

**WHILE "J" HAPPENS** to be the 10th letter of the alphabet, the 300-J is actually the ninth model of Chrysler's famous series. As in many cases where models are identified by letters, the letter "I" has been skipped because people have a habit of confusing it with the letter "L" and the Roman numeral "I" (one).

Like all its predecessors, the 300-J comprises an exhilarating blend of uncluttered, functional styling, high performance, and excellent roadability. From the wide, strictly functional grille opening to the modified-fastback design of the top and rear quarter, this latest "300" spells GO!

The two-door hardtop is the only body style being offered in the 300-J series this year. Still built on a 122-inch wheelbase, the "J" features quite a few differences from last year's "H." Most significant is the complete top-to-bottom restyling job. About the only readily identifiable point between the two cars is in the basic shape of the grille.

"Three-hundred" series fans will be pleased to note that the long ram intake manifold, first introduced on the 1960 "F" model and then dropped on the "H," has been brought back this year. This radically designed dual unit ups the power rating from last year's 380 to 390 hp at 4800 rpm. Torque is also increased from 450 pounds-feet at 3600 rpm to 485 at 3600. Engine size remains at 413 cubic inches, and while the output's quite high, it's still a bit short of the 400 hp that was offered on the 1960-61 "F" and "G" models. This is because today's engine uses a milder camshaft in the interest of smoother low-end operation.

The "J" is available with an optional, fairly close-ratio three-speed manual transmission. At this writing, the four-speed manual hasn't been listed as an option for the 300-J, although the Chrysler people could change their minds on this, just as they did on the "426" Dodge and Plymouth.

Our test car was equipped with the heavy-duty, three-speed Torqueflite automatic transmission. This unit differs from those found in other, lower-powered Chryslers in that it uses a different friction material on the clutch and a different kick-down band to take care of the high engine output. Line pressure is also increased, and the transmission is set up to shift at much higher engine rpm than the others. To us, it felt every bit as positive as the transmission we used in our MOTOR TREND-Geraghty Automotive Dodge last year at the drags. Also installed

in the test car was a standard 3.23-to-1 rear axle, with optional Sure-Grip differential.

Other options included radio, air conditioning, heater, and tinted glass. Power steering, power brakes, tachometer, bucket seats (power on the driver's side), and seat belts are all standard equipment on the 300-J. With all this equipment and a full tank of gas, the car weighed (at the curb) 4412 pounds. Test equipment, driver, and passenger added another 400 pounds for a total test weight of 4812 pounds.

With all that low-end torque available, traction was a big problem in trying to get maximum acceleration figures on this car. We had to experiment to find the right amount of throttle to use to keep from burning the rear tires off. Once we found the right combination (use brake and throttle to get the engine up to 1100 rpm on the line and then gradual throttle for the first 40 feet), we were able to get fairly decent, consistent times. Standing-start

## Fabled "300" series gets younger as it gets older

by Jim Wright, Technical Editor



0-30, 0-45, and 0-60-mph runs averaged out to 3.2, 5.2, and 8.0 seconds. The standing quarter-mile averages were 15.8 seconds' ET, with a top speed of 89 mph.

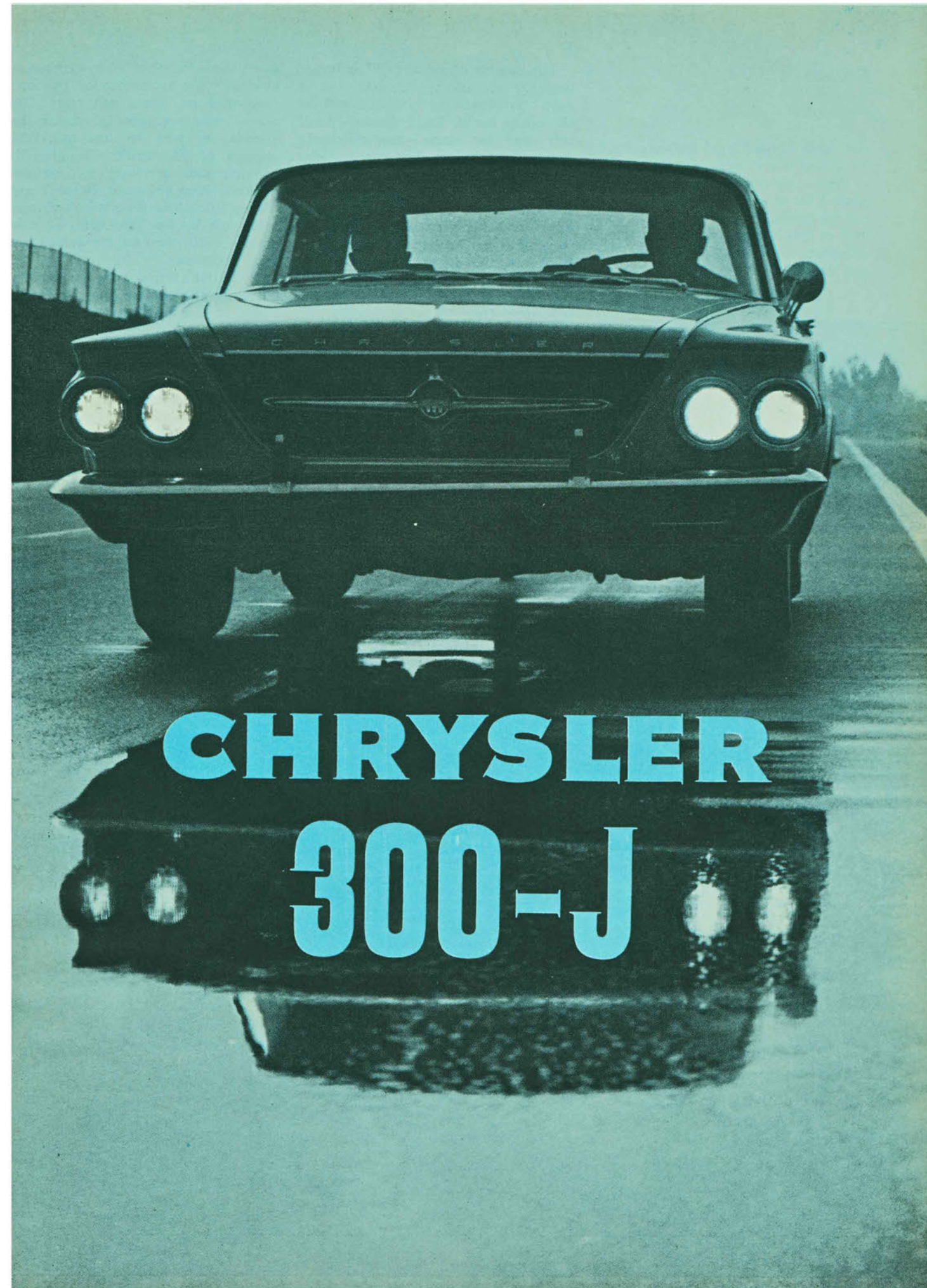
We didn't have to use the forced shift method because of the 5400-rpm automatic shift-point settings in the transmission. We did try a few tunes on the "typewriter" but didn't pick up any time over starting in DRIVE. The Riverside Raceway backstretch was long enough to reach a top speed of 118 mph, but given more room, the 300-J could have unwound a bit more.

The standard axle with a manual transmission is 3.91 to 1 which, combined with a good "cheater slick" rear tire, could produce mid-13-second ETs and 100-105 mph trap speeds in the quarter-mile. This would also lower top speed as well as raise gasoline bills.

As it was, fuel consumption was already pretty high. But this is the price you have to pay to drive a big, high-performance road car. During our acceleration and top-speed trials, we recorded fuel consumption figures as low as 5.2 mpg. Around town, the average was in the nine- to 11-mpg range, and extended highway cruising brought a high of 13.8 mpg. The "413" is a big engine, and it uses big carburetors (the barrels are the same size as those used in the drag-racing "426s") as well as premium gasoline, but if driven sensibly it can deliver satisfying mileage.

The mild camshaft (compared to earlier versions) allows the 300-J to be driven around town at a snail's pace without the usual lugging and plug fouling associated with high-performance machinery. The automatic transmission, power steering and brakes, plus the fully adjustable seat make it a car that any woman can handle as easily as she would any car (once she gets used to the car's size). We drove it to and from work through Los Angeles' rush-hour traffic at its worst every day for several weeks and never experienced one bad moment.

It's out on the open road that the average owner will feel that the 300-J's worth every penny he paid for it. This is a road car *par excellence!* We made several high-speed runs at the track during a light rain, and the surface was liberally covered with large puddles of water, none of which had the slightest adverse effect on the big "J." It was straight as an arrow down the entire length of the course and even the constant crosswind couldn't budge it. Even at these high speeds (100 to 115 mph), wind noise wasn't at the annoying level.



## CHRYSLER 300-J

*continued*

and down around legal highway limits it's almost non-existent. On the outside of the car, the non-silencing air cleaners allow a lot of engine noise to be heard, but the driver and passengers hear very little of this because of adequate sound deadeners and insulation on the floor and firewall.



PHOTOS BY BOB D'OLIVO

The suspension on the "J" is firmer than on the other Chryslers, but it wasn't anywhere near what could be classed as harsh. Road shocks—small ruts and tar strips—are effectively damped out before they can be telegraphed up the steering column to the driver's hands. Sudden dips taken at speed have little effect on the "J's" stability, and it's very seldom that the suspension can be made to bottom out. With just the driver aboard or with a full load of passengers and luggage, the ride (both boulevard and highway) is Number One.

During one long stretch of mountain driving where the road was narrow and extremely winding, we felt there was

*(LEFT) Glove compartment has little usable space. If you're not careful opening the door, everything inside falls out.*

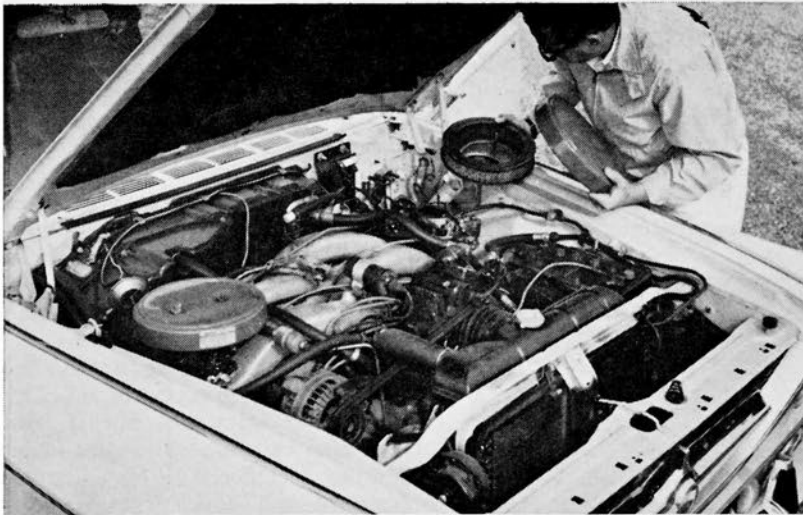
*(BELOW) More conventional instrument panel replaces old "juke box," losing oil gauge in the process. Square wheel isn't too easy to get used to, gives good view.*

just a shade too much understeer noticeable with the recommended tire pressures (24 psi, front and rear). Tire squeal was apparent at rather low speeds, as was an uncomfortable amount of tire scrub. Changing the recommended pressures to our own personal liking (32 front, 28 rear) completely cured this. Ride wasn't changed too much by the hard tires, although we could tell when the car passed over large tar strips.

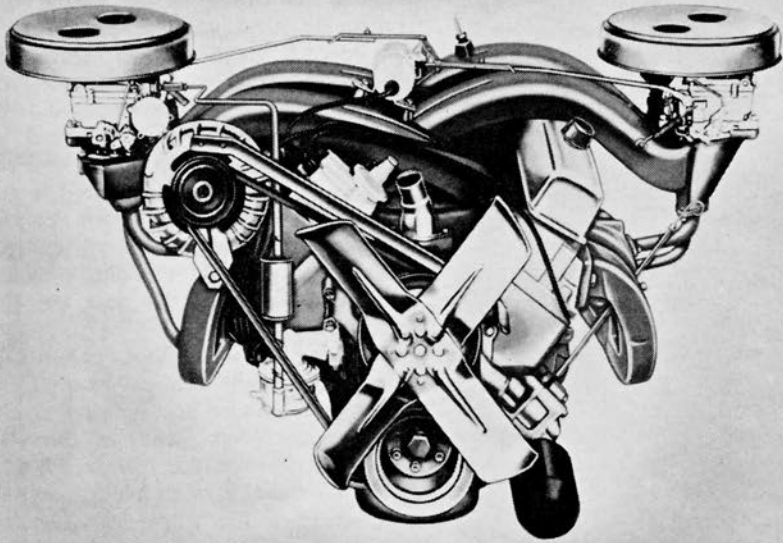
What did change were the handling characteristics. Before, the car (especially at the front end) felt like it weighed 4500 pounds; after, it felt like it weighed half that much and the steering became much more neutral in feel. While our pressures might raise a few gripes from tire engineers, they're what we use on 90 per cent of our test cars out on the road. We personally feel that (in most cases) not only is handling improved, but the tires wear longer.

The 300-J has braking power to match its go power. Big, 11-inch-diam-





FAMOUS LONG-RAM INTAKE MANIFOLD RETURNS THIS YEAR TO HELP PULL 390 HP FROM 413 CUBIC INCHES.



DRIVING THROUGH RAIN AND DEEP PUDDLES DIDN'T BRING ANY LEAKS IN THE UNIT-CONSTRUCTION BODY.



BIG BRAKES ON THE 300-J STAND UP IN HARD USE. WET SURFACE HAD LITTLE EFFECT ON BRAKING POWER.

## CHRYSLER 300-J

*continued*

eter by three-inch-wide drums are used both front and rear. The drums have a wide flare around their periphery to give better cooling. During the wet spell at the track, we were able to use them

almost as hard as later, when the surface had dried. There was very little difference in the overall stopping distances between the wet and dry surfaces. A lot of this was due to the good traction of the Riverside track surface when it's wet. On normal city streets (wet), the stops had to be made a little more carefully.

There was a normal amount of fade

after we'd used the brakes hard during our stopping tests, but they didn't fade completely and they bounced right back after a short cool-down period. Pedal pressures with the Chrysler power brakes weren't so touchy as some and required very little time to get completely used to.

Quality was up to what's expected on an expensive car — and workmanship, both exterior and interior, seemed to be in keeping with the car's character. Materials were top grade, and given the proper care the entire car should be able to deliver trouble-free service over a long period of time.

The fully adjustable bucket seat makes it an easy matter for just about any driver to tailor it to his particular needs. We still haven't gotten completely used to the "square" steering wheel. About the only advantage of this wheel is that it can be pretty big in diameter and can be located rather high to provide clearance for the driver's legs beneath it, and at the same time a fairly short driver can still see over it. Since this car comes standard with quick power steering (3½ turns lock to lock), we personally feel that a smaller-diameter *round* wheel mounted a bit lower would be much better. Maybe next year the square wheel will end up in the same place as the old "bubble" instrument panel did this year (on the scrap heap).

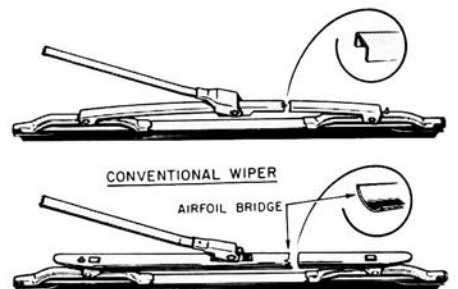
This year's instrument panel has large, round, individual gauges that are easy to read under any lighting condition. Interior gives plenty of room in every direction for four full-sized adults (five in a pinch), with plenty of luggage space in the trunk for extended touring.

Room under the hood is at a premium because of the long ram intake manifold, which has to be removed if the mechanical valve lifters have to be checked or adjusted.

We won't say that this is the best "300" so far, because the others were also very good cars in their day, but the "J" is every bit as exciting and just as satisfying to drive. /MT



Front and rear passenger space is plentiful, should accommodate even the biggest adults. Seat design limits load to four people (five in a pinch). Front bucket-type seats come nearer being true buckets than many others being offered, are also more comfortable.



Exclusive for Chrysler Corp. this year is a unique wiper blade that uses an airfoil to hold it against glass at speed.

## CHRYSLER 300-J

2-door, 4-passenger hardtop

**OPTIONS ON CAR TESTED:** Air conditioning, power windows, Sure-Grip differential, radio, power antenna, tinted glass

**BASIC PRICE:** \$5184

**PRICE AS TESTED:** \$6134.80 (plus tax and license)

**ODOMETER READING AT START OF TEST:** 2952 miles

**RECOMMENDED ENGINE RED LINE:** 6000 rpm

### PERFORMANCE

#### ACCELERATION (2 aboard)

0-30 mph	3.2 secs.
0-45 mph	5.2
0-60 mph	8.0

Standing start 1/4-mile 15.8 secs. and 89 mph

Speeds in gears @ 5400 rpm (shift point)

1st	54 mph	High	118 mph
2nd	94 mph		(observed top speed)

Speedometer Error on Test Car

Car's speedometer reading	30	46	51	62	72	83
Weston electric speedometer	30	45	50	60	70	80

Observed miles per hour per 1000 rpm in top gear.....23 mph

Stopping Distances — from 30 mph, 34 ft.; from 60 mph, 142 ft.

### SPECIFICATIONS FROM MANUFACTURER

#### Engine

Oliv V-8  
Bore: 4.19 ins.  
Stroke: 3.75 ins.  
Displacement: 413 cu. ins.  
Compression ratio: 10.0:1  
Horsepower: 390 @ 4800 rpm  
Torque: 485 lbs.-ft. @ 3600 rpm  
Horsepower per cubic inch: 0.94  
Ignition: 12-volt coil

#### Gearbox

3-speed automatic (Torqueflite); pushbutton controls

#### Driveshaft

One-piece — open tube

#### Differential

Hypoid — semi-floating  
Standard ratio: 3.23:1

#### Body and Frame

Unit construction  
Wheelbase: 122.0 ins.  
Track: front, 61.0 ins;  
rear, 59.7 ins.  
Overall length: 215.5 ins.  
Curb weight: 4412 lbs.

#### Suspension

Front: Independent; lateral, non-parallel control arms with torsion bars and direct-acting tubular shocks, link-type stabilizer  
Rear: Rigid axle, with 7-leaf, semi-elliptical springs and direct-acting tubular shocks

#### Steering

Rack and sector, with integral power  
Turning diameter: 43.1 ft.  
Turns: 3.5 lock to lock

#### Wheels and Tires

5-lug, steel disc wheels  
7.60 x 15 4-ply nylon tubeless tires (Goodyear Bluestreaks standard equipment)

#### Brakes

Hydraulic, duo-servo, with integral power; cast-iron drums  
Front: 11-in. dia. x 3 ins. wide  
Rear: 11-in. dia. x 3 ins. wide  
Effective lining area: 287.2 sq. ins.



A GOOD ROAD CAR NEEDS PLENTY OF USABLE TRUNK AREA FOR THOSE LONG TRIPS. THE 300-J HAS IT.



LIGHT, RESPONSIVE HANDLING UNDER ALL ROAD CONDITIONS WAS ALWAYS PART OF 300's CHARACTER.

