

Re: Furthering the doom of astro CCDs...

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- *From:* Chris L Peterson <clp@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
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On Thu, 22 Jan 2009 06:49:10 GMT, Davoud <star@xxxxxxx> wrote:

When you say "advanced imagers" are you talking about researchers whose needs are quite different to those of an amateur who wishes to make pretty pictures?

Not at all; I'm not talking about scientific imaging. In most hobbies, and astronomical imaging is no exception, there is a progression of skills and passion (shall we say obsession?) from beginner to extremely advanced. This is seen in terms of time invested as well as money (often reflected in equipment acquired).

There are many parallels between astronomical imaging and conventional photography. In the film days, a small percentage of photographers used medium or large format equipment. This is expensive to purchase and use, and doesn't deliver dramatically better results than 35mm. Nevertheless, it does provide better performance and has capabilities beyond what is even possible with 35mm. Those photographers might be called the most advanced. Certainly, a group representing a very small percentage of all photographers manage (or managed) to keep healthy a serious niche market of equipment producers.

So with astronomical imaging. Currently, specialized cameras for this purpose provide significantly better results than DSLRs, which is why many, probably most, imagers are still using them. But advances in DSLR technology over the last few years (which are ongoing) make these cameras very attractive to many astronomical imagers. And as you note, they have the advantage of being dual use. That said, we are years away from them matching what is possible with filtered astronomical cameras (IMO, that will never happen, but we'll see). So there remains a progression: those who are most serious (passionate, obsessed...) continue to advance beyond DSLRs for the simple reason that they reach the limits of what those cameras are capable of.

Thus-- and this was the point I was making to Rich's typically absurd rant-- there will always be a market (probably a pretty good one) for dedicated astronomical cameras, and contrary to his assertion, their

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"doom" is nowhere in sight.

(There was absolutely nothing in my original post that criticized imagers for their choice of equipment. It is a simple statement of fact that some imagers are more advanced than others, and the most advanced don't generally use DSLRs because they find their limitations... limiting. I sense you saw some insult in there, even though there was none. People use what works for their interests– and budgets.)

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