



Preface

During the mid-1960s, I received my very first telescope. The prospect of what it would reveal was exciting to say the least, and with my brother's help, I took no time in setting it up so I could begin the adventure with some daytime observing. Back then, the attention was all about the "telescope," and eyepieces commanded no fascination of their own. In fact, eyepieces were just another "thing" that came in the box—they were simply a part of the telescope, like the Moon filter and the solar projection screen. Today of course, this has all changed and both the beginner and seasoned amateur astronomer maintain a keen interest in the eyepiece and the many special attributes it brings to the table that are separate and distinct from what the telescope can provide. With the many advances in eyepiece technology, it is also quite easy to assemble a set of eyepieces that individually contain more optical material than even the observer's telescope might have! And taken all together, a small collection of eyepieces can actually cost much more than the telescope itself. For some observers today, they even form fond attachments to their favorite eyepieces, and as they change and upgrade telescopes over time, their eyepieces remain. Because of all of this, the eyepiece of today has taken on a unique life of its own, as something very special and distinct, and as a much valued and discussed component in the observer's optical arsenal. This new standing for the eyepiece I feel is quite deserved, because it is not the telescope that brought us that experience which the popular idiom coined by Tele Vue Optics so wonderfully describes ("Space Walk Effect"), but it is the eyepiece alone that has accomplished this transformation for the amateur astronomer community. In many ways, the eyepiece of the twenty-first century has grown up and is no longer just another "thing" in the box with the telescope. Instead, the eyepiece is for many a well-deserved center of attention in the consumer astronomy market.

In this book, *Choosing and Using Astronomical Eyepieces*, I strove to present the eyepiece in five distinct ways: introductorily for those not too familiar with its basic form and function (Chap. 1), more in depth for those wanting to deepen their knowledge and learn a myriad of tricks-of-the-trade when using an eyepiece (Chap. 2), from the perspective of the eyepiece's Apparent Field of View capability as this is now a popular way of thinking about an eyepiece and has become the basis by many for how they choose and use eyepieces (Chap. 3), from the perspective of other amateur astronomers from around the world to give a broader perspective that goes beyond the technical and into the heart and soul of the eyepiece (Chap. 4), and, finally, from the all-important "gear-head" perspective where, in the final desk reference section of the book, the reader can peruse and refer to the many statistics and photographs on the over 200 popular new and used eyepiece brands and lines detailed (Chap. 5).

The astronomical eyepiece, once a little considered accessory, is today a much revered, discussed, and transformative component of a telescopic system. No longer are our explorations restricted to "porthole" views with eyes held tight to optics; instead the eyepiece has been the liberator, taking us to ever new heights in observing where the bounds of Earth can seemingly slip away as we immerse our way through space and among the stars.

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