

First Day With A Used Chinese Scooter

What to do in the first hours, before spending money on anything. Most of it costs nothing and all of it saves money later.

An hour on day one is worth a weekend later. Work down in order — the sections are deliberately in the order that saves the most money.

1 · RECORD WHAT IT IS, BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE

- ☐ VIN found, written down and photographed
- ☐ Engine number found, written down and photographed
- ☐ Emission label found and photographed flat on
- ☐ Machine looked up and the factory noted
- ☐ All of the above saved somewhere that is not just your phone
- ☐ Belt marking, roller size and plug type recorded before they are changed

DO IT NOW, NOT LATER

Every one of these numbers is under a panel. On day one you are already taking panels off out of curiosity. In three months, when you actually need the number, you will not be.

2 · SAFETY BEFORE THE FIRST REAL RIDE

- ☐ Both brakes work and are properly adjusted
- ☐ Tyres have tread, hold pressure and are not cracked or ancient
- ☐ Lights, brake light, indicators and horn all work
- ☐ Nothing is loose — axle nuts, handlebar clamp, engine mounts, exhaust
- ☐ Throttle returns fully on its own when released
- ☐ Steering does not bind or catch
- ☐ No fuel leaks anywhere
- ☐ Mirrors fitted and pointing at something useful

3 · CONSUMABLES WORTH DOING ON AN UNKNOWN MACHINE

On a machine whose history you do not know, assume none of this has been done. It is all cheap and it all removes a variable if something goes wrong later.

- ☐ Engine oil and, if separate, gearbox oil
- ☐ Air filter — check it, clean or replace
- ☐ Spark plug — record the old one before binning it
- ☐ Drive belt — inspect, and record the marking
- ☐ Brake fluid, if hydraulic and the fluid is dark
- ☐ Coolant, if liquid cooled
- ☐ Tyre pressures set correctly
- ☐ Every accessible fastener checked for tightness

WHAT NOT TO SPEND MONEY ON YET

Not a performance variator, not a big-bore kit, not a loud exhaust, and not a new CDI. None of them fix a machine that has not yet been serviced, and all of them make diagnosing the next problem harder. Get it running properly on standard parts first. Then, if you still want to change something, you will have a baseline to compare against.

THE RECORD

BOUGHT ON	BOUGHT FROM	PRICE PAID
ODOMETER AT PURCHASE	VIN	
ENGINE NUMBER	FACTORY	

WHAT IT NEEDS, IN THE ORDER YOU INTEND TO DO IT

Need to work out what you actually own?

The Scooter Parts Registry is a free public record of the Chinese factories behind US-market scooters, ATVs and go-karts — brand, engine family, VIN prefix, factory and related machines. No account, no email.

thescooterparts.com/identify