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## Press Release:

# Small Wheels – Big Ideas

## **Bremen Classic Motorshow Celebrates German Motor Scooter Culture**

Whether it's a Vespa, Lambretta or Schwalbe, 70 years after motor scooters first gained popularity in Germany, it's impossible to imagine city centres without these nippy little two-wheelers. Exorbitant car prices after the end of the Second World War drove people to buy scooters instead, and they quickly became a cult object for a whole generation in the 1950s and 1960s. "The scooter is definitely a vehicle that inspires nostalgia and modernity in equal quantities," says Frank Ruge, Project Manager at the Bremen Classic Motorshow. The special exhibition on two-wheelers showcases urban mobility on small wheels then and now, and is being held at the first classic car show of the year, from Friday 31 January to Sunday 2 February, 2020. "Through the 20 exhibits we can look back at the early days of mass motorization and mobility today," says Ruge on the idea behind the exhibition in Hall 1.

But first, let's go back to the start. Although the scooter is almost as old as motorised traffic, all attempts to establish scooters as a two-wheeled alternative in Europe failed until the mid-20th century. This changed with the Allies' Corgi and Cushman scooters in Italy. At the end of the 1940s, the triumphal procession of Piaggio and Innocenti scooters began its march out of Pontedera and Milan and around the world. In 1950, scooters reached northern roads beyond the Alps.

Italian Vespa and Lambretta prototypes convinced license holders like Hoffmann and NSU. These models pushed imitators in East and West to drive forward the civilization of motorized two-wheelers with their own ideas. Amateur engineers upped the ante, like the Stüdemann brothers from Hamburg with their "Fibs", August Falz in Döbeln with his "Sibylle" or the Achilles West factory in Wilhelmshaven. Their "sports model" was based on the Swiss AMI scooter.

In 1951, automotive firm Glas, based in Dingolfing, created the latest large travel scooter, guaranteed to cover long distances. Developed in 1951 by technicians outside the industry, in 1953 the 200 cc version of the Goggo scooter became the driving force in the market, and the ultimate Bastert two-wheeled car banished all thoughts of old-fashioned mobility. The Maicomobil provided good shelter from the weather and plenty of storage space. With its sidecar, it allowed whole families to travel before small cars were developed. A prime example of international success among the German touring scooters is the Zündapp Bella. A special US-export version of it will be on show at the Bremen Classic Motorshow.



Passion for design-engineering gave rise to designs that contested Vespa's dominance, such as Lino Tonti's Aermacchi Cigno with its more motorbike-like driving dynamic. A Heinkel Tourist from endurance racing had a fibreglass body and a racy, high-revving four-stroke engine - a long way from a peaceful putter along.

Racing spirit and stylish subculture co-exist in the world of scooters and come face to face through the bikes we're exhibiting in Bremen. The pure lines of a Lambretta Skkeleton represent 60s pop culture, while the Vespa PX belongs to the 80s and its preppy kids. On a Schwalbe to Vietnam or on a Vespa on the drag race course – the special exhibition in Bremen also reveals the escapist side of scooter culture.

At the end of the 20th century, high traffic volumes in cities created new problems. Possible solutions came from Honda in the form of its Helix and from BMW with its C1 model.

The Bremen Classic Motorshow runs from Friday 31 January to Sunday 2 February 2020 in all halls at Bremen Messe, plus the Hall 8 modular unit. The halls are open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. A day pass costs 16 Euros.

More info at [www.classicmotorshow.de](http://www.classicmotorshow.de)

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**Further information for editorial offices:**

MESSE BREMEN & ÖVB-Arena/M3B GmbH  
Kristin Viezens, Phone +49 421 / 35 05 - 4 44, Fax +49 421 / 35 05 - 3 40  
E-Mail: [viezens@messe-bremen.de](mailto:viezens@messe-bremen.de); Internet: [www.messe-bremen.de](http://www.messe-bremen.de)