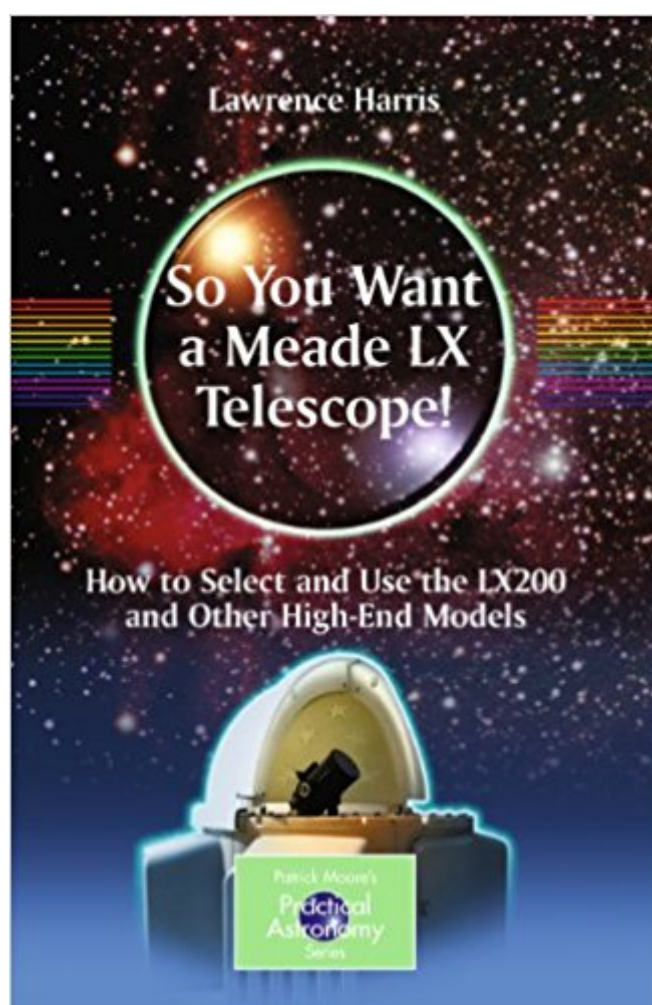


The book was found

So You Want A Meade LX Telescope!: How To Select And Use The LX200 And Other High-End Models (The Patrick Moore Practical Astronomy Series)



Synopsis

Computers and Astronomy Perhaps every generation of astronomers believes that their telescopes are the best that have ever been. They are surely all correct! The great leap of our time is that computer-designed and machined parts have led to more accurately made components that give the astronomer ever better views. The manual skills of the craftsman mirror grinder have been transformed into the new-age skills of the programmer and the machine maker. (The new products did not end the work of craftsman telescope makers, though. Many highly skilled amateur/professional opticians continued to produce good-quality mirrors that are still seen today.) Amateur-priced telescopes are now capable of highly accurate tracking and computer control that were once only the province of professionals. This has greatly increased the possibilities of serious astronomy projects for which tailor-made software has been developed. Add a CCD camera to these improved telescopes (see Chap. 3), and you bring a whole new dimension to your astronomy (see Fig. 1. 1). Look Before You Leap! But first, a word of caution. Unless you are already familiar with astronomy and basic telescopes, it is not wise to start spending large amounts of money on a featured telescope. Such an instrument might otherwise be subsequently abandoned due to a perceived overcomplexity coupled with a waning interest.

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Customer Reviews

If, like me, you are a relative beginner and visual observer who uses your Meade LX200 in alt/az mode, and don't have an experienced mentor living nearby, you will likely find one or two dozen tips in this book that will help you. That made it worth buying for me. I always dog-ear any of a book's pages with useful information and figure that if a book has at least 10 dog-ears it was worthwhile. This book ended up with 13, so it "passes." Almost half of the book's 230 pages are about software, primarily for astrophotography. I'm a visual observer, at least for now, so half the book didn't matter to me, at least not yet. I've had my Meade LX200 for a couple of years and still have lots to learn. There's no group of amateurs locally, Meade users or otherwise, so my only support group has been "The Google" and a few forums. The problem with that is there is almost always too much information to sift through to find answers, and when you find them you can't be certain they are correct. I have found a few websites, like Mike Weasner's, that share a lot of useful, accurate information. But I still needed more. If I had an experienced mentor living next door, using the same telescope, I wouldn't need this book. But I don't. Instead, the book acted like a mentor with a lot of simple tips I guess I should have known or figured out, but didn't.

this is certainly a useful and well written text, but it does not live up to its title, does not fill an important need within a brand category such as meade telescopes, and does not recognize the specific categories of amateur and semipro astronomers or the way they approach a telescope. my comments emphasize the disparity between the book's title and contents, and the fact that the contents are in fact highly specialized: they certainly don't tell you how to select a telescope! the first heading on the first page is "computers and astronomy," and roughly 150 of the book's 230 pages consists of chapters such as "essential software for basic operations," "software adjustment of polar alignment," "autoguiding," "using advanced software" and so forth. another 40 pages is devoted to balancing and polar alignment, the different types of telescopes, generic telescope accessories, updating firmware, telescope retailers and online user groups. i judge only about 30 pages or less than 15% of the book is actually concerned with meade specific products or guidelines for their use. it's a shame, because the meade user manual appears to have been written by a retired engineer, full of facts but meager with guidance. what is the best way to position the tripod on unpaved soil, or use the gps system, or update location or time information, or autoalign the scope?

when autoalignment fails, why does that happen? how should one transport the scope, or store it (batteries left in, or taken out?), care for the optics, or clean dirty optics? how does one ventilate or cool down the scope prior to viewing? what specifically does "advanced coma free" (ACF) optics mean, and how specifically do ACF optics differ from newtonian, cassegrainian or ritchey-chretien optics?

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