

Re: Got a Telescope, Now What?

Source: <http://sci.tech--archive.net/Archive/sci.astro.amateur/2006-09/msg01111.html>

- *From:* "John Carruthers" <joncarruthers@xxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* 23 Sep 2006 04:56:59 -0700
-

Lauren the Ravishing wrote:

Hi again,

I picked up "Turn Left at Orion," and "Sky & Telescopes Pocket Sky Atlas," recommended by Dave and others. I'm going to pick up a planisphere since the Sky Atlas doesn't provide the wide view.

A good start.

It appears that I'm going to need a different finderscope. It's very difficult to simply center in on a specific point in my living room so I can imagine the frustration of aligning it for real use. I also noticed that the cross-hair target shifts as my eye moves off center from the eye piece, adding more frustration. What finderscopes do you recommend? What are features I look for?

A "corect image" is good for beginners, they may cost a little more though.

I'd also like to find out more about the 1x LED finders, such as The Rigel Quickfinder, as Dennis suggested. Will this complement or replace a finderscope? It seems obvious that the first priority in sky watching is being able to find the object, and where I should first put my money, but these two items alone could equal the cost of the scope. Does it make sense to spend as much money on the tires as the car?

I have a couple of different finders, but I tend to use a simple tube sight most.

Regarding the telescopes counterweight. It seems ok as far as I can tell. I can pivot to any position without much of a problem, except for

Re: Got a Telescope, Now What?

the front/back elevation.

I'm not sure I fully understand the EQ mount. There are two fine adjustments for Right-Ascension and Declination. One of them (the RA?) only adjusts to a range of 15 to 20 degrees. And there's a big screw that raises the front to back tilt from 0 to 90 degrees. It seems odd that the front to back tilt has such a clumsy control. Is this something that gets set only once for the evening depending on latitude and then only the RA and Dec positioning are required? I'm gathering that I need to align the mount with Polaris – for example, setting the big screw to a height of 40 degrees latitude in NY, and positioning the 12:00 RA to also align with Polaris. Some clarity here would be greatly appreciated.

I downloaded RTGUI last night (suggested by Robert). That combined with SkyGazer software makes mapping out a plan easy.

Great little prog, try it in conjunction with "Cartes du Ciel".

Walking home last night I noticed a distinct pattern of bright stars. When I got home I downloaded RTGUI and got a suggestion for M31 – Andromeda. I located M31 in the SkyGazer software and noticed that it was close to the zenith, and that I could visually navigate to it by lining it up with that distinct pattern of stars I saw earlier – which I learned is Cassiopeia. So Andromeda will be my first target tonight if sky conditions are right.

See if you can see it with a binocular first, then in the 'scope.

I would also recommend "Astronomy Hacks" for a quick read, it would complement Turn left at Orion.

jc

.