

Sky-Watcher Explorer 150 (EQ3-2)

VITAL STATS

- ▶ **PRICE** £290
- ▶ **APERTURE** 150mm
- ▶ **FOCAL RATIO** f/5 (750mm)
- ▶ **FINDER** 6x30
- ▶ **SUPPLIED EYE PIECES** 10mm & 25mm
- ▶ **WEIGHT** 18kg
- ▶ **MANUFACTURER** Sky-Watcher
- ▶ **TEL** 01359 244200
- ▶ **WEB** www.opticalvision.co.uk

- ▶ **FOR** Good for advanced observing
- ▶ **AGAINST** High price

VERDICT

VALUE FOR MONEY	80%
OPTICS	80%
EASE OF USE	80%
BUILD QUALITY	85%
MOUNT + DRIVE	95%
OVERALL	84%

If you are looking for a larger instrument that retails close to the limit of our £300 budget, yet embodies many of the qualities that you would look for in a scope that can grow with your interest, then the Explorer-150 is one for serious consideration.

The EQ3-2 German equatorial mount is capable of taking quite a load while retaining stability and is well matched to this tube assembly. A built-in bubble level makes for faster setups and an optional polarscope enables accurate polar alignment. A single- or dual-axis drive system is available at extra cost.

The optical tube assembly was perfectly aligned (collimated) straight out of the box. The 15cm diameter primary mirror is stated as being paraboloidal in figure

according to the specs, though in practice was very slightly undercorrected under test. The achromatic 6x30 finderscope was very sharp with a superb mount and alignment bracket.

When I used my own 2.8x Klee Barlow in conjunction with the supplied 10mm eyepiece to deliver a magnification of just over 200x, the scope really showed its potential. Saturn was a stunning sight with detail seen on the globe and its shadow seen on the rings. Jupiter's cloud belts also revealed much fine detail. On the deep-sky, spiral galaxy M51 was clearly seen as a misty smudge with its satellite galaxy plainly visible, despite the severe light pollution at my location.

