

FREE SAMPLE

The opening pages of

1961 Chrysler 300 Letter Series Restoration Guide

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Factory-Correct Restoration Reference

1961 Chrysler 300 Letter Series Restoration Guide

Model Years 1961

Model year	1961
Letter designation	300G
Engine	413 cu in Golden Lion wedge V8, cross-ram
Output	375 hp (short-ram competition version carried over)
Transmission	3-speed TorqueFlite automatic; heavy-duty 3-speed manual (option code 281)
Production	1,617 total (1,280 hardtops; 337 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 1961 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 1961 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 1961 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	1961
Engine (standard)	413 cu in Golden Lion wedge V8, cross-ram
Output	375 hp (short-ram competition version carried over)
Transmission	3-speed TorqueFlite automatic; heavy-duty 3-speed manual (option code 281)
Chassis	Unibody; Torsion-Aire front suspension
Original list price	\$5,441 coupe; \$5,841 convertible
Production	1,617 total (1,280 hardtops; 337 convertibles)

The 1961 Register - What Makes a 1961 a 1961

- The face changes again: the grille inverts (now wider at the top) and the quad headlamps are canted inward at the bottom - no other letter year wears this front end.
- Taillights move OFF the fins to the tail panel below them, and the fins themselves are sharpened. The 1960 spare-tire decklid is gone.
- The Pont-a-Mousson 4-speed is dropped. The manual option is now Chrysler's own heavy-duty 3-speed (option code 281) - a different gearbox with a different parts list.
- Cross-ram induction continues in long-ram (375 hp) and short-ram competition forms with dual four-barrel carburetors.
- Slotted wheels and hubcaps aid drum-brake cooling; power windows are standard. The AstraDome cluster continues for its second and final letter-series styling year in this span.

Engines - the 1961 Specification

Engine	Output	Notes
413 Golden Lion, long cross-ram	375 hp	Standard; dual four-barrel carburetors
413 Golden Lion, short-ram	400 hp	Competition version carried over from 1960 specification

Engine hardware carries over from the 300F cross-ram specification - the 1961 changes are the manual gearbox, the styling and the details, not the engine. Keep the years separate anyway: build sheets, colors and trim are



300G-only.

Verify the code-281 heavy-duty manual on any claimed stick-shift 300G; a Pont-a-Mousson in a 1961 car is a transplant, however exotic it looks.

Year-Correct Procedures

Brake-cooling slots in the wheels are functional: keep the correct slotted wheels with the car and do not substitute solid discs of chrome.

Unibody and Torsion-Aire service carries over from 1960 practice; front-end height setting precedes alignment, as on every torsion-bar letter car.

Finishes and Trim - 1961 Only

- Exterior colors: Formal Black, Mardi Gras Red, Alaskan White and Cinnamon metallic. Tan leather interior with the full-length console and rear buckets continued.
- Canted headlamps, sharpened fins and below-fin taillights are the 300G signatures - a 1961 car wearing a 1960 nose or tail is a parts mix, not a variant.

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 1961 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 1961 Chrysler 300 Letter Series the way it was built - one year at a time. - RestorationEssentials