

Thanet Astronomy Group

Astronomy for Everyone in Plain English

What to See, February 2014

Keeping our eye on Orion.

**Stars (Bellatrix, Meissa, Saiph)
Constellation (Orion),
Nebula (M42)**

This guide is for 7pm 24th February 2014.

Last month I featured the star Sirius, the constellation Orion and 5 of its main stars. This month three more stars and a nebula. I'm hoping you all found Jupiter and Orion last month and have been looking at them since.

At 7pm 24th Feb 2014 - look due south.

Star Bellatrix

About 45 degrees above the horizon you will see the star Bellatrix. It is just a little to the right (11 degrees) of Betelgeuse and forms the top right corner of Orion. It is about 243 light years away.

Star Meissa

Between and above Betelgeuse and Bellatrix you will see the star Meissa. This forms a triangle with the stars Betelgeuse and Bellatrix and marks Orion's jaw. This star is over 1055 light years away.

Star Saiph

At the bottom left corner of Orion, to the left of the bright star Rigel you will see the star Saiph. This forms the bottom left corner of Orion. Saiph is about 720 light years away, and believed to be 20 times bigger than our Sun.



Orion Without constellation lines



Nebula M42 By George Ward Feb 2014 Celestron 925

Nebula M42

One of Orion's most striking features is in its sword. This is a chain of faint stars which curve down and left from the left most star in Orion's belt (Alnitak). The Nebula is near the bottom of the sword and looks like a cloudy patch. It's unsurprising that the word "Nebula" is Latin for cloud. M42 is the result of a huge star exploding (Supernova).

Contact us if you need help or information.

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West Bay Cafe Saturday's 1-4 pm.