

January 2008

VOL. 115, NO. 1

On the cover: The total solar eclipse of August 11, 1999, was just about to end in Hungary when Miloslav Druckmüller shot the 22 exposures that went into this composite, which shows fine structure in the Sun's electric-pink chromosphere and ghostly white corona. Our next opportunity to witness such a spectacle comes on August 1, 2008, as described on page 34.

FEATURES

22 Alien Earths from A to Z

Planets of diamond, planets of burning-hot ice, iron-giant worlds where you'd weigh a ton astronomers may soon be finding these and more. *By Sara Seager*

26 A Hawaiian Galaxy Garden

A botanical display on Hawaii's Big Island isn't just the world's first walk-through model of the Milky Way — it's a floral retreat that merges beauty and education. By Jon Lomberg

3I Hipparcos's Star Distances Get Better

The sphere of stars whose distances are accurately known just grew from 200 to 600 light-years out.

By Roger W. Sinnott

The Arctic-Asian Solar Eclipse of August 2008

Want to see this year's only total solar eclipse? Your best bet for a view on solid ground involves a journey to meet the Moon's shadow as it crosses Siberia and northern China. By Fred Espenak & Jay Anderson

93 Mastering Your Finderscope

Can't find what you're looking for in your telescope? Here's the remedy! By Tony Flanders

THIS MONTH'S SKY

55 January 2008 Sky at a Glance

56 Northern Hemisphere's Sky Winter's Sky of All Seasons By Fred Schaaf

58 Binocular Highlight

M Is for Messier By Gary Seronik

59 Suburban Star-Hop

The Andromeda Strain
By Ken Hewitt-White

61 Southern Hemisphere's Sky

 $By\ Greg\ Bryant$

62 Sun, Moon, and Planets Jupiter and Venus Dance at Dawn

By Fred Schaaf

69 Exploring the Moon
The Rings of Imbrium

By Charles A. Wood

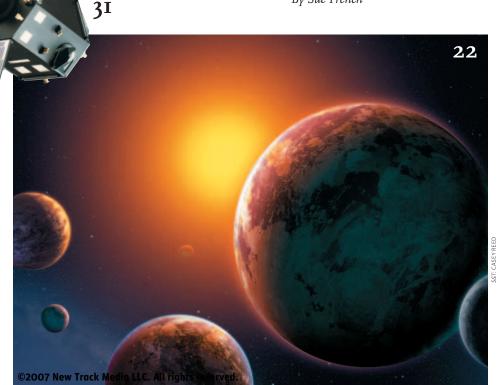
73 Celestial Calendar

The Southward Plunge of Comet Tuttle *By Greg Bryant*

Lunar Occultation Highlights for 2008 By David W. Dunham

80 Deep-Sky Wonders

Perseus's Flying Mantle By Sue French





& TELESCOPE CONTENTS, CONTINUED

38 Hot New Products for 2008

Peruse our 10th annual selection of the most intriguing new products and terrific innovations entering the astronomical marketplace. By the Editors of Sky & Telescope





ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

10 Spectrum

Star Trails at 20 By Richard Tresch Fienberg

- 12 Letters
- 16 Skyscape Hubble Lifts the Veil
- 18 News Notes
- 19 Mission Update
 By Jonathan McDowell
- 20 50 & 25 Years Ago
 By Leif J. Robinson
- 45 Books & Beyond
- 48 Astronomy Online

Lunar Roundup
By Stuart J. Goldman

51 Rambling Through the Skies

Priming the Meridian By E. C. Krupp

84 Star Trails

Is a Small Telescope Better? By David H. Levy

87 Telescope Workshop

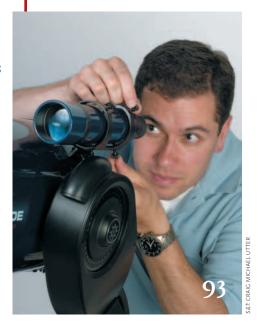
Cooldown Confusion By Gary Seronik

- 90 Hobby Q&A
- 98 Gallery
- 112 Focal Point

Pluto, Science, and Death By Joe Shuster



You'll find bonus material for many Sky & Telescope articles online. Visit SkyandTelescope.com/skytel for links. And see page 14 to learn about our new Satellite Tracker, star-party calendar, astronomy glossary, and other special features of our website.



SKY & TELESCOPE (ISSN 0037-6604) is published monthly by New Track Media LLC, 90 Sherman St., Cambridge, MA 02140-3264, USA. Phone: 800-253-0245 (customer service), 617-864-7360 (all other calls). Fax: 617-864-6117. Our website: SkyandTelescope.com. © 2007 New Track Media LLC. All rights reserved. Periodicals postage paid at Boston, Massachusetts, and at additional mailing offices. Canada Post Publications Mail sales agreement #40029823. Canadian return address: 2744 Edna St., Windsor, ON, Canada N8Y IV2. Canadian GST Reg. #R128921855. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Sky & Telescope, PO Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142. Printed in the USA.