

Re: Starter scope for 9 year old: StarBlast or SkyQuest?

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On 13 Dec 2006 13:01:01 -0800, flonesaw@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx wrote:

I've got to weigh in on this.

I had an alt-azim 4.5 inch reflector when I was about that age. Altazimuth mounts can suck big time. If I got an interesting item centered, by the time I got somebody else to the eyepiece, it often drifted out of view. Positioning an altazimuth scope on an object is difficult for a kid that age, even a nerd like I was. The scope, even though I could handle it, didn't get used often because it was so much work getting an item in the eyepiece. Knowing the sky didn't help, either.

If this nerdy kid is anything like I was at that age, the best gift of all would be to take him to the store and let him help pick it out. You can educate him about the plusses and minuses of the various optical systems and he can help you understand what kind of scope might suit him the best. It could be that the 8" light bucket Dob will be the one, or he may want to go with an equatorial mounted 100mm achromat.

This issue I'm trying to relate here is that many of these choices are very personal ones. If he is sharp and understands the issues, maybe he could provide the best input, rather than us astro freaks on this forum.

Give him a card with some pictures of some scopes and enclose a certificate good for a telescope purchased at your nearby Orion store. I'm sure that he'll be totally blown away at your trust in him to help pick it out.

My latest thinking, since I am close to the Orion store, is to talk to the store about exchanges (trade ups). If they are reasonable, I'm thinking about buying the StartBlast to put under the tree. I'll then tell him that we can go to the store and look at better scopes if he wants to. I figure the store will be a lot more interested in trading

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up than down.

Thanks for the thoughts.

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