



Sky-Watcher EQ6 Pro SkyScan

VITAL STATS

- ▶ **PRICE** £1,149
- ▶ **CONNECTOR** Vixen-style dovetail
- ▶ **WEIGHT** 24kg
- ▶ **LOAD CAPACITY** 24kg
- ▶ **MAX SLEWING SPEED** 3.4°/second
- ▶ **HAND CONTROL DATABASE** 13,400+ objects
- ▶ **INTERFACES** RS-232; autoguider
- ▶ **POWER SUPPLY** 12V external (supplied)
- ▶ **MANUFACTURER** Sky-Watcher
- ▶ **TEL** 01359 244200
- ▶ **WWW** opticalvision.co.uk

- ▶ **FOR** Best for heavy scopes
- ▶ **AGAINST** Too heavy to be portable

VERDICT

BUILD QUALITY	86%
FEATURES	89%
GO-TO ACCURACY	91%
TRACKING ACCURACY	91%
STABILITY	95%
OVERALL	90%

The Sky-Watcher EQ6 Pro is by far the most substantial mount of the four on test. Like the HEQ5, the EQ6 Pro is a logical development of Synta's popular heavy-duty EQ6. Those who still possess the older version may be interested to hear that a £499 upgrade kit is available from the UK importer, Optical Vision Ltd. This includes a replacement control panel/motor board, two stepper motors and, of course, the SkyScan computerised hand controller.

At twice the weight of the Vixen Sphinx mount and tripod – even before any

counterweights are added – the EQ6 Pro is clearly not for the faint-hearted or weak of limb. While it's quite possible to assemble this leviathan and strip it down on your own, it is really a mount that is best suited to a permanent observatory setup.

At first glance it may simply appear to be a scaled-up version of the HEQ5 Pro, but there are notable differences. Consider the tripod and its 5cm (2-inch) diameter stainless steel legs: it's identical to the Celestron CG-5's. Given that Synta now owns Celestron, perhaps that's not so surprising. The extra mass of the EQ6 mount increases the stability to such an extent that we practically had to thump it to induce any vibrations.

Polar scope is a pleasure

Like the HEQ5 Pro, the built-in polar axis alignment scope is a real plus for the Sky-Watcher range. When the SkyScan is powered-up, a small red LED gently illuminates its objective lens to aid the visibility of the internal reticle, making it so much easier to offset from Polaris to the true north

celestial pole. When we inspected the polar scope in detail, we found that it was well aligned with the axis of the mount, to better than 2 arcminutes in fact.

It is also adjustable for higher precision if required, making it a real pleasure to use. If the HEQ5 is power-hungry, the EQ6 is a power-devourer; expect an even shorter time between charges with this mount, although this is not so much of a problem with an observatory setup, where a mains supply can be used.

One thing that surprised us was how quiet the EQ6 Pro was, even when operating at its fastest slew speeds. The alignment procedures and capabilities of the version 2.05 SkyScan hand control are identical to that supplied with the HEQ5 Pro, though curiously we found that the tracking accuracy of this larger mount was slightly worse. Periodic error was similar, at around 30 arcseconds before calibration, while Go-To accuracy was identical to that of the HEQ5 Pro.

We felt that this, the largest mount offered by Sky-Watcher, caters more for big-scope owners seeking a permanent setup than observers who like to be fleet of foot. If the rumours of a flash-upgradeable SkyScan hand control are true, then more features are on the way.

