

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

The Organisation

C. Cesarsky – Editorial	2
Tim de Zeeuw to Become the Next Director General of ESO	3
X. Barcons – Astronomy in Spain	4

Telescopes and Instrumentation

R. Gilmozzi, J. Spyromilio – The European Extremely Large Telescope	11
G. Monnet, I. Hook, J.-G. Cuby – Report on the Conference “Towards the European Extremely Large Telescope”	20
M. Arnaboldi et al. – ESO Public Surveys with the VST and VISTA	28
F. Malbet et al. – AMBER, the Near-Infrared Instrument of the VLTI	33
F. Malbet et al. – First AMBER/VLTI Science	37
V. Dhillon et al. – ULTRASPEC: High-speed Spectroscopy with Zero Read-out Noise	41

Astronomical Science

Supernova 1987A – 20th Birthday	
C. Fransson et al. – Twenty Years of Supernova 1987A	44
J. Danziger, P. Bouchet – SN 1987A at La Silla: The Early Days	49
Y. G. Tsamis et al. – Integral-field Spectroscopy of Galactic Planetary Nebulae with VLT FLAMES	53

Astronomical News

M. Grenon – Nature Around the ALMA Site – Part 1	59
M. Böcker, J. Vogt – Research Project “Safety and Health in High-altitude Observatories”	64
A. Kaufer et al. – First Report on the 2007 ESO Instrument Calibration Workshop	66
F. Barrientos, N. Nagar, F. Mirabel – Report on the Fourth Advanced Chilean School of Astrophysics	67
W. Gieren et al. – Report on the Third Advanced Chilean School of Astrophysics	68
H. Boffin, C. Madsen – ESO at the AAS, the AAAS and in Dublin	69

Announcement of the ESO Workshop “12 Questions on Star and Massive Star Cluster Formation”	70
Announcement of ONTHEFRINGE: The Very Large Telescope Interferometer Training Schools	71
ESO Studentship Programme	72
Fellows at ESO – A. Jordan, P. Lynam	73
Vacancies	74
Personnel Movements	75
List of Proceedings from the ESO Astrophysics Symposia	75
New Editor	75

Annual Index 2006	76
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Front Cover Picture: The European Extremely Large Telescope (Artist’s Impression by Herbert Zodet, ESO PR Photo 46/06)