

range closely resembles that of the four-passenger T-Birds. The materials and styling are much more elaborate than the T-Birds though.

General dimensions of the 300F are identical to those of other similar models bearing the Chrysler nameplate with overall length almost 220 inches, or 18 feet 4 inches. Maximum width is 79.4 inches and the design height of the two-door hardtop is 55.1 inches with four passengers. Wheelbase is 126 inches, the front wheel tread is 61.2 inches and the rear tread is 60 inches. Compared to a member of the so-called low-priced group, the Plymouth Fury we tested last month, the 300F differs less than an inch in all measurements except the wheelbase and overall length. The 300 has 8 inches more wheelbase and is 10 inches longer than the '60 Fury. In the weight department, the scales dropped much lower when the 300F was driven on the platform. The hardtop test car weighed 4640 pounds versus 4080 for the Fury, both full of fuel but minus passengers or any other added weight. The reason for the comparison of size and weight between the 300F and the '60 Plymouth Fury will be discussed a little later.

Unitized construction is used for the 300F body just as it is for all other 1960 Chrysler Corporation cars except the Imperial. This type of structure is very solid and rattle-free due to lack of bolted and riveted joints. An elaborate rust-proofing method is used whereby the bodies are dipped in huge tanks to make sure that all hidden corners are thoroughly protected. The 1960 unit body construction is a definite step forward for Chrysler and helps considerably toward improving the quality of these cars compared to those of previous years.

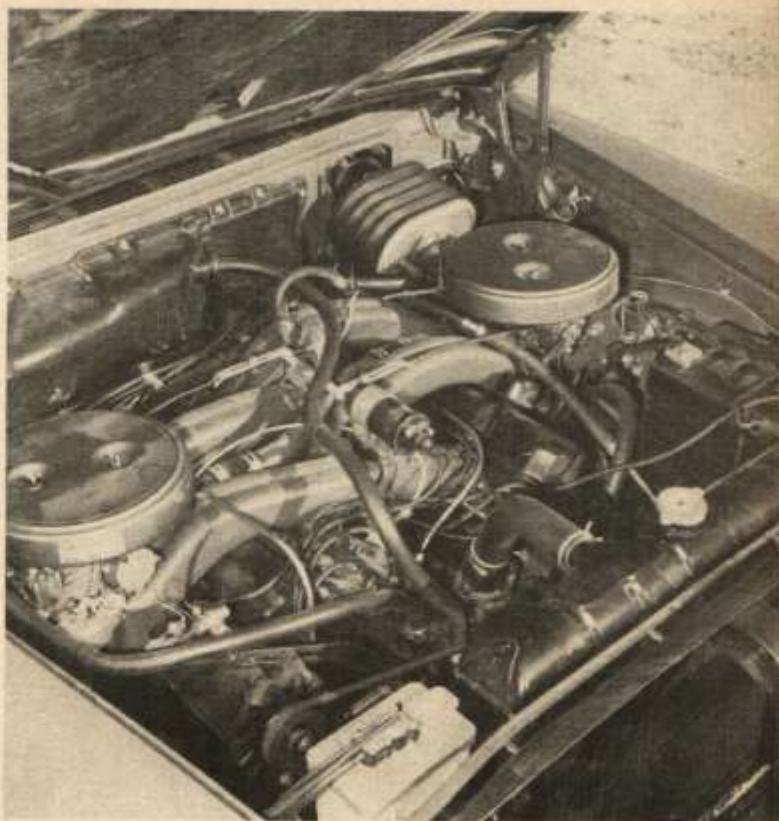
The suspension system is changed very little from what it was in 1959 with torsion bars used for the independent front wheel springing and longitudinal semi-elliptical leaf springs used at the rear. The only noticeable changes to either front or rear suspension is in the mounting bushings which have been redesigned to effectively cancel road noise between the spring anchors and the brackets welded to the unitized body.

As we go to press, exact spring rates have not been released but figures from service bulletins indicate that the 300F has approximately 40% stronger springs on the front and 50% more on the rear than a 1960 New Yorker model. These estimates would give the 300F a front spring "rate" of about 175 pounds per inch at the wheel which means that a load of 175 pounds over each front wheel would cause the car to drop one inch lower at that point. Applying the 50% figure to the rear leaf spring would give a rate of approximately 200 pounds per inch at the wheel. Again, we throw in the figures on the '60 Plymouth Fury as a comparison, 130 at the front and 135 at the rear wheel. Since the 300F is a heavier car, it requires higher spring rates than the Plymouth but even with weight allowances, the 300F has a much stiffer suspension.

Something the 300F has that is not used on Plymouths is a heavy-duty stabilizer bar between the front wheel lower control arms. The  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch diameter bar aids greatly in resisting body roll on corners. Heavy-duty tubular shock absorbers also aid the higher spring rates and front stabilizer bar in controlling the 300F securely at high speeds.

Brakes for the 1960 models have been changed but very little from what they were in 1959. They are the same size with 12-inch diameter,  $2\frac{1}{2}$ -inch wide drums used both front and rear for a total lining area of 251 square inches. The only change made was to revise the backing plates so that the shoes are kept in better alignment. The main purpose of this is to eliminate brake squeal; it doesn't actually give a more effective brake. This Total-Contact braking system as Chrysler prefers to call it is, in our opinion, one of the few sub-standard features of the 300F. They are of the same basic size and design as the brakes used on 1957 Chrysler cars and have been increasingly overloaded each year since that time. The 300F brakes (power assist is standard) will stop the car adequately from high speed if the need should arise but not more than

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**TOP**—Well filled engine compartment of the 300F includes power steering, power brakes and dual-quad Ram Induction intake system all as standard production items. The standard engine is 413 cubic inches, rated 375 hp. Optional engine is 400 hp.

**BOTTOM**—Cornering ability of the 300F is exceptional despite its size and weight. Heavy-duty suspension parts and good weight distribution combine with terrific engine response to make the 300 drive like a smaller car. Curb weight is 4640 pounds.