

FREE SAMPLE

The opening pages of

1959 Chrysler 300 Letter Series Restoration Guide

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Factory-Correct Restoration Reference

1959 Chrysler 300 Letter Series Restoration Guide

Model Years 1959

Model year	1959
Letter designation	300E
Engine	413 cu in Golden Lion wedge-head V8
Output	380 hp
Transmission	3-speed TorqueFlite automatic; 3-speed manual
Production	647 total (522 hardtops; 125 convertibles)

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

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How This Guide Works

This is a **single-year restoration** guide for the 1959 Chrysler 300 Letter Series - one model year, given its own guide because the year changes are the restoration: specifications, finishes and procedures that differ from the year before and the year after are called out in the 1959 Register below, and shared platform material is labeled as shared. Chrysler 300 Club International letter-car specification table; Chrysler factory shop manuals 1955-1961; Hagerty marque model histories; period road-test references (Motor Trend).

Scope. This guide covers the 1959 Chrysler 300 Letter Series as built. Neighboring years appear only where a change boundary must be drawn - a part or procedure belonging to another year is named as such, never silently applied to this one.

Platform Snapshot

Fact	Detail
Model year	1959
Engine (standard)	413 cu in Golden Lion wedge-head V8
Output	380 hp
Transmission	3-speed TorqueFlite automatic; 3-speed manual
Chassis	Body-on-frame (last year); Torsion-Aire front suspension
Original list price	\$5,319 hardtop; \$5,749 convertible
Production	647 total (522 hardtops; 125 convertibles)

The 1959 Register - What Makes a 1959 a 1959

- The engine break: the Hemi is GONE. The 300E runs Chrysler's new 413 cu in Golden Lion wedge-head V8 - same 380 hp on paper, 103 lb lighter, and a completely different engine to rebuild, tune and detail.
- One-year grille: narrow horizontal red bars with four chrome bars replace the eggcrate - a 1959-only identifier that is frequently 'corrected' to the wrong year's grille.
- Last year of body-on-frame construction for the letter series - the unibody change is a 1960 story.
- Power swivel front seats are standard, synchronized with the door opening; the upholstery is a basket-weave 'Living Leather' in Natural Tan.
- Goodyear Blue Streak tires on 14-inch wheels were the factory performance fitment.

Engines - the 1959 Specification

Engine	Output	Notes
413 Golden Lion wedge V8	380 hp	Wedge-head (not Hemi); dual four-barrel carburetors

The 413 is the RB-family wedge that carries the letter series through 1965. Head, manifold and detailing parts do not interchange with the Hemi cars - a parts order written from a 1957-58 list will be wrong under this hood.

Weight dropped about 103 lb against the Hemi installation, which is part of why front spring/torsion settings and weight figures differ from the 300D despite the carryover body.



Year-Correct Procedures

All engine service now follows the wedge-engine sections of the 1959 manual: valve gear, timing and carburetion procedures are RB-engine procedures, not FirePower procedures.

Swivel-seat mechanisms are power-operated and door-synchronized on the 300E - disconnect and note the linkage before seat removal.

Finishes and Trim - 1959 Only

- Exterior colors: Formal Black, Turquoise Grey metallic, Cameo Tan metallic, Copper Spice metallic, Radiant Red and Ivory White. Natural Tan basket-weave leather interior.
- The red-bar 1959 grille is a finish item, not a defect: restore the red bars rather than chroming them away.

Restoration Sequence Notes

- Photograph and record the car's tags, casting numbers and as-found trim before teardown - on a single-year restoration the as-found evidence is what the finished car is judged against.
- Verify every year-locked item in the 1959 Register before ordering parts; the commonest defect in this model's restorations is a neighboring year's part fitted without malice and without record.
- Keep a build file: sources consulted, measurements taken, and every substitution made, however small.

Recommended for this restoration

Shop exact-fit supplies on Amazon

- Chrysler 300 letter series hemi engine rebuild gasket set
- 1955-1961 Chrysler 300 weatherstrip kit
- Chrysler cross ram intake gasket set

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Sources Consulted

Chrysler 300 Club International letter-car specification table; Chrysler factory shop manuals 1955-1961; Hagerty marque model histories; period road-test references (Motor Trend). Where sources disagreed, the disagreement is recorded in this guide's corrections file and the disputed figure is not asserted.

Thank you for restoring a 1959 Chrysler 300 Letter Series the way it was built - one year at a time. - RestorationEssentials