

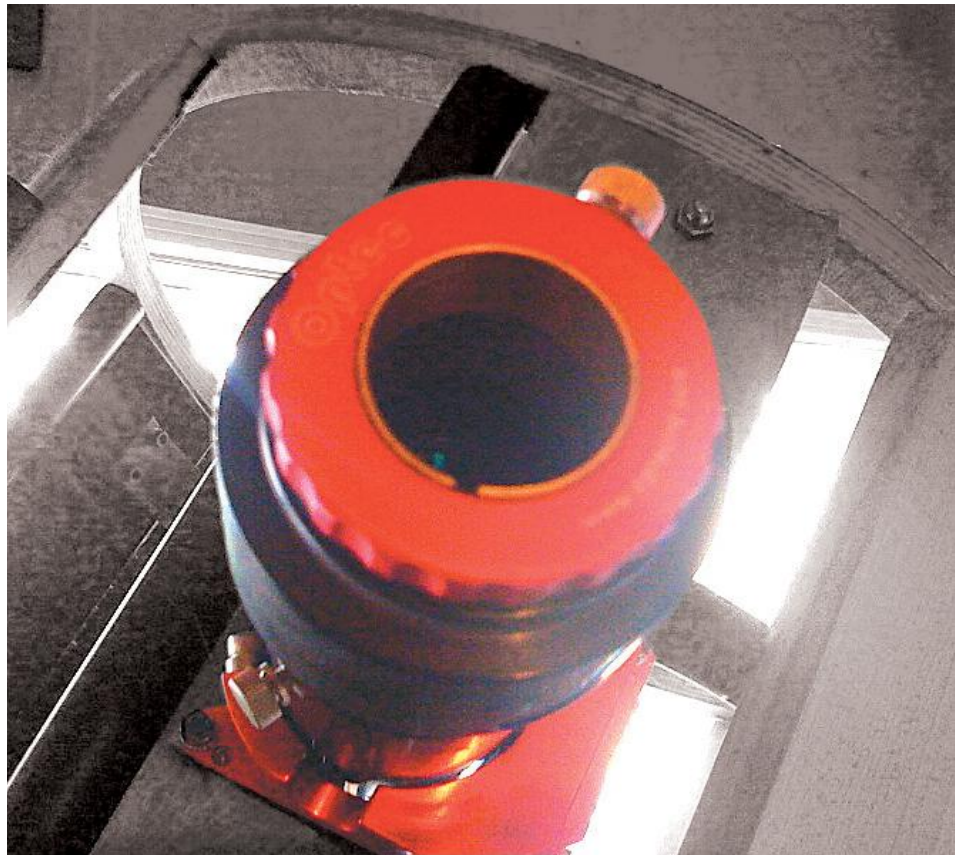
Optec 2-1.25 Inch Adapter

A Simple Yet Beautiful Piece of Gear

By Erik Wilcox

I remember getting my first expensive wide-field eyepiece. It was the venerable 24-mm Tele Vue Panoptic (which I still own after all these years), and I was thrilled with its high level of performance and well-corrected field of view. But one thing I wasn't thrilled with were the setscrew marks that my focuser left on the brand new chrome barrel of my prized eyepiece.

When shopping through the classified sections on my favorite astronomy sites, I always noticed the term "Has some setscrew marks, but otherwise in good condition" when describing used eyepieces. As someone who appreciates gear for form and function, I wondered why there wasn't a better solution for this problem. Some manufacturers tried



nylon screws on their focusers and adapters, which helped; but the screws sometimes stripped out and often didn't hold the eyepiece in place very well.

Finally, a couple of companies began offering adapters with compression ring features, which didn't leave setscrew marks. This was an improvement, but there were still issues. Many of these

adapters were crudely designed, with thin compression rings and flimsy overall quality. Not exactly the sort of gear that you'd want on your expensive 2-inch focuser! Enter Optec and their new 2-1.25-inch adapters.

Optec is a well-known manufacturer of quality astronomical parts and has recently come out with some exciting

new products, both for visual and astrophotography use. For details on all their products, their website can be found at www.optecinc.com. For this article, I'd like to focus on their brand-new 2-1.25-inch adapter.

Unlike many other aftermarket compression ring adapters I've used, the Optec unit is all quality. It has a beautiful brushed aluminum finish (in your choice of color) with knurled edges to aid in gripping. I found the unit comfortable to use and easy to grip even with thick gloves. It also has a built-in brass compression ring that measures 5/8-inch long and a full millimeter thick. What this means is that eyepieces with a safety cutout won't catch or hang up on the compression ring like they tend to do with thin compression rings. The unit is low-profile (measuring just 1.6 inches from top to bottom), so you won't lose any outward focus. And there are also filter threads for both 1.25 inch and 2 inch as well, a nice feature.

The Optec adapter is a beautiful piece of gear. I found that the red finish matched well with my red Moonlite focuser, and it also went nicely with my black refractor focuser. Best of all, the Optec adapter fit nicely in each focuser; not too snug, and not too loose.

In the field, I found using the Optec was a breeze. When tightened, the eyepiece felt much more secure than using a setscrew or an adapter with a thinner compression ring. This makes sense since

the thicker gauge of the compression ring in the Optec leads to a more even tightening of the eyepiece. And of course there was no marring of the finish on the barrels of eyepieces.

The machining and tolerances on the Optec are exquisite. The threads have a very nice feel to them; filters from different manufacturers each went on smoothly and securely, and there's a nice, smooth motion when tightening an eyepiece in the adapter. The entire bottom portion of the Optec adapter is nicely blackened (inside and out) to prevent stray light from reaching the eyepiece.

Overall, I'm extremely impressed with the new Optec 2-1.25-inch adapter. It's the first compression ring adapter I've used that I feel is a worthy replacement to the standard adapters found on many 2-inch focusers. And it's a noticeable improvement for those focusers that already come with a stock compression ring adapter. An inexpensive upgrade for any telescope with a 2-inch focuser! **AT**

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