Distinctive grille opening has the 300F emblem supported by a horizontal and vertical chrome bar with a black plastic egg-crate behind. Massive front bumper wraps around the fenders for maximum protection. The hood release is operated from the dash.

CHRYSLER 300F continued

seats, door kick panels and even the area around the rear seat backs. Good looking aluminum and rubber squares are used in the driver's foot area to resist wear.

The instrument panel of the 300F is basically the same as that used in other '60 Chrysler cars and is a very legible, well designed group. The best part of this panel is not apparent until nighttime when the lights are turned on. A new lighting method called Panelescent provides instrument illumination that is completely free of glare, yet is much easier to read than former types. Words cannot adequately describe the Panelescent lighting; it must be seen to be appreciated. The only dial in the whole car which can't be instantly checked is the tachometer and this is not because it isn't properly lighted, instead it is because the tach dial is poorly located low in the transmission tunnel. Not only that, the tach on our test car would bounce wildly during low gear acceleration and usually stick at about 3500 rpm which made it useless. To be useful, a tachometer should be as near as possible to eye level directly in front of the driver.

As a whole, we were greatly impressed with the interior styling and finish of the 300F. There were a couple of rough spots on our test car which a competent dealer service department should be able to smooth out, such as sticky power windows, air leaks around the side windows, etc.

You recall that we compared the 300F and the '60 Plymouth Fury for size, weight and suspension earlier. The reason for this comparison is that we were quite surprised to discover the 300F does not feel like a bigger, heavier car. It does, in fact, feel more like a smaller car than does the Plymouth. This last is due to the heavy-duty suspension of the 300F; the '60 Fury does not offer heavy-duty suspension components or front stabilizer bar as standard equipment. The stiffer suspension of the 300 gives the most secure ride of any American car on the road today. Although a slightly choppy ride is given at slow speeds, to us it was definitely not objectionable and even the most critical person in favor of a soft ride would probably not notice the firm suspension on average city streets.

At high speed through twisting mountain passes or over undulating desert dips, the 300F is head and shoulders above any other car on the road. The suspension is ideal for these conditions and the ride delivered is fantastic. Throttle response, too, is positive and delivers power in the desired quantity just when you need it going through a curve. Only in the tightest of corners did we notice any stutter on the part of the carburetion. The hesitation was momentary and an extra jab of the throttle would bring the engine back to life. The maneuverability and lively performance of the 300F belie the fact that it is a big, heavy automobile. As we mentioned earlier, our test car weighed 4640 pounds minus passengers—2480 pounds, or 53.4% of the weight rested on the front wheels and the remaining 46.6% was on the rear. This ratio reveals the 300F to have a smaller percentage on the front wheels than the average American sedan and is at least partially responsible for the good handling characteristics and lack of exaggerated understeer usually associated with a heavy car.

Our test car was a two-door hardtop model with the standard 375 horsepower engine, TorqueFlite transmission, power steering, power brakes, power seat, power windows, radio, heater and miscellaneous other extras. Most of the items just mentioned are standard equipment for the 300F and help explain why the car weighs over 4600 pounds. The acceleration for a car of such weight borders on the fantastic. Remember that Fury we tested last month with SonoRamic 361 engine? The 300F actually bettered it in most phases of our acceleration test. From a standing start to 30 mph, the 300 needed 3.4 seconds, the Fury did it in 3.1; 0 to 60 mph, 7.4