

FREE SAMPLE

The opening pages of

1955-1971 Chrysler 300 Buyer's Guide

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1955-1971 Chrysler 300 Buyer's Guide

Model Year 1955-1971

Coverage	Letter cars 1955-1965 + non-letter 300 1962-1971 + 300-Hurst
Engines	331/354/392 Hemi; 413 wedge; 383/440
Body styles	Hardtop coupe, convertible
Key check	VIN-prefix authentication before all else
Market note	Letter cars are blue-chip; tributes price far below

Every specification in this guide was checked against factory literature, marque references, period road tests, and documented survivor cars. Where sources disagree or the record is silent, this guide says so rather than guessing.

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Chapter 1 - Why Buy a 300

The Chrysler 300 is two markets in one guide: the letter cars (1955-1965), blue-chip American performance luxury with production runs in the hundreds, and the non-letter 300 (1962-1971), the sporty full-size Chrysler that delivers the look and much of the feel at a fraction of the price. Both reward the same buying discipline: authenticate first, inspect structure second, and never pay letter-car money for a tribute.

This guide's rule, stated once and applied everywhere: the price difference between a real letter car and a re-creation is the most expensive misunderstanding in the Mopar market. Chapters 2, 3, and 10 exist to make sure it never happens to you.

Chapter 2 - The Letter Cars 1955-1961

Year	Model	Engine / rating	Built
1955	C-300	331 Hemi / 300 hp	1,725 coupes
1956	300B	354 Hemi / 340 or 355 hp	1,102 coupes
1957	300C	392 Hemi / 375 hp (390 opt.)	1,767 + 484 conv.
1958	300D	392 Hemi / 380 hp (390 FI opt.)	618 + 191 conv.
1959	300E	413 wedge / 380 hp	550 + 140 conv.
1960	300F	413 long-ram / 375 (400) hp	964 + 248 conv.
1961	300G	413 long-ram / 375 (400) hp	1,280 + 337 conv.

Production per the Chrysler 300 Club International specification chart. The buying notes: the C-300 is the homologation special and the market's anchor; the 300B's 355-horsepower option was America's first 1 hp/cu in; the 300C is the classic Forward Look year and the first convertible; the 300D is the rarest Hemi year with the infamous 35-car Bendix fuel-injection option (most converted to dual quads decades ago); the 300E is the wedge



transition and the value entry; the 300F and 300G carry the long-ram intakes that must be verified by casting number. Every convertible leads its year's market by a wide margin.

Chapter 3 - The Letter Cars 1962-1965

Year	Model	Engine / rating	Built
1962	300H	413 / 380 or 405 hp	435 + 123 conv.
1963	300J	413 / 390 hp	400 coupes only
1964	300K	413 / 360 or 390 hp	3,022 + 625 conv.
1965	300L	413 / 360 hp	2,405 + 440 conv.

The later letter cars moved to shorter wheelbases (122 inches for 1962-64, 124 for 1965) and are relatively more available — the 300K is the highest-production letter car of all. The 1963 300J is the quirk of the series: it carried no 'J' badging and was sold simply as the '300,' which is why authentication by VIN prefix matters more than badging. The 300L of 1965 is the last letter car, and the 300H's 405-horsepower 413 option is the hottest factory rating of the later series. These cars price below the 1955-61 letters in equivalent condition — the classic-era premium is real.

Chapter 4 - The Non-Letter 300: 1962-1971

Chrysler introduced the non-letter 300 in 1962 as a sporty full-size — the '300 Sport' — a badge-and-trim performance line rather than a letter car. It continued through 1964 on the shorter wheelbase, ran 1965-68 as the full-size performance Chrysler with 383 and later 440 power, and closed out 1969-71 with 440 V8s. These are handsome, fast, usable Mopars with real road presence — and they are not letter cars, which is exactly what their prices reflect.

Buy a non-letter 300 for what it is: the affordable way into the 300 look with big-block Mopar running gear and deep parts support. The fraud to watch for is the reverse — a non-letter car re-badged and presented as a letter car. The VIN prefix is the entire defense (Chapter 10). A tribute or clone at a tribute price is an honest car; the same car at letter money is the trap this guide exists to prevent.

Chapter 5 - The 300-Hurst (1970)

The 1970 300-Hurst is the series' last hurrah: a white-and-gold 300 coupe with the 440 TNT V8 at 375 horsepower, built in a short run — the Chrysler 300 Club chart records 511 coupes and a single convertible at \$5,842 (published histories commonly cite roughly 485-501 total; this guide uses the Club chart and flags the conflict). The Hurst touches — the livery, the interior details — are model-specific and verified by tag, not by paint.

Hurst cars trade on documentation: fender tag, build records, and the Hurst-specific equipment all agreeing. A white 1970 300 coupe with gold accents and no paperwork is a paint job until proven otherwise. Priced right, the Hurst is the most collectible of the non-classic-era 300s and the only 1966-71 300 with genuine blue-chip interest.