

# So, You Want to Buy a Telescope?

The best recommendation for anyone interested in astronomy is do NOT buy a telescope. The first step toward exploring the beauty of the night sky is to start with a good sky chart or subscription to *Astronomy* or *Sky and Telescope* magazine. While looking at the moon is enjoyable, it is not always up. A sky chart or magazine will help you locate the planets, double stars, clusters, and a variety of other deep sky objects.

A second recommendation would be to start with a pair of binoculars. You'll get much more use out of these, and cheap binoculars are much, much better than a cheap telescope.

You should also consider joining an organization such as the St. Louis Astronomical Society, or attend star parties like those held at the McDonnell Planetarium. You'll be able to ask questions, look through a variety of telescope designs, and be better informed when you make your decision.

When you are ready to make your purchase, avoid retail stores or other mass merchandising outlets. While they may boast of 600-power magnification at a cost of only \$99.99, you'll be buying nothing more than frustration. Buy your telescope from a dealer who knows astronomy, knows telescopes, and offers only quality instruments. Below are a few selected websites that can assist you.

## Telescope Websites

[www.starizona.com](http://www.starizona.com)

[www.hardinoptical.com](http://www.hardinoptical.com)

[www.telescopes.com](http://www.telescopes.com)

[www.telescope.com](http://www.telescope.com)

[www.scopecity.com](http://www.scopecity.com)

[www.discovery-telescopes.com](http://www.discovery-telescopes.com)

[www.scopetronix.com](http://www.scopetronix.com)

[www.astronomics.com](http://www.astronomics.com)

[www.astro-physics.com](http://www.astro-physics.com)

[www.first-telescope.com](http://www.first-telescope.com)

[www.stellarvue.com](http://www.stellarvue.com)

[www.optcorp.com](http://www.optcorp.com)