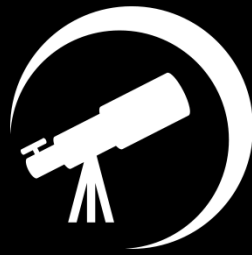


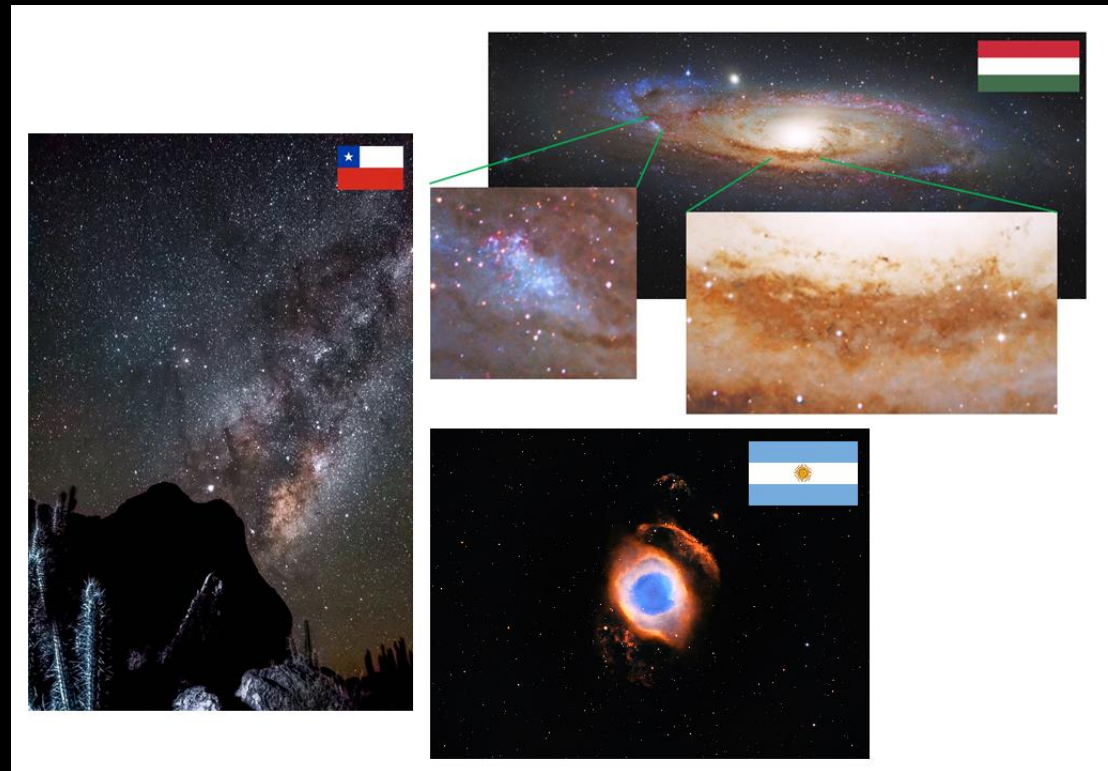
Interview with Hugo Landolfi, Buenos Aires Argentina  
nPAE World Champion Astro Photographer 2021



**nPAE**  
PRECISION ASTRO ENGINEERING

To celebrate winning the nPAE World Champion Astro Photographer 2021 award we are pleased to present this exclusive interview with Hugo Landolfi!

After winning the Southern Hemisphere title, his Helix Nebula image was voted the best in a head to head vote against the Northern Hemisphere winner and the previous nPAE World Champion, in nail biting social media public vote.



Here in his own words Hugo tells us about his own journey and experiences in astrophotography!

**nPAE** – Hi Hugo, thanks so much for taking part in this interview!

**Hugo** – Thanks for inviting me to this interview! It's great to be here.

**nPAE** – When did you start photographing the night sky?

**Hugo** – Although I am currently 53 years old, I have started my activity as an astrophotographer at a very young age. Approximately between the ages of 18 and 19, I took an astrophotography course at the Asociación Argentina Amigos de la Astronomía and, after finishing it, I began to take photographs with the traditional method of a film and photo camera. The difficulties were enormous, and the possibilities of this system, for an amateur, did not offer highly encouraging results.

After some years of experiencing frustrations, I left the activity to return to it about six or seven years ago. I took the astrophotography course again at the same Association, with whom Claudio Pietrasanta and Alejandro Tombolini are my current teachers, and I noticed that everything had changed because everything had turned to the digital world, that is, everything had to be learned again, especially what it does to the processing of the images.

The great advantages are that today an amateur can take pictures of a quality that 20 years ago were only possible with a professional telescope.

**nPAE** – What is your favourite astronomical object and why?

**Hugo** - Obviously, one of my favourite objects was the winner of the contest, namely the Helix Nebula. I really like planetary nebulae, especially the small ones, which are rarely photographed due to the difficulty of taking good pictures of such small objects. In conclusion, in general, what I like the most are planetary nebulae.

**nPAE** – Where do you like to observe / photograph the most, what is good about this place?

**Hugo** - I generally make the observations and take photographs in the garden of my own house, in San Isidro, a suburban area around the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, capital of the Argentine Republic. Because I have a very light-polluted sky, I usually did narrowband astrophotography.

**nPAE** – With what equipment do you photograph?

**Hugo** – I have two telescopes, a Meade 130 APO series 6000 refractor telescope and a SkyWatcher 200 F4 Newtonian telescope. My mount is an iOptron CEM70.

I do the tracking with a small William Optics 60mm aperture refractor.

I have an ASI ZWI 294 monochrome camera, with its corresponding filter wheel and Astrodon brand narrow band and colour filters. I also own a QHY brand colour camera with an a-PSC chip size.

All the processing is done with the Pixinsight software.

**nPAE** – Talk us through some of your favourite images.

**Hugo** – My favorite image is the Helix Nebula and another one I just finished recently, which I hope to enter again for the southern hemisphere in your contest this year, which is the Dolphin Nebula. I also have very beautiful images of the Shrimp Nebula and some galaxies like the beautiful Centaurus A.



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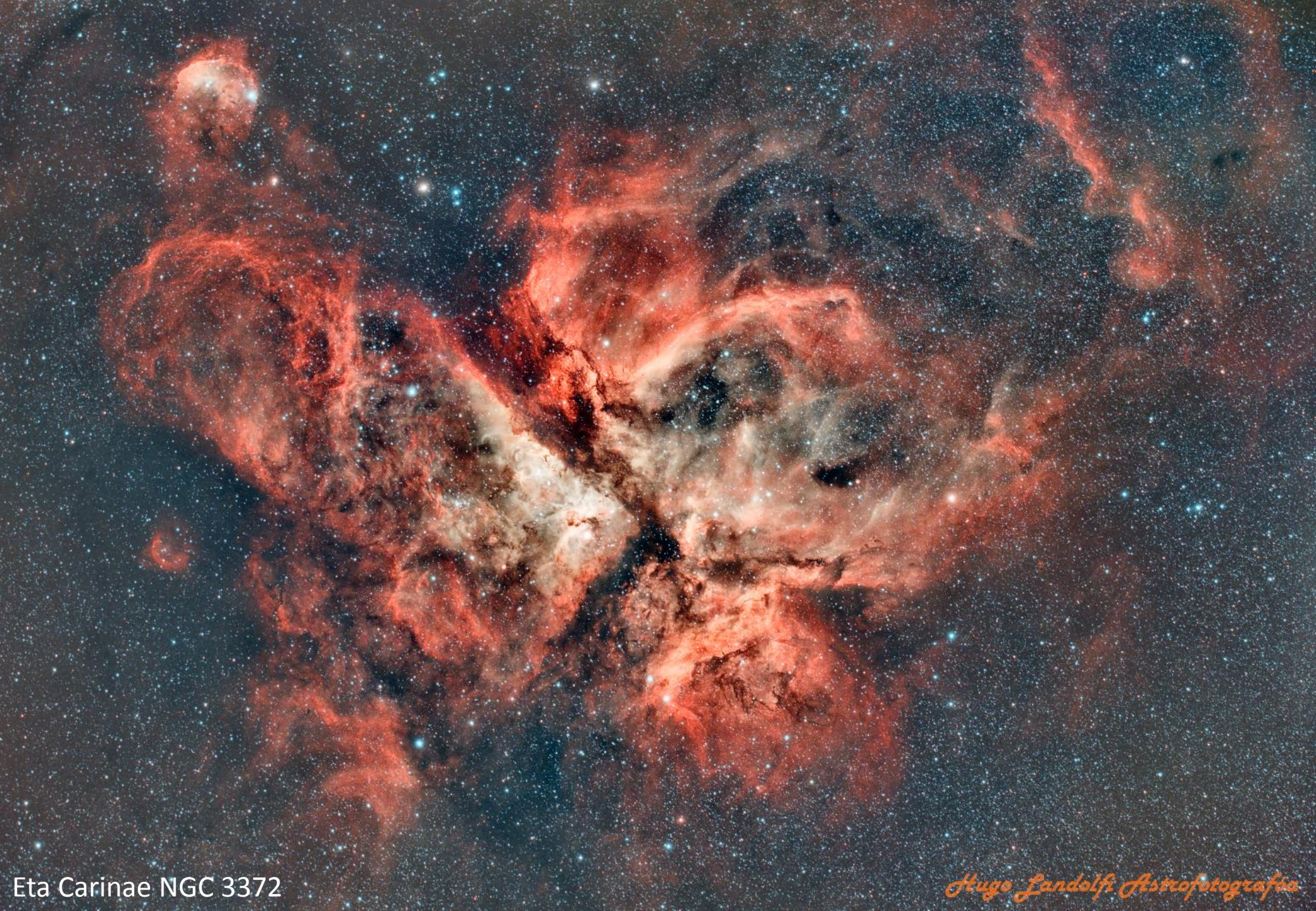


**nPAE** – Wow! Tell us a little more about your life and journey as an astrophotographer.

**Hugo** - Coming back, six or seven years ago, back to astrophotography, after having left it for so many years, it was like relearning the activity all over again from scratch, because of all the changes that had been made in the years that had passed since I started.

Everything was digital, everything was automated and, although the telescopes could be the same, everything related to handling, obtaining photos, calibrating and processing them had changed completely.

This meant that, since I like to learn a lot about everything that I am passionate about, I invested a lot of time studying these topics, beyond the course that I mentioned earlier, and I studied various books on the subject, especially in what you do to the image processing with the Pixinsight software, along with learning various precision techniques in tracking and obtaining photographs.



Eta Carinae NGC 3372

*Hugo Landolfi Astrofotografia*



**nPAE** – What advice do you have for aspiring astro photographers?

**Hugo** – What every new astrophotographer should know is that this is certainly a difficult hobby, often frustrating, that requires a lot of discipline, temperance, patience and a desire to learn and study. Anyone who meets these conditions, sooner or later, will achieve great quality results in the photographs they take. The result of the photographs of him will be getting better and better, the first ones surely being of lower quality than the ones he takes later.

I suggest you study, join an association where they carry out this activity and get in touch with people who have experience from whom you can learn both theory and practice. This is the path that I myself have followed and it has given me good results.

**nPAE** – What's it like being world champion?

**Hugo** – It was really a surprise to me, but I don't take it as something to brag about, like I'm a great astrophotographer. If I can say that I am methodical and studious, and I was surprised to have been chosen in the first round of your course, where I won the best photo of the southern hemisphere, and then in the final round where we fought vote by vote. With the help of many friends and acquaintances, we were able to win the worldwide contest.

Humility is very important for the astrophotographer and, in my case, beyond feeling important for having won your World Championship, instead, I am extremely grateful that nPAE have considered my photography as worthy of such achievements, especially considering the quality of the photographs of my fellow competitors. In this sense, I thank the staff of nPAE and the jury of the contest, not only for holding this contest annually, which greatly stimulates the activity of astrophotographers because it allows knowledge and recognition of their work, but also for the openness to participation in your contest from anyone from anywhere in the world, which is a great value, since there are many astro photography contests that are only local or national.