Pen & Pixel



Figure 1 — The Lagoon Nebula (Messier 8 or M8) is one of the most-watched objects in the summer and fall sky—the archetype of warm-weather observing. Klaus Brasch collected the light for this composite from his observatory in Flagstaff, Arizona, using a C11 HD telescope at f/6.2. The image is a stack of several exposures totalling 16 minutes, along with separate exposures taken through filters to enhance the red H α emission. The Lagoon spans an area of 90' by 40' in Sagittarius and is easily visible in binoculars—sometimes even by eye.

Figure 2 — The Bubble Nebula, NGC 7635, is another popular fall object with Journal contributors. This one comes from Howard Trottier and is the result of approximately 12 hours of exposure, with about 300 minutes in luminance (unbinned), and about 100 minutes in each of R, G, B, and Hα (all with 2x2 binning). Ten-minute subframes were taken in all channels. Howard used a PlaneWave Instruments CDK17, operating with a focal reducer at f/4.5 and an SBIG STL-4020M camera. The Hα channel was blended into both the luminance and red channels in order to get as much depth as possible in the extensive emission nebula, while trying to maintain a "natural" colour. The Bubble is an HII emission region in Cassiopeia; the bubble shape is created by a stellar wind from the hot central star.

