



The 100-mm Garrett Optical Binocular Telescope System Model GT100-45

These Big Boys Will Change the Way You Think About Binoculars!

By Richard Harris

It seems in these days of super sensitive cameras and large aperture telescopes the binoculars take a back seat for astronomers. Most of us have a small set laying around but they rarely get used because we all know the golden rule of “aperture wins” in astronomy and binoculars are just one of those pieces of equipment that, unless they are really good or really big, lose our interest in our quest for just the right equipment to view the Heavens.

But the people at Garrett Optical are

out to change the way we think about binoculars with their introduction of the 100-mm $f/5.3$ Binocular Telescope system.

The new 100-mm $f/5.3$ binocular set is worlds away from most any other binoculars you might be used to seeing. Actually the larger binocular sets such as these are thought of more as two individual telescopes sitting beside each other in permanent side by side mounting.

Throw out those old ideas of fixed

magnifications, and set ocular sizes. This binocular telescope set features standard helical 1.25-inch eyepiece focusers and a finder scope dovetail mounting block. There is a lot about this set of binos to talk about!

What's in the Box?

The set comes off as really polished right out of the box (**Image 1**). One of the reasons for this is Garrett Optical hand collimates and adjusts the binos before

100-MM GARRET OPTICAL BINOCULAR SYSTEM

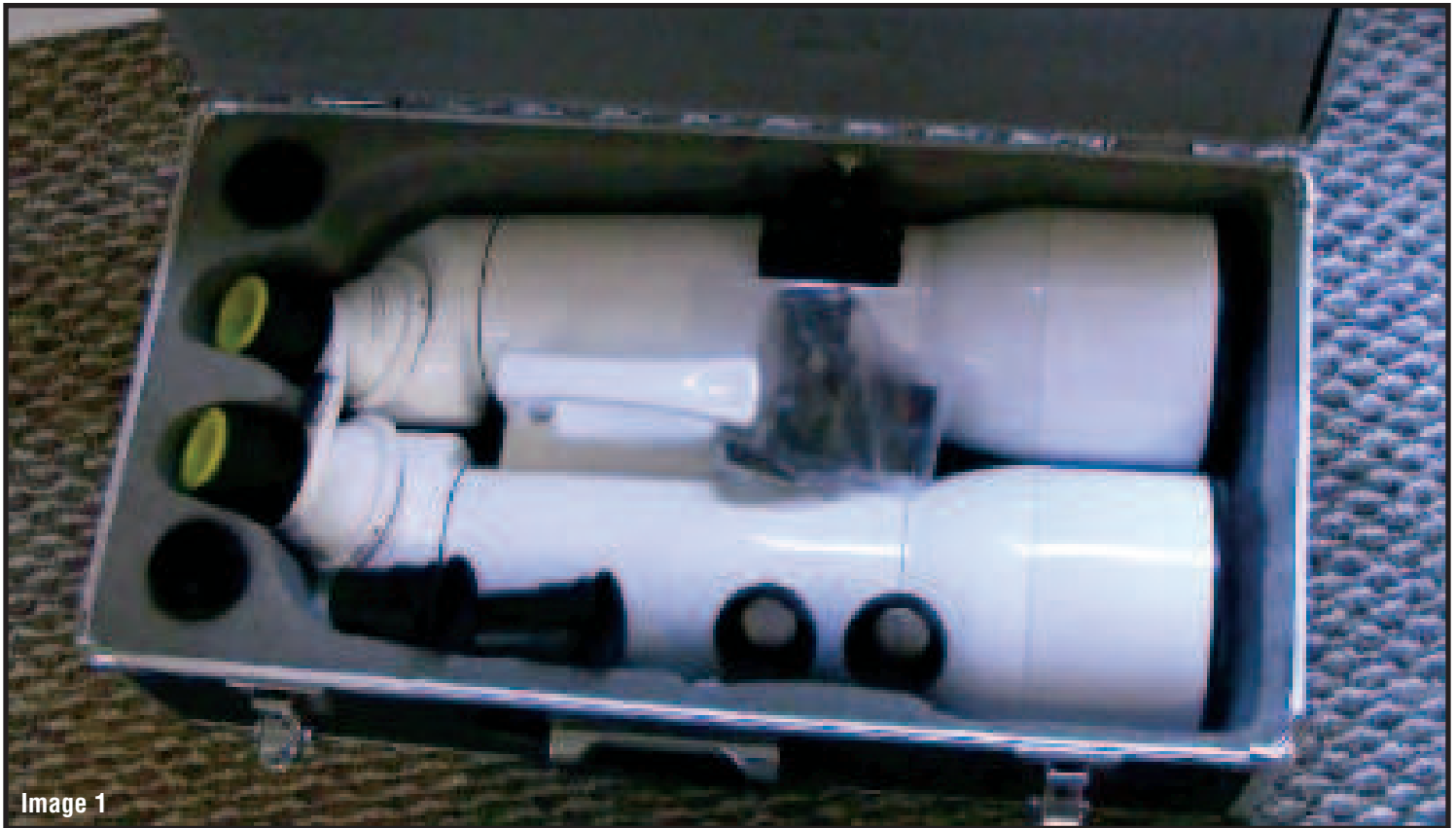


Image 1

they even ship them to you. You'll get the 100-mm binocular telescope set, along with 23-mm (57° AFOV) and 13-mm (60° AFOV) focal length eyepieces (in a set), yielding 23x and 41x magnifications.

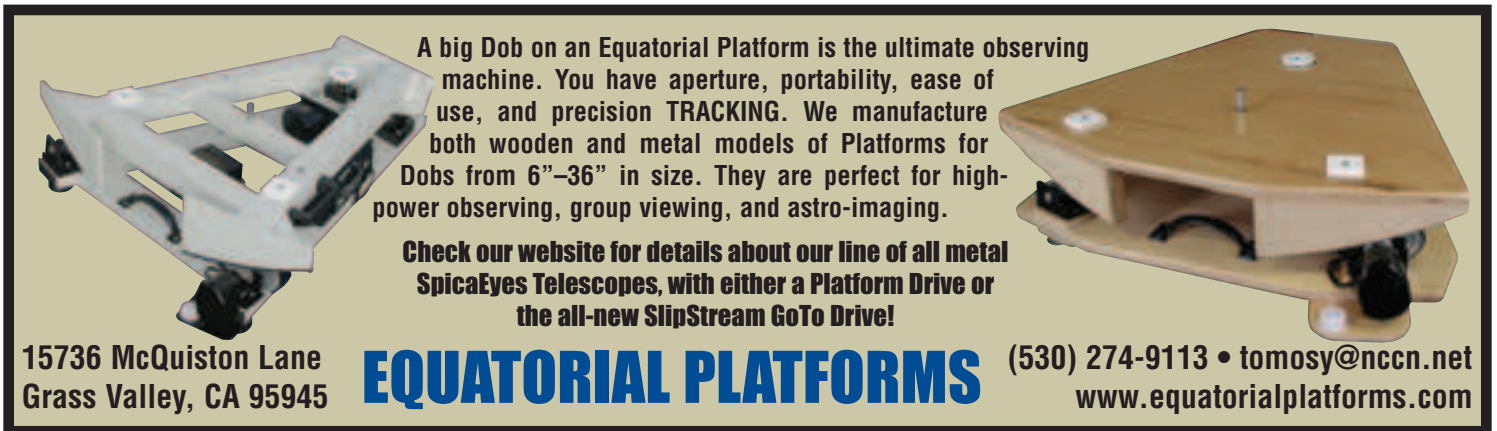
There is also an attached Vixen style finder scope base for attaching your own finder scope or the multiple red illuminated finder as offered by Garrett Optical – a \$49 option at time of purchase. A form fitted case, and a 2 year warranty polish off the overall package.

This might also be a good time to mention that the entire process of ordering, receiving, and questions after receiving the binos was five stars.

Initial Impressions?

The first glance out of the box is wow. Two 100-mm coated objective lenses stare you in the face and look as though they belong in a Disney movie with a creature named “Wally” (Image 2). But these are not robot eyes, they are large aperture, rich

field BaK4 optical glass objective lenses and look fantastic. There is a bolted on handle on top which is nice to have on such large binoculars and helps when mounting them to your tripod. The weight of the set with the eyepieces and red illuminated finder attached is just over 13 lbs which is considerably less than some competitors. The white paint is glossy and smooth and I couldn't help but retract and detract the dew shield extensions a few times for grins – they held in place nicely



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even when pointed straight up. The overall feel of the binoculars is very rugged, and you can't help but want to put them on a tripod right away and start viewing.

Using the Binoculars

I opted to get the series 5000 tripod from Garrett Optical to mount the binos (Image 3). There are also mounting screw holes on each side of the tubes in case you want to use a fork type mount. The tripod system came with a Vixen style dovetail plate which we mounted to the bottom side of our set and sliding that into the safety locking dovetail on the tripod was a breeze. You simply slide the plate into the place and when you hear a "click" (which is a small brass safety switch) you know the binoculars won't fall away while you are tightening the dovetail hold down.

First views were in the daytime doing a little birding and terrestrial viewing. I'm not an avid bird viewer but the magnification and contrast of the optics were very

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Universe. I'm used to hunkering over a Newtonian scope or an end mounted fork mounted OTA sitting on a wedge where you sometimes have to kneel down at such angles.

M31 was on grand display. The stars were all flat to the edge of the view and I could take in all of the galaxy because the wide field of view and short focal length. I then set my sites on a brighter object, which was the planet Jupiter, which appeared very bright with the 23-mm eyepieces so I switched to the higher powered 13-mm eyepieces to bring the planet and it's moons more into focus. I was able to make out the cloud bands easily on the planet which was surprising for such fast optics. The finder scope

was really helping now, as I switched the view to overhead to gaze at M57, the Ring Nebulae. The ring wasn't a disappointment either and seeing it in stereo-vision was more than spectacular. I kept moving around the sky to different objects and as great as the view was coming from the well collimated optics, I kept thinking about how comfortable it was to use the set.

good. I switched around eyepieces a few times between the two given sets provided and was amazed at how clear things looked. I left the binoculars set up and awaited nightfall.

The first night out I set up in my driveway where I had a clear view to the eastern sky – which was now in full bloom with late summer deep sky objects. I had in the 23-mm eyepieces and first panned around to M31 which was just about 55 degrees up in my location. Right from the start I noticed that the viewing angle was comfortable even though the binoculars were pointed at a steeper viewing angle. This was because the built-in helical focusers are tilted at a 45 degree angle – so I only had to tilt my head into the eyepieces slightly. This in combination with the extra tall series 5000 tripod made for an incredibly comfortable view. I felt like I could just walk up and look in to the

them I had attempted to use a Bogen heavy duty tripod I already owned as a grab-an-go alt-az mount for the large set. But that proved to be a bit of a challenge because of the lack of good clamping lockdowns and large enough handles to move the binos around. That's when I opted to order the series 5000 tripod and head– and I'm glad I did! The tripod only costs a couple hundred dollars and was well worth it to support such a finely crafted set of binoculars.

The series 5000 unit is extremely heavy duty and has everything needed for using large binos under the night sky. Even in the dark I could find the levers and knobs just fine and the extra long extension handles moving the binos around came in handy.

Final Thoughts

I really liked these binoculars and would recommend the Garrett Optical system to anyone looking for a large binocular set. The binoculars cost \$999 at the time of this writing and is an astonishing value. The kit includes everything you need minus the mount and I would dare to say this might be the last set of astronomical binoculars you'll ever buy. Make sure you either have a very heavy duty tripod or just spend the \$200 for the series 5000 tripod from Garrett as well, like I said before it'll be money well spent.

After using the set for a while it's dawned on me that I've basically got 2 side by side finely crafted telescopes so I plan to noodle some with mounting them on an equatorial mount and experiment with some astrophotography. What better setup to have than a visually stunning set of optics that can also be used in an imaging guide-scope combo! I'll save the results of that for a later article.

Editors Note – Richard has created a video of his review on the ScopeTrader YouTube channel to allow readers to get a first hand look at the entire setup. To view the video go to [YouTube.com/user/ScopeTrader](https://www.youtube.com/user/ScopeTrader) or search for ScopeTrader in the YouTube search box. [📺](#)

Tripod and Mount Considerations

The overall experience using the Garrett Optical combination was very pleasant. But I wanted to make mention that even though the binoculars are light in weight for their class, you are still going to need a substantial mount to make the viewing experience as pleasant as mine was. These aren't the kind of binoculars you hold in your hand! When I first received