



<p>ESOCast Episode 26: Life and Leisure at Paranal</p>	
<p>00:00 [Visuals start]</p> <p>[Narrator]</p> <p>1. The Sun sets at ESO's Paranal Observatory. Technicians and engineers have worked hard all day to prepare the European flagship facility, the Very Large Telescope, for astronomers to use.</p> <p>At night, scientists address some of the most important mysteries in the Universe with this superb science machine, observing the heavens in exquisite detail.</p> <p>Paranal is dedicated to astronomical observation, but no one can work all the time, especially in these harsh conditions. Everyone at the observatory has leisure time, and enthusiastically pursues their hobbies during their free time.</p>	<p>Images:</p> <p>Sea of clouds, seen from Paranal summit</p> <p>VLT at sunset</p> <p>Astronomers during observations</p> <p>Guisard or Salgado time-lapse</p> <p>Various leisure activities (short cuts)</p>
<p>00:49 ESOCast Intro</p> <p>2. This is the ESOCast! Cutting-edge science and life behind the scenes of ESO, the European Southern Observatory. Exploring the ultimate frontier with our host Dr J, a.k.a. Dr Joe Liske.</p>	<p>ESOCast introduction</p>
<p>01:08 [Dr J]</p> <p>3. Hello and welcome to another episode of the ESOCast.</p> <p>Paranal is a special place to work at. First of all, it is located in the very remote and arid Atacama Desert in Chile, and it takes hours to drive to the nearest city. Secondly, the work that needs to be performed there isn't exactly easy and the professional skills of the staff are constantly challenged by the incredible technical diversity of the Very Large Telescope.</p> <p>So this combination makes leisure activities an essential part of life for the staff, because it helps</p>	<p>Dr J in virtual studio. On screen:</p> <p>Desert</p> <p>VLT at Paranal</p> <p>Astronomers at work</p> <p>Leisure activities</p> <p>Images of the three featured astronomers</p>

<p>them to relax and to recover from their often highly stressful work.</p> <p>In this episode, we're going to follow three Paranal staff members: Fernando Salgado, Stéphane Guisard and Margaret Moerchen, to learn about both their jobs and their hobbies on Paranal.</p>	
<p>01:57 [Narrator]</p> <p>4. Fernando Salgado is an electronic engineer at Paranal. Together with his colleagues, Fernando tests and repairs the numerous electronic components of the Very Large Telescope to keep them in working order. This is often far from easy, and mastering the instrument's sheer complexity is a real challenge.</p> <p>During his free time, Fernando's great passion is playing the drums. And at Paranal, he plays as often as he can in the entertainment room of the Residencia to keep his skills up.</p> <p>He also frequently has jam sessions with colleagues and astronomers from all over the world in the entertainment room, expanding and improving his own musical experience. Amateur musicians frequently give spontaneous performances in the entertainment room, enriching the cultural life of everyone at the observatory.</p>	<p>Images:</p> <p>VLT at Paranal</p> <p>Fernando during work at the VLT ctrl room</p> <p>Fernando playing drums</p>
<p>03:03 [Narrator]</p> <p>5. Stéphane Guisard is an optical engineer and leads the Paranal optics group, making sure that the Very Large Telescope has the best possible optical quality. This involves a lot of different tasks, including working on one of the VLT's huge main mirrors during a recoating operation.</p> <p>Stéphane's biggest hobby is astrophotography, and some of his images have been used in previous ESOcasts.</p> <p>But Stéphane is also a top-level water polo player. As his club is in far away Santiago, the pool of the Paranal Residencia helps him stay fit and keeps his feel for water at a competitive level. The pool of the Residencia is popular with many people, but Stéphane is certainly amongst the most frequent users.</p>	<p>Images:</p> <p>VLT at night</p> <p>Stéphane during work (working on mirror)</p> <p>Stéphane doing astrophotography</p> <p>Stéphane in pool of Residencia</p>
<p>04:13 [Dr J]</p>	<p>Dr J in virtual studio. On screen:</p>

<p>6. But the Paranal Residencia isn't the only place that offers a chance to relax. Next door to it, ESO has built a gym that offers a wide range of activities. Here, lots of people get together to form sports teams, and the gym hall definitely contributes a lot to the social climate at the observatory.</p>	<p>Exterior shots of the Residencia Exterior shots of gymnasium People doing sports</p>
<p>04:30 [Narrator]</p> <p>7. Kick-off for a soccer game at the gymnasium. At about 2400 m above sea level, there's less oxygen in the air, making being in shape even more important for players. People who live and exercise regularly at the altitude don't have any trouble, however.</p> <p>In another room, several people practice yoga together, following the instructions of an experienced trainer.</p> <p>Others get in shape by using one of the many exercise machines of the sports hall. Again, the altitude and aridity of the site make exercise more difficult, but the machines still see a lot of use.</p>	<p>Images: Soccer game</p> <p>Yoga class</p> <p>People on exercise machines</p>
<p>05:23 [Dr J]</p> <p>8. The conditions at Paranal make it one of the best places in the world for astronomical observations. There are rarely any clouds and the climate is extremely dry in the Atacama Desert. Located at 2600 metres, the VLT can observe for over 320 nights per year.</p> <p>But it's exactly these harsh conditions that make Paranal a true challenge for the sports enthusiasts, especially outside, under the blazing desert sun.</p> <p>But there are people that are willing to face the challenge.</p>	<p>Dr J in virtual studio. On screen: Desert images Paranal observatory Margaret outside cycling</p>
<p>05:53 [Narrator]</p> <p>9. Margaret Moerchen is an astronomer at Paranal, supporting science operations. On the day shift, she makes sure that the telescope and the instruments are ready for the night observations. On the night shift, she performs observations either in service mode or in visitor mode.</p> <p>In order to relax from these demanding duties, she likes to bike at Paranal. In the desert, good sun protection is crucial and drinking plenty of water is a must. The site offers numerous off-road options, but today Margaret chooses Paranal's "Star Track" for</p>	<p>Images: Margaret at VLT ctrl room</p> <p>Mountain-biking in the desert</p>

<p>her excursion. This path leads from the Residencia up to the Paranal summit. Although the dryness and the altitude effects are always noticeable, Margaret typically bikes for about an hour before she returns.</p>	
<p>06:59 [Dr J]</p> <p>10. There are many ways for people at Paranal to enjoy themselves during their free time, and to relax from their unique but demanding professional obligations.</p> <p>And after they've played, they are ready to continue the world-class work that astronomers have come to expect from Paranal.</p> <p>This is Dr J signing off for the ESOcast. Join me again next time for another cosmic adventure.</p>	<p>Dr J in virtual studio. On screen: Recreational activities at the Residencia Generic Paranal footage Paranal time-lapse, JF</p>
<p>07:21 [Outro]</p>	<p>ESOcast is produced by ESO, the European Southern Observatory.</p> <p><i>ESO, the European Southern Observatory, is the pre-eminent intergovernmental science and technology organisation in astronomy, designing, constructing and operating the world's most advanced ground-based telescopes.</i></p>

08:17
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