



Sky-Watcher Explorer-130PS (AZ PRONTO)

Perfect for astronomers on the go, this exquisite Newtonian has been built with the beginner in mind

Telescope advice

Cost: £219

From: Optical Vision Ltd

Type: Newtonian

Aperture: 5.11"

Focal length: 25.59"

Best for...



Beginners



Low budget



Planetary viewing



Bright deep-sky objects



Basic astrophotography

A telescope that can be easily transported to sites untouched by light pollution has great appeal whether used by a beginner or a more seasoned astronomer - and that's exactly the sort of telescope Sky-Watcher's Explorer-130PS is, fitting the bill nicely as a 'grab-and-go' instrument. The telescope and its AZ PRONTO mount are a compact and light package. Assembly and operation are user friendly in the hopes of providing a welcoming introduction to observing the night sky, making it an ideal telescope for those new to touring the heavens.

It uses a Newtonian reflector design that employs a parabolic primary mirror to collect and focus the light, and a flat secondary mirror to reflect it to the eyepiece. This design requires collimation to align the two mirrors accurately with one another and the eyepiece. But, to make life easier for beginners, a large chunk of this potentially perplexing process has been removed. The telescope has a fixed mirror cell for the primary mirror which is collimated at the factory, so it'll only require occasional adjustment to the secondary mirror, for which a suitable Allen key is supplied. Upon delivery the review telescope was in excellent collimation and produced well-formed stars during this test - it really did work well straight out of the box. The AZ PRONTO mount didn't disappoint and was quick to assemble, providing a sturdy platform for the telescope. An accessory tray for your eyepieces also

serves to help stabilise the entire set-up - we discovered that there was minimum shaking during our observations and sufficient resistance against the light breeze that picked up throughout the course of the evening. Adjustments with the mount are smooth and it's easy to keep objects centred in the tube's field of view.

The Explorer-130PS also comes with a pier extension to keep the telescope from clipping the tripod legs while slewing - something that got a lot of use throughout our review of the instrument.

The Explorer-130PS' steel optical tube is finished in a high-gloss black with a silver-flecked finish,

The optical system provides exquisite views of an excellent selection of targets

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The supplied red dot finder is an excellent choice, especially for beginners

making it aesthetically appealing, cradled in two substantial felt-lined tube rings, which are attached to a Vixen-style dovetail bar. The dovetail bar feature isn't used to attach the telescope to the mount. Instead, a bolt on the mount is screwed into a matching threaded hole in the base of the bar - pleasingly, no slippage was experienced during our review of this feature.

A rather basic, plastic, single-speed rack and pinion focuser completes the optical tube, but despite some initial reservations we found this to be effective in use. With it we were able to achieve focus amazingly quickly and easily.

The supplied red dot finder is certainly an excellent choice, especially for beginners, as it's so easy and intuitive to use. Over a smaller, optical finderscope, we relied on it extensively for star hopping to a selection of deep-sky objects that peppered the mid-summer, evening sky.

With its focal length of 650mm, the Explorer-130PS is a good compromise for observing a wide range of objects in the Solar System and deep-sky categories. Taking our observations until dawn, we enjoyed some excellent views of Mars in the small hours of the morning, then a variety of open clusters boasting its wide-angle capabilities. In both the 25mm and 10mm eyepieces the rugged lunar surface was a wonderful sight through this telescope, sure to delight those who have only just been introduced to astronomy.

Overall, the scope and mount package was a pleasure to use. It's simple to assemble and easy to get to grips with, while its optical system gives good views of popular targets. With no immediate, teething faults, the Explorer-130PS gets a massive thumbs up from us!



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Two eyepieces are supplied - a 25mm and 10mm

