocoque body has been reworked, and there's a

new head tube too.

It's hooked up to a long travel pit bike fork, with a 12" wheel on the end of it, complete with a custom hub. The rear suspension's been upgraded with a pair of SIP shocks, run through the middle of the scooter. They're attached to a custom-built mount, and the whole setup offers twice as much travel as stock.

Relocating the shocks had a good effect on the stroke length and the weighting of the Vespa," explains Alex. "And also on design?it fills the space under the tank and opens things up for the wide 130/90-10 rear wheel."

You'll spot some pretty gnarly foot controls on either side of the dual shocks. The Vespa has been treated to a full hydraulic brake setup, including milled aluminum calipers with enlarged pistons, Galfer discs, and Spiegler braided steel hoses.

The PX 150 is known for its 'twist shift' hand-operated gear shifter, but here it's been ditched for a foot control?and Butcher developed the accompanying sequential box themselves. The change freed them up to create a more traditional motorcycle cockpit too.

On the Fat Bars are a Domino quick action throttle, a folding clutch lever, and a SIP brake master cylinder. The kill switch is mounted to the front clamp. A SIP tachometer rounds out the setup, complete with a digital display for speed and even temperature.

Butcher designed a number board for the front to carry SIP's branding, but drilled it out and popped a powerful LED behind it. The taillight's also from the SIP catalogue, modified a touch.

The guys have naturally hopped the Vespa up as much as possible too. SIP supplied a Parmakit water-cooling system, with the radiator hidden in the body, along with a Malossi pump. The mods are extensive, but highlights include a Pinasco crankcase and a 177 cc Parmakit cylinder.

The crankshaft, reed valve block, ignition, clutch and driveshaft are all upgrades. The Vespa now breathes in through a Keihin carb?kitted with a Ramair race filter?and breathes out via a SIP race exhaust.

"The 'curly' exhaust tubes serve two functions," says Alex. "Increasing the ride height, and creating a visual balance between the right and left sides of the bike."

For Escape's final livery, Butcher Garage combined SIP's corporate colors (black, red and white) with the help of Anton Gorbunov on design, and Ksenia Deryagina on paint. Even though they started out with sketches, they went back on the paint job several times.

In the end, they focused on 'ageing' the checkered part, using a process involving clear acrylic lacquer and powder coating.

Escape is a cracking little machine, which makes a strong case for more custom scooters around here. Scooter EXIF, anyone?

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