

Sam Wollaston

'However whiny and smelly Tomos is, he is also charming'



The timing is nice. They took away my high-spec Range Rover Sport with "ebony and ivory" interior and heated leather seats.

Ten minutes later, this little fella turns up: a baby blue 50cc Slovenian scooter called Tomos.

Do they not know who I am? I'm a distinguished motoring correspondent, at a quality international news organisation. Yes, *that* Sam Wollaston. So! WTF?

It's ridiculous to compare a Range Rover with a Tomos. But because the latter has replaced the former, it's hard not to. At 55kg he weighs 2.6% as much as the Range Rover. Cost, also expressed as a percentage: 1.6. Cost compared with the cost of the audio system on the other: 27.9%. That's right: this vehicle costs a little over a quarter the price of the Range Rover's *radio!* Perhaps now you can understand my slight shock?

TOMOS CLASSIC XL 45

Price £1,395

Top speed 28mph

Acceleration 0-60mph in...
hahahaha

Fuel consumption 100-110 mpg

CO₂ emissions N/A but it's a two-stroke so no prizes for greenness

Green rating 3/10

Cool rating 10/10



Tomos mopeds and scooters have been made in Koper, Slovenia, since 1954, originally under licence for Puch. You haven't been able to buy one here for 30 years. Now they're back. Though you can get cheaper Chinese mopeds and scooters, a Tomos costs less than anything from Japan or Italy.

To be honest, it's not hard to see why. I don't believe much has changed in the past 30 years, if not since 1954. This is motorised two-wheeled transport at its most basic. There's no battery, no ignition, nothing that isn't necessary. There are pedals. It has that vivid mosquito noise of a little two-stroke engine - less common here than it used to be, but it brings back memories of childhood holidays in warmer places. Plus the smell of burning oil: if you're parking in a garage, switch off before going in, or you may never come out. And if you're parking outside, make sure you've got a good lock, because

its weight - if not its desirability - makes it extremely nickable.

The arrival of this one coincides not just with the departure of my king-of-the-road off-off four-by-four, but also with the arrival of winter. The commute to work with Tomos isn't any quicker than on my bicycle, but it's certainly colder; I'm pedalling on this, too, not because I need to, but to prevent frostbite.

I can't pretend I'm not thinking about those heated leather seats, that I'm not missing the roof and the sides, the room for company, the five-grand stereo, the lofty position, the feeling that I'm not going to die any minute. On the plus side, other people seem to like me - and Tomos - a lot better. And I like myself a lot better, too. However basic, whiny and smelly Tomos is, he is also charming. Chic, even, in a retro, Slovenian kind of way. Plus I'm around 83 grand better off. Cold? What cold?