

Colour Photos of the Southern Sky

Many people have been impressed by the beauty of the southern sky, as seen with the naked eye, or on the photographic plates taken with the ESO Schmidt telescope.

The question has often been asked whether ESO, like the Hale Observatories in California, could provide colour photos of some of the more spectacular objects that can be photographed from La Silla.

We are happy to report that the first steps in this direction have now been taken. During some nights, colour photo tests were made with the Schmidt telescope and the results are quite satisfactory.

It is much more difficult to make astronomical colour photos than black-and-white photos. This is because the colour balance changes during long exposures in such a way that the pictures become almost completely blue. This can be corrected, and as a result of our tests, it is now possible to take colour pictures on KODAK Ektacolor L film with exposure times up to two hours.

The first successful photo shows the Small Magellanic Cloud and it is a pity that it cannot be reproduced in "The Messenger". Further photos were taken in February, 1975; we hope that a small collection can be established.

Copies of the photos will, of course, be made available to the general public and should give good publicity to ESO.

R. M. W. / H. E. S.

La Silla Workshop Introduces "Turno System"

The so-called "Turno system", under which teams of technicians take turns at staffing the astronomy workshops on La Silla, was introduced on April 1, 1974.

The purpose of the system is to provide the all-important continuity of skilled service for astronomers working on the mountain. Previously, the weekend staff consisted of maintenance and repair men only.

At the moment, four technicians are participating, doing turnos of 18 days, with two days overlapping and seven days for recuperation.

The technicians found their new job hard and long, their other jobs in the Santiago main mechanical workshop fell behind, but now they are catching up, and they are, of course, compensated by corresponding periods of leave.

As for the astronomers, all contacted were taking full advantage of the improved service at weekends and were greatly pleased with the "Turno system".

A Place to Eat

La Silla can hardly be compared with Hamburg, Geneva or even La Serena for the variety of free-time activities which it offers. However, it may be a good place to eat.

The restaurant comes to life at 6.30 a. m. and at seven you can begin with ham and eggs and all the usual trimmings of an international breakfast.

Chile comes on the menu at lunch, which may start with avocado pear, natural, or stuffed with rock lobster tails; or



"You name it, we have it!" says chief cook Erich Schumann (left), about to prepare fresh poodle.

a small hors-d'oeuvre consisting of seafood, cold cuts and salad — or a raw vegetable cocktail.

The dairy products, fresh fruit, vegetables, and fish and meat of many kinds are from La Serena. Santiago provides fancier foods and also vegetables not grown on the coast.

At lunch and dinner soup is served and generally there is a choice. The lentil soup is said to have something special. Try conger eel chowder too: the conger is about the best seafood in Chile. The main course, consisting of meat, fish or fowl, can rise to the heights of canard à l'orange.

An alternative is corn pie (pastel de choclos).

Or you may try porotos (white kidney beans, Chilean style), a spicy dish of pork, noodles, squash — served sometimes with a small steak or a fried egg.

Then there are desserts to make the mouth water: chirimoyas — and cantaloupes stuffed with ice cream, topped with whipped cream and marinated with cherry brandy or Curacao (ahem!).

And the wines — oh dear! On La Silla you may only dream of them.

The La Silla restaurant caters during the week to about 110 people from 10 countries: technicians, administrative staff, hard-working labourers — and even harder-working astronomers, building their strength with bowls of lentil soup.

Staff Association News

On January 20–21, a meeting was held at the TP Division, Geneva, between representatives of the ESO Administration and of the Geneva and Hamburg branches of the Staff Association. Messrs. Woltjer, Bachmann, Carreau and Wilson and Miss E. Kunstein took part. In closed session, the meeting discussed the final proposal concerning the Staff Association Statutes; this will be circulated to the staff before the SA presents it for approval to the Director-General. Later there was a general meeting of the TP Division staff, called by the local branch of the SA.

Prof. Woltjer spoke on general and technical developments, including the auxiliary equipment for the 3.6 m telescope.

The Hamburg branch of the SA met on January 30. Prof. Woltjer replied to the Chairman's words of welcome and briefly reviewed the outlook for the establishment of the astronomical group and the restructuring and integration of the ESO establishments. The meeting then discussed various matters, including char-