



Point the 300B in a straight line and it could go. In the '56 Speed Week, a 300B set a new record for a stock American car in the flying mile, zooming to an average of 139 mph.

## The 1956 Chrysler 300B

WHEN IT CAME TO 1950s road-going performance, it was none other than Chrysler leading the charge. The brand had come out swinging in 1955 with their special 300 model, which blazed to 37 wins and secured both the NASCAR Championship and the AAA Championship.

For 1956, they built on that first-rate success, releasing the 300B at the Chicago Auto Show. This new-and-improved version boasted the title of being the highest-powered car in America, packing a 340-horsepower FirePower V-8. That 354 cubic inch engine could be had in two variants; the base 340 horsepower one and an optional, even hotter, 355 horsepower version. The latter would go down in history as becoming the first engine in an American vehicle to produce one horsepower for each cubic inch of power.

The car's razzle dazzle didn't stop with what it could do, but also with technology and engineering

it brought. Transmission choices included a slick, push-button PowerFlite—a world's first. This relocated the gear selection to a key pad to the driver's left. Now, instead of having to move a steering column or floor mounted lever, drivers could simply use a finger to punch in what gear they'd like. More forward thinking could be seen in such elements as the dramatic styling of the flight-swept rear fenders and wrap-around cockpit, giving occupants the ready for blast-off sensation. The vehicle was available in three colors: cloud white, red, and black. All bore unique front and rear badging, complete with a checkered flag, a reminder of its first-place capabilities.

It showed that prowess once again that year, continuing the winning streak and securing the 1956 NASCAR Championship. Chrysler, for the second consecutive year, took all the honors they could at NASCAR's Daytona speed week, setting three new records in a 300B. 



Pushing buttons to shift gears was a radical concept. At night, the button in use was dimmed, while the others around it were brightened.

### Collectible Insights

Chrysler limited production to only 1,102 300Bs in 1956. Hagerty values one in Concours condition at around \$117,000.



Matt Avery is an automotive author and historian. His new book, "COPO", documents Chevy's ultimate muscle cars, showcasing over

40 of the world's best COPO examples. Learn more at [www.COPOthebook.com](http://www.COPOthebook.com)