



Starry Night Pro Plus 5.0

The newest version of Starry Night astronomy software incorporates a Canadian state-of-the-art, 20,000-image mosaic of the entire night sky

IMAGINE BEING ABLE TO SEAMLESSLY zoom in on any part of a wide-angle photo of the entire night sky, and as you do, the detail increases in proportion. That's just one of the features of the

latest upgrade to the top-of-the-line version of Starry Night Pro astronomy software (previous review, version 4.5, *SkyNews*, Jul./Aug. 2004). Visually, the software is stunning in its realism, and

NIGHT SKY REALITY TOUR

A typical screen shot from the new Starry Night Pro Plus (version 5.0) astronomy software looks remarkably photographic. That's because it is, in part, the product of many photos—a huge mosaic of 20,000 individual images of the real night sky united with computer-generated stars and databases.

it is seemingly endless in its capabilities.

Much of what is new comes from an integration into Starry Night of some of the best features of another software, Desktop Universe, especially the full-colour, pole-to-pole, CCD-image mosaic of the night sky. The mosaic was a five-year project headed by Doug George and Peter Ceravolo of Main Sequence software of Ottawa (developers of Desktop Universe) that involved the acquisition of more than 20,000 CCD images from remote sites in Australia and Arizona and the subsequent painstaking digital stitching together of the individual images to make a seamless image of the entire sky to magnitude 14.

"This makes the all-sky image available to a much wider audience," says George, "including those on the Macintosh platform." The colour mosaic weighs in at 6.44 billion pixels. Especially attractive is the detailed photographic realism of the Milky Way, which is much closer to reality than previous rendering attempts. For aficionados of high-end software that does it all (just listing the features would take more space than available here), this is one impressive package. Price, about \$300; available at telescope shops. ■

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Optisan Pioneer 7x50

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