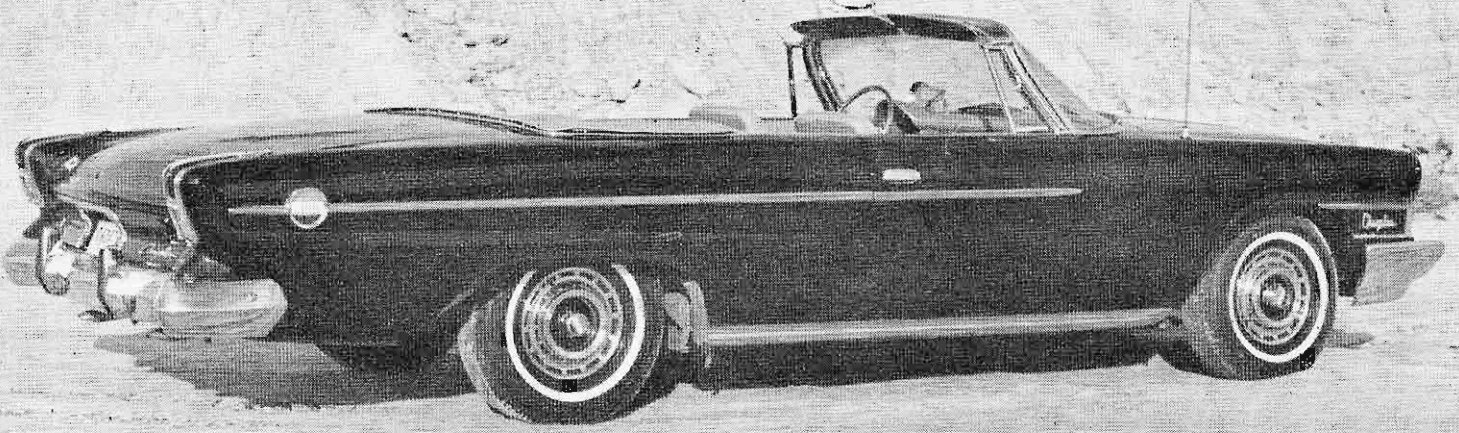


Chrysler 300-H

**CAR
LIFE**
Road Test





WHEN CHRYSLER decided to capitalize on the 300 series' good name with a lower-priced line of cars, it wisely kept the letter series going, too, although the relationship of the two is a bit confusing. The 1962 version is the eighth in this procession and thus bears the designation 300-H. Chrysler says when it finishes the alphabet it will continue with double letters; the "AA" will appear in 1982!

The 300-H also continues its predecessors' penchant for brilliant performance and leather-lined luxury while making those forebears seem a bit lacking in one area or another. The 300-H, we think, is extremely desirable; it combines into one package most of the elements we think necessary in a high-performance automobile.

There are few visible exterior changes for '62, although the best one is the most noticeable one—the tailfins are gone! Minus these, the 300-H assumes a neat and sleek appearance. Not so readily apparent, however, is the most important change; the 300-H is shorter, lighter and quicker than any of its ancestors. There really isn't much to identify the 300-H from the new 300 series, the main external differences being chrome lettering on the trunk lid and 7.60-15 Goodyear Blue Streak tires. Both models bear the now-familiar red, white and blue 300 emblem; front, sides and rear.

Inside, 300-H appointments manifest themselves instantly. This is strictly a 4-passenger car and each passenger is allocated his own padded leather armchair in which to ride. Although they're billed as bucket seats, few buckets ever were so luxurious (or wide). The front two seats are individually adjustable fore and aft, the back two aren't. Ensnared behind the steering wheel, the driver gets a definite king-on-his-throne delusion. Console armrests divide the front and rear sides into separate compartments as surely as did the old-fashioned bundling board. Virtually out of sight on the front console is the mechanical tachometer, a fine and useful instrument—if it had been positioned where the driver could see it without taking his eyes completely off the road! The special 150-mph speedometer is buried inside the Chrysler line's ridiculous "Astradome" instrument panel, while the rest of the controls, pedals and dials are like those on any other Chrysler. Tan leather (and some vinyl) covers the interior tastefully, but is the only color available.

The special interior trim is just one feature of the 300-H specification. The 413-cu. in. engine, now fitted with two 4-venturi carburetors atop it, is another. This is described elsewhere (See "Detroit's Cubic Inch Race," page 8). We'll only say here that it does its particular job magnificently. Coupled to Chrysler's 3-speed, push-button-

controllable TorqueFlite transmission, the power package is completely docile and controllable, yet delivers maximum effort upon demand. No point here in yearning for a 3- or 4-speed manual transmission, they simply aren't available (although Dodge has both close-ratio units for its 413-cu. in. engines). Chrysler has tried the French-built Pont-a-Mousson 4-speed as an option, but it proved too expensive, and has been dropped.

Standard equipment on the 300-H also includes power steering, braking and window lifting systems. Although we don't particularly care for the super-sensitive Chrysler steering, we won't question its value on such a big, heavy car. It does have the advantage of a quicker ratio, which effectively increases the car's maneuverability.

We will, however, criticize the brakes. They are adequate, but just barely so. Although large enough to do the job (drums are 12 x 2.5 in., total swept area 377 sq. in.), the 300-H brakes are prone to rapid fade. This may be caused by wrong brake lining, poor cooling of the drums or an inefficient design. Whatever the case, it has been present in all the 300-series Chryslers we've tested in the past year (300-G, 300, 300-H). The car stops well enough, once, but the second crash stop from 80 finds wheels grabbing and pulling in a most discomfiting

The combination of elegant appointments, superior handling and a vastly flexible power train makes the 300-H, in our opinion, a supremely desirable automobile.



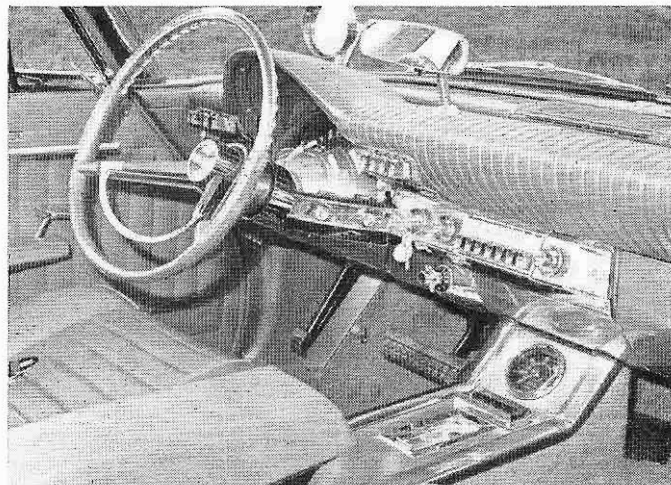
INDIVIDUAL ARMCHAIRS for four passengers.

DEEP TRUNK holds plenty of luggage.



DRY AIR cleaners cover dual 4-throat carburetors.

CONSOLE HOUSES tach, window buttons, ash tray.



manner. Also, after the second stop, pedal pressure had become quite high in relation to brake effectiveness—the first sign of fade. Perhaps the aluminum-finned iron drums of the Buick or sintered linings of the Corvette would alleviate this. The brakes are probably entirely adequate for city driving but mountain driving could compound the problem.

The going part of the 300-H is perhaps its strongest point. It accomplishes every phase of forward motion with beguiling ease. Idling about town is a pleasure and the big engine just loafs; when the highway opens up, so do you. The push-button transmission will let the engine rev to the maximum in any gear and 6000 rpm produces a whistling 63 mph in 1st and 106 mph in 2nd. We don't ordinarily over-rev an engine by quite such a margin but the 300-H did it so easily in 1st we used fewer rpm in 2nd during timed runs. Mistreatment is never really necessary in this car anyway because the automatic transmission does a good job of picking the shift points. At wide-open throttle it shifts 1-2 at 50 mph and 2-3 at 80 mph. Acceleration times suffer only fractionally.

Considering that the test weight of the 300-H is 4560 lb., its 16-sec. quarter-miles are outstanding. Traction is

good with the Blue Streaks and it reaches 100 mph in 21 sec. Top speed is, we estimate, 133 mph; it could be slightly more, since 133 corresponds with the power peak of 5200 rpm and the engine does turn beyond that. An actual 140 should be easy enough to accomplish with a freshly-tuned engine—if you have an open, safe, unpatrolled highway handy. Incidentally, we found the speedometer to be virtually dead accurate at our usual checks at 10-mph increments; something rarely found today.

How did the 300-H get lighter and faster? To begin with, Chrysler stopped putting it on the long, 126-in. New Yorker chassis and adapted the 300-H specifications to the 122-in. Newport (ex-Windsor) model. Over-all length and weight thus were reduced too, the latter item by 300 lb. The 5-in.-less length will never be missed as interior dimensions remain the same.

A good share of the 300-H's desirability lies in the way it handles. It is vastly different from the 300 we tested last month. Where the 300 had a soft, boulevard ride, the 300-H has a firm, almost harsh, quality to its motion. But where the 300 feels flighty and floaty from the 80s on up, the 300-H's stiffer suspension comes into its own—there's not an ounce of a bounce. (You get the feeling

that the car isn't riding over the undulations, it's smashing them flat like a steamroller!) Slightly larger torsion bars in front (1.01 in. vs. 0.99 in. for the Newport and 300) and an extra spring leaf in the rear partially accomplish the feat. Spring rate at front is 130 lb. per in. and at the rear approximately 160. Stronger shock absorbers and a husky, 0.75 in. diameter anti-roll bar on the front help, too.

There are other, more subtle differences throughout the 300-H, justifying, we think, its \$2000 price increase over the 300 series. Also, many of the accessories not included in the 300's list price are included in that of the 300-H (i.e., power steering, power brakes, 413-cu. in. engine, dual exhaust, automatic transmission, numerous comfort and trim items). Some of these "conveniences" we could forego; however, the 300-H comes as a complete package and we're not sure but what it's the best way to insure that the buyer gets what he needs to safely operate such a rapid and roadable vehicle.

The Chrysler 300-H, then, is a total automobile. Nothing has been sacrificed in building it the way the engineers think it should be made. Its handling and appointment are superb, its performance and styling excellent; we only wish it would stop a bit better. In the case of the 300-H, one very nearly can have everything. ■



CAR LIFE ROAD TEST

300H

CHRYSLER 300-H

SPECIFICATIONS

List price	\$5386
Price, as tested	5648
Curb weight, lb.	4220
Test weight	4560
distribution, %	55/45
Tire size	7.60-15
Tire capacity, lb.	4360
Brake swept area	377
Engine type	V-8, ohv
Bore & stroke	4.19 x 3.75
Displacement, cu in.	413
Compression ratio	10.1
Bhp @ rpm	380 @ 5200
equivalent mph	133
Torque, lb-ft.	450 @ 3600
equivalent mph	91.8
Fuel tank capacity, gal.	23

EXTRA-COST OPTIONS

Radio, heater, auto pilot, remote control mirror.

DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase, in.	122.0
Tread, f and r	61.1/60.0
Over-all length, in.	215.3
width	79.4
height	55.7
equivalent vol, cu ft	552
Frontal area, sq ft	24.6
Ground clearance, in.	5.3
Steering ratio, o/a	19.2
turns, lock to lock	3.5
turning circle, ft	42.7
Hip room, front	2 x 23.5
Hip room, rear	2 x 22.5
Pedal to seat back, max.	42.0
Floor to ground	12.0
Luggage vol, cu ft	32.8

GEAR RATIOS

3rd (1.00), overall	3.23
2nd (1.45)	4.68
1st (2.45)	7.91
1st (2.45x2.2)	17.4

PERFORMANCE

Top speed (5200), mph	133
best timed run	n.a.
3rd ()	
2nd (5300)	95
1st (5850)	60

ACCELERATION

0-30 mph, sec	3.4
0-40	4.3
0-50	6.0
0-60	7.7
0-70	9.8
0-80	13.0
0-100	21.0
Standing 1/4 mile	16.0
speed at end	88.5

FUEL CONSUMPTION

Normal range, mpg	12/15
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SPEEDOMETER ERROR

30 mph, actual	30.0
60 mph	59.8
90 mph	90.0

CALCULATED DATA

Lb/hp (test wt)	12.0
Cu ft/ton mile	123.5
Mph/1000 rpm	25.5
Engine revs/mile	2355
Piston travel, ft/mile	1470
Car Life wear index	34.7

PULLING POWER

3rd, lb/ton @ mph	390 @ 55
2nd	500 @ 45
1st	off scale
Total drag at 60 mph, lb	145

