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Wood Wonders Custom Case for Your Premium Eyepiece Collection

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The Wood Wonders case as tested can hold a selection of 1.25- and 2-inch eyepieces and filters, with the storage compartments illuminated by red LEDs. Credit: Alan Dyer

After you collect a set of premium eyepieces what better place to house them than in a luxurious and custom-built case from Wood Wonders?

Plus: Compact; unique finish; great features for astronomy

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Minus: Hard to identify eyepieces; tight fit for wide eyepieces

The bespoke Wood Wonders case holds a large selection of eyepieces and accessories in a compact package, with luxury features such as red lighting and interior heating. I've had my eye on one of Ron Burrow's beautiful Wood Wonders eyepiece cases for some time. This year I decided to treat myself, and why not, after all we've had to endure in 2020!

I ordered mine from the Wood Wonders website. The case arrived with no problems by mail from Michigan to Alberta within a month or so, keeping in mind that all cases are built to order.

The case is hand-crafted from red oak and is available in either a single-drawer model (what I bought) and a larger two-drawer unit. The latter holds the same number of eyepieces but has double the storage capacity for accessories. Both have room in the lid behind a Plexiglas cover for small books or star charts, such as the original Sky & Telescope Pocket Star Atlas.

A great touch for the case is the included red LED lights in the lid, powered by a nine-volt battery with an on/off switch. I like this feature, as it allows me to see what's in the case without having to turn on the main light in the room.

battery and with a dimmer control. Like your fridge, the lights automatically switch off when the lid is closed. The lighting works great and the battery seems to be lasting well.

While the lid closes tightly, it will not be as waterproof and dustproof as a weather-sealed Pelican camera case.

The drawer(s) are good for filters and small accessories. Filters in smaller cases can stand on end, but larger filter cases must lie flat. The drawers slide out to reveal more storage below for larger odds and ends. The Wood Wonders website provides all the dimensions.



Beneath the drawer is more storage space. While the vertical eyepieces make for compact storage, the tight spacing limits the number of wide eyepieces it can accept. Credit: Alan Dyer

The main compartment holds the eyepieces vertically in a wood tray insert, drilled with your choice of hole patterns and mix of 1.25- and 2-inch sizes. I chose Pattern No. 4, which accepts five 2-inch eyepieces and eight 1.25-inch eyepieces.

In Pattern No. 4, the central 2-inch hole has the most space around it, and so is good for one jumbo eyepiece such as a 31mm Tele Vue Optics Nagler or, in my case (literally), a Tele Vue 41mm Panoptic. There was room enough for the four other 2-inch holes to accept a narrower Tele Vue Ethos eyepiece, or the Baader Planetarium Morpheus and Hyperion eyepieces. The tight spacing allows only two of the eight 1.25-inch holes to accept wide-bodied 1.25-inch eyepieces, such as Tele Vue Delos models.

The remaining 1.25-inch holes can accept only narrower, and usually short, 1.25-inch

eyepieces or Barlows, which can become hard to reach amid the other tall eyepieces. So if your collection is made of only wide 2-inch eyepieces, consider the Ethos layout option with its eight 2-inch holes. If your needs change, you can order a different eyepiece tray later, or even order a customized layout you draw and supply as a template.

There is enough height to accommodate tall Ethos and Delos eyepieces. However, with the eyepieces vertically mounted, their side labeling become difficult to read, so you have to remember what focal length goes where. Or, like a box of chocolates, you can create and print out a guide to place in the lid. I also found that the ribbing on the barrels of the Baader Hyperion and Morpheus eyepieces made them stick in the wood holes. It takes some tugging to pull them out.

Wood Wonders offers a Kendrick Astro heater system for keeping eyepieces dry and toasty in humid climates. This requires an outboard source of power. To keep things simple, I didn't select this option. My unit is also the standard finish model, but there's a wide range of Minwax stain finishes to pick from.

However, I did select the option of a finish with constellation figures carved into the exterior, and a glow-in-the-dark personalized monogram on the lid. After all, if you are going to have a custom-made case, go for it and make it look unique!

I have not yet subjected my Wood Wonders case to much harsh outdoor weather or abuse, so I can't say how well the construction and finish will stand up over the long term. However, I'm certainly enjoying it for its looks, convenient features, and attractive design that holds my key observing essentials together in one compact package.

MSRP: \$209 to \$349 depending on the model

Website: www.wood-wonders.com



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Alan Dyer is an astrophotographer and astronomy author based in Alberta, Canada. His website at www.amazingsky.com has galleries of his images, plus links to his product review blog posts, video tutorials, and ebooks on astrophotography.

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