

# FIRST light

## LARGE IMAGE CIRCLE

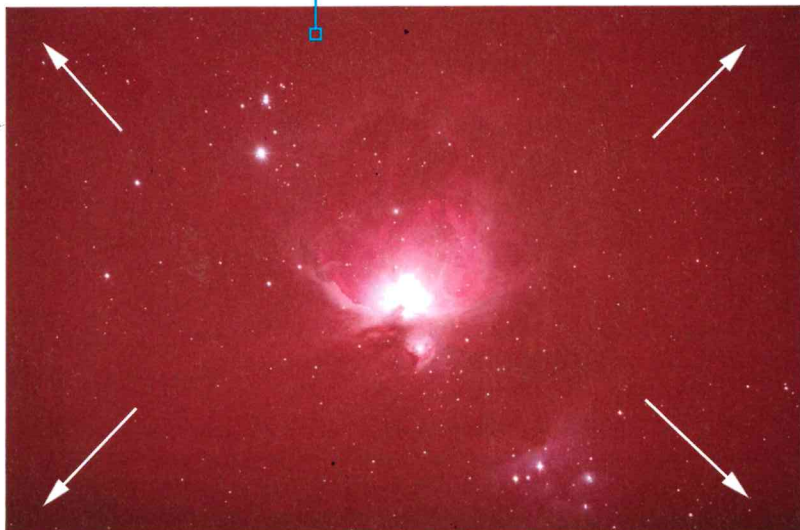
The telescope's focused image circle gives full illumination over an area 70mm in diameter. This means that vignetting is minimised even across a full frame (35mm) DSLR sensor or the largest CCD sensors typically used by amateurs. Camera bodies themselves may create a small element of corner shading, but flat-fielding takes care of this.



showed no serious distortion right to the frame corners. The four-element lens group in the centre of the corrector really did its job well; the quality of the field was quite superb.

It initially took us a few moments to figure out that the images taken were mirror-reversed left to right. This is an easy to fix once identified, but it's something to be aware of. Using a mono filtered CCD camera we did experience some odd concentric reflections around really bright stars. This wasn't a problem with our DSLR camera.

Short tube refractors tend to rule by majority when it comes to wide-field deep-sky imaging. Such setups have many virtues, including cost, portability and ease of use. Although expensive, what you're paying for with the RASA is the resolution and finesse of the final delivered image. This is something it does extremely well. **S**



Our shot of the Orion Nebula at ISO 1600, five-second exposure

### SKY SAYS...

Now add these:

1. Light pollution filter for Rowe-Ackermann astrographs
2. CGE Pro computerised mount
3. Nighscape 8300 CCD camera

► Two Losmandy-style dovetails run the full length of the telescope tube. One is for mounting the tube itself, while the other allows you to attach accessories such as an autoguider. The RASA comes without a finder and this is an important initial add-on to get.

If you plan on using a DSLR, it's necessary to tether the camera to a laptop positioned near the focus end of the scope. It's impossible to turn the focus knobs and properly review what's happening on the camera's rear screen without this arrangement.

### Taking on a refractor

The astrograph's performance was extremely good. Using a DSLR with an APS-C sensor, the scope gave us a measured field of view of 1.6x2°. We found our images went deep very quickly, a five-second test at ISO 1600 showing a tremendous amount of detail in and around the Orion Nebula, M42. The billowing nebula had lots of fine structure in it and this was even more impressive when we compared the shot with a similar field taken by a 4-inch apochromatic refractor. The larger aperture of the RASA really delivered a tremendous improvement in resolution. The stars were sharp across the entire field and

### VERDICT

BUILD & DESIGN	★★★★★
EASE OF USE	★★★★★
FEATURES	★★★★★
IMAGING QUALITY	★★★★★
OPTICS	★★★★★
OVERALL	★★★★★