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Here is my William Optics Zenithstar 66 sitting atop my Orion 120mm refractor.

About six months ago I was in the market for a very nice and very portable wide field refractor, I was looking at brands like the Tele-Vue TV-60 and the Takahashi FS-60 also the Borg 77, but did not want to shell out almost \$1k for one. Then I came across William Optics 66mm Zentihstar series. The moment I saw this scope online I was very impressed, then I started to do some research on them and read some reviews as well and made my decision to go with the Zenithstar.

When I first saw the price I got a little worried about the performance and optics in this "little" guy, but I spoke with David Yang the US branch manager and he informed me that the Petsval design in this scope would give me breathtaking wide field deep sky views even with such a small aperture. Well that was enough to sell me, because a wide field scope that was portable enough to take out at a moments notice and gave crisp views was exactly what I wanted, so I made the decision and ordered the Zenithstar 66 Semi-Apo terrestrial package for \$298.00 (us).

Packaging:

†When I received the box from William Optics I got very anxious and could not wait to open it. When I did open it I was thoroughly impressed with just the package, the scope, 45 degree prism and 20mm Swan eyepiece all came in the nicest case I have ever seen, it is a custom stylish carrying bag that is of very good quality and fits this scope and accessories perfectly (not too mention it just looks good setting in the case!)

First impressions:

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Tuesday, April 25, 2006

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The very first thing I noticed about this scope was the exceptional high quality and details that William Optics put into it. From the beautifully CNC machined optical tube, the very best crayford focuser I have ever seen or used to the wonderfully smooth retractable dew shield (which slides like butter and has just the right amount of tension). Fit and finish on this scope is of the finest quality! One of the next things I noticed was the light reflection in the lens cell, not green or white (clear) but a very nice bluish purple.

Dew Shield: The dew shield is perfect. If you own a Zenithstar 66 you know what I mean. It slides so smoothly and has the perfect amount of tension between it and the o.t.a. that at any angle it stays exactly where you want it.

Lens cell: The lens cell unfortunately does not allow for user collimation, so hopefully after the scope has traveled half way around the world it will still be in collimation or it will have to go back to the dealer or William Optics for a (retuning). But the quality of the lens cell is very nice. Mine arrived in perfect collimation with stars showing a perfect airy disk with bright concentric diffraction rings.

Optical tube: The o.t.a. is simply beautiful. William Optics sends you a cleaning cloth with the scope and trust me with the black anodizing on the o.t.a. you will see every finger print on it, and you WILL want to use the cloth to clean it. This is the finest looking optical tube on the market. (in my opinion)

The focuser (my favorite): The focuser supplied with the scope is a 1.6" crayford focuser that is compatible with virtually all S.C.T. accessories which is a HUGE plus. This CNC machined crayford is so smooth and is even nicer than my (JMI) - NGF-DX3 2" Crayford focuser for my Newtonian which cost me \$189 which is more than half the cost of the whole Zenithstar package!!!! The fully rotate able design is a blessing for astrophotographers, and is as smooth as can be.

Optical design: The petzval design incorporated in the Zenithstar 66 is a doublet lens in front with one lens made of ED glass and a secondary doublet just inside the focuser draw tube which acts as a field flattener and improves color correction. The baffling design is of superb quality, which you can see here along with the secondary doublet.



The scope produces crystal clear views to the edge of the field and will give you views with no ghosting or off axis light, which can annoy the heck out of me in other scopes. Even with the moon being just out of view there is NO off axis light seen, the moon just pops into view along a beautiful black background. There was a small amount of false color on the lunar limb at magnifications over 180x but not enough to get aggravated with it. With the baffle design along with the ED glass and secondary doublet/corrector you get an extremely flat field with virtually no chromatic aberration! Which is also a photographers dream.

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Here you can see M42 taken with the Zenithstar and with my point and shoot Canon A95. Eyepiece projection 18X15 sec exposures stacked in registax and levels and curves adjusted in Photoshop.

As you can see this is not a true testament to what this scope CAN do, but it is what I have to work with at the moment for imaging.

Pros:

- †PRICE \$298
- †Perfect grab and go scope with quick cool down time
- †Beautiful optics, flat field, virtually no false color, HUGE deep sky views with the right eyepiece
- †Perfect fit and finish of the finest quality that I have seen in a small scope (and even some of the more top end ones also)
- †Great for virtually anything except high power planetary viewing i.e. deep sky, photography, and terrestrial.

Cons:

- †Small aperture
- †45 degree prism is of good quality but if your going to get a package for this scope spend the extra \$150 and get the SCT dielectric 90 degree diagonal. (which has nothing to do with the scope itself)
- †Other than these two things there is nothing wrong or even remotely not of top quality.

Conclusion:

The best "little" scope you can get. All and all this one will be with me for life. One of the best investments you can make whether you are just looking for a grab and go or a great photo scope or even a terrestrial scope.