

ESO is the European Organisation for Astronomical Research in the Southern Hemisphere. Whilst the Headquarters (comprising the scientific, technical and administrative centre of the organisation) are located in Garching near Munich, Germany, ESO operates three observational sites in the Chilean Atacama desert. The Very Large Telescope (VLT), is located on Paranal, a 2 600 m high mountain south of Antofagasta. At La Silla, 600 km north of Santiago de Chile at 2 400 m altitude, ESO operates several medium-sized optical telescopes. The third site is the 5 000 m high Llano de Chajnantor, near San Pedro de Atacama. Here a new submillimetre telescope (APEX) is in operation, and a giant array of 12-m submillimetre antennas (ALMA) is under development. Over 1600 proposals are made each year for the use of the ESO telescopes.

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Contents

Reports from Observers

J. Gerssen et al. – Mapping the Properties of SDSS Galaxies with the VIMOS IFU	2
C. Evans et al. – The ARAUCARIA Project – First Observations of Blue Supergiants in NGC 3109	5
S. Warren et al. – Early Science Results from the UKIDSS ESO Public Survey	7
P. P. van der Werf et al. – Starburst Galaxies Under the Microscope: High-Resolution Observations with VISIR and SINFONI	11
J. Hjorth et al. – The Short Gamma-Ray Burst Revolution	16
M. Hettterscheidt et al. – Probing the Universe Using a Mostly Virtual Survey: The Garching-Bonn Deep Survey	19
A. Richichi et al. – Burst or Bust: ISAAC at Antu Sets New Standards with Lunar Occultations	24
L. Kaper et al. – Measuring the Masses of Neutron Stars	27

Telescopes and Instrumentation

H. U. Käußl et al. – Good Vibrations: Report from the Commissioning of CRIFES	32
H. Bonnet et al. – Enabling Fringe Tracking at the VLTI	37
J. Emerson, A. McPherson, W. Sutherland – Visible and Infrared Survey Telescope for Astronomy: Progress Report	41
P. Andreani, M. Zwaan – The European ALMA Regional Centre: User Support for European Astronomers	43

Other Astronomical News

H. U. Käußl, C. Sterken – Deep Impact as a World Observatory Event	48
J.-P. Swings – Around and about “Europe’s Quest for the Universe”	49
C. Madsen – Open House at the ESO Headquarters	50
M. Dennefeld, H. Kuntschner – Report on the NEON Observing Schools 2006	52
P. Andreani, M. Zwaan, R. Laing – Report on the Meeting on Science with ALMA: a New Era for Astrophysics	53
Prestigious NASA Award for ST-ECF (ESO/ESA) Scientists	54
Fellows at ESO – D. Naef	55

Announcements

G. Monnet – Helping to Build ASTRONET Science Vision	56
ESO Workshop on Observing Planetary Systems	57
Conference on Obscured AGN Across Cosmic Time	57
ESO Workshop on Science with the VLT in the ELT Era	58
Vacancy notice	58
Personnel Movements	59
New Editor	59

Front Cover Picture: Tarantula Nebula

This image of the Tarantula Nebula in the Large Magellanic Cloud was obtained during the commissioning of FORS2 on the VLT Unit Telescope KUEYEN in early 2000. It is a composite of three exposures, using *B*, *V* and *R* filters.