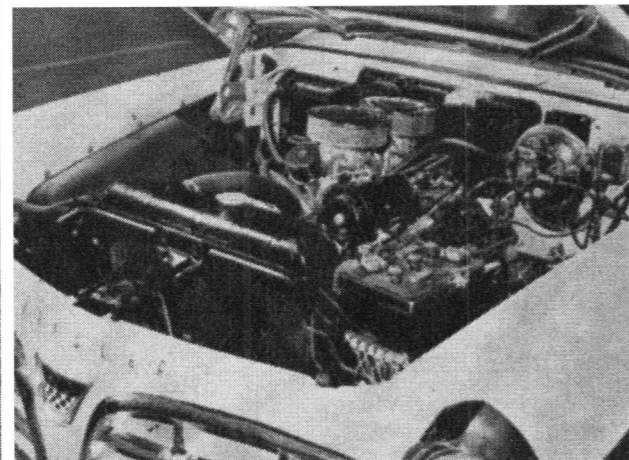




Chrysler 300

a step in the
right direction



IF THE NEWLY announced Chrysler "300" had come from Italy, instead of Detroit, it would undoubtedly be called a car of the "Gran Turismo" category. While the dyed-in-the-wool sports car enthusiast will object to calling this new high-performance car a touring-sports machine (on the basis of its sheer bulk and weight) there is no denying that it is a most interesting automobile from several standpoints.

Chrysler's own publicity sums up their thinking very well. "Powered by a 300-horsepower modified Chrysler FirePower V-8 engine and fitted with special suspension, the ground-hugging hardtop was designed to the specifications of motor sports enthusiasts who, since the introduction of the FirePower engine in 1951, have been asking Chrysler to build an automobile with many sports car characteristics.

"Among the things they asked for were a modified FirePower engine like those used at Le Mans and Watkins Glen road races, a simple unadorned exterior, the road-hugging look and feel of a sports car and a practical, durable leather interior which would take hard wear. This car incorporates these qualities."

The end result of these worthwhile objectives is shown here. Chrysler builds 4 hardtop coupes on their 126" wheelbase chassis, the Windsor Nassau and Newport;

the New Yorker Newport and St. Regis. All these cars are essentially identical except for trim details and choice of engines (188 or 250 bhp). The 300 chassis and body adds a fifth model to the lineup, with important modifications.

The engine is basically their New Yorker powerplant, modified by the addition of another 4-barrel carburetor, and a special camshaft. The valve timing gives an overlap of 60° with an intake duration of 280°, an exhaust duration of 270°, and a lift at the valves of .44". Tappet adjustment is at the valve rockers. Brake horsepower is 300 at 5200 rpm, equivalent to a speed of 131 mph using the 3.36 to 1 axle ratio.

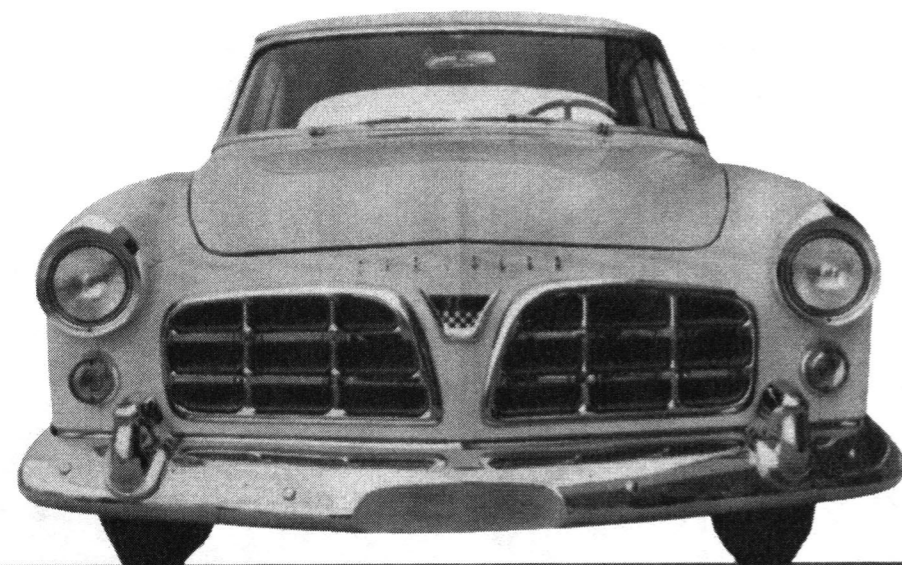
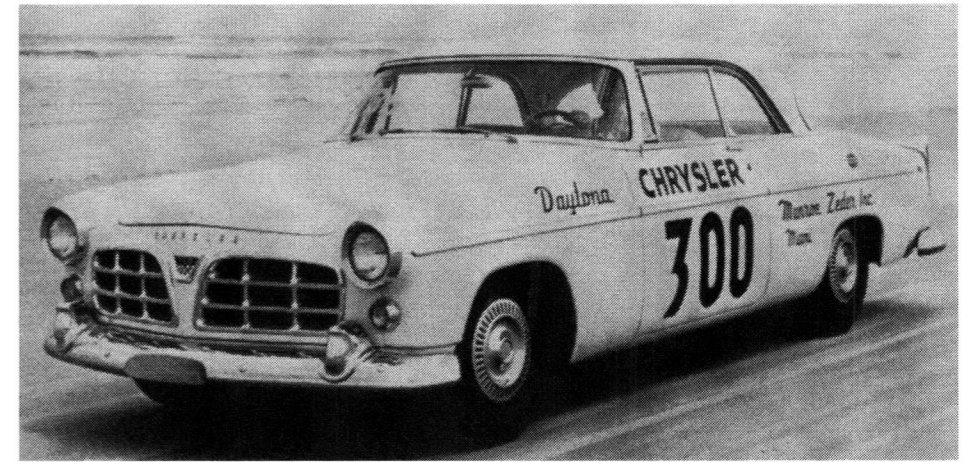
Chrysler emphasizes the fact that the "300" is powered and geared for unexcelled pick-up in traffic with tremendous performance in the middle range speeds, for passing the car ahead. The zero to 60 time is said to be 10.5 seconds, using the 3.54 axle ratio and the torque convertor plus two speed transmission which are standard equipment. The car weighs 4340 lbs, but with only 14.4 lbs/hp, it should jump. Torque figures are not available, but on the basis of 350 ft-lbs., the rear wheels will "chirp" at any speed up to at least 70 mph.

Just as important as sheer acceleration (if not more so) is the ability of the chassis to absorb this horsepower and give safe

handling characteristics with good roadability. Chrysler has, for two years, built their cars with relatively quick steering (when powered) and the highest roll-axis in the industry (domestic). Although the front roll center is just over 2" above the ground it is an important factor which, when combined with a c. of g. lowered by one inch, stiffer springs and a wide front tread (60.2"), contributes materially to a reduced roll angle. The chassis and body are dropped one inch lower than the standard models, by merely reducing the allowable bump travel. Frequent "bottoming" is eliminated and stability is improved by using stiffer (higher rate) springs all-around. Another interesting feature used by Chrysler for some time is the special rubber bumpers which contact the forward half of the rear springs under violent acceleration. This reduces the spring wind-up and the tendency of the rear end to sink.

Enthusiasts would like to see the disk brakes which have been standard equipment on the Crown Imperial for 4 years used also on the "300", but cost and weight have perhaps influenced the decision to retain 12" Lockheeds.

While the "300" lacks the appeal and glamour of some of the Chrysler-Ghia dream cars, it is a well designed and thought out compromise. ●



Not only is the Chrysler 300 the fastest stock car built in the USA, but it also won the 160-mile Daytona "road race".

