

Interview with Yann Sainty, Lorraine, France
nPAE World Champion Astro Photographer 2022



nPAE
PRECISION ASTRO ENGINEERING

To celebrate winning the nPAE World Champion Astro Photographer 2022 award we are pleased to present this exclusive interview with Yann Sainty!

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



Here in his own words, Yann tells us about his own journey and experiences in astrophotography. This is a beautiful story!

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

Yann – Thanks a lot for this opportunity.

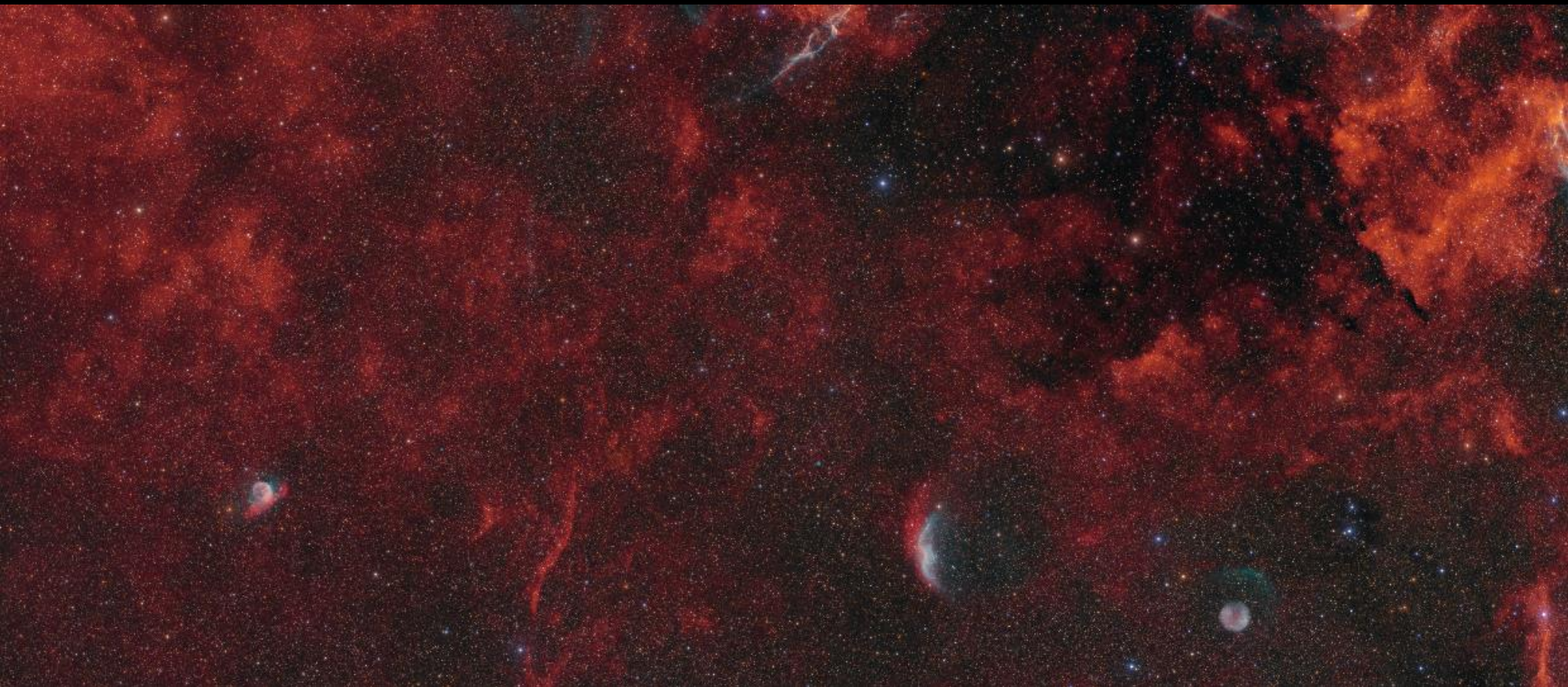
nPAE – When did you start photographing the night sky?

Yann – I started night photography in May 2020. Having a garden, I thought it would be cool to have a small telescope to look at the moon at night with friends. I ordered without knowing anything about it and ended up with a 200/1200 'scope, which has been sitting in the garage for a while. When I motivated myself to shoot at the moon with it, I was shocked at what I saw. I then did some research on the Internet and saw that you could observe the planets, and the emotion I saw was immense when I saw the rings of Saturn. I discovered the concept of astrophotography, and that's where the passion started. I then spent all my clear nights outside trying to understand how this discipline works and the more time I spent on it the more the passion grew. And meeting other enthusiasts who have now become friends only made the desire to go further and further to share more wonders of the sky grow.

nPAE – What is your favourite astronomical object and why?

Yann – I don't really have a favourite astronomical object because the sky is so rich in objects with different characteristics, shapes, colours that it is impossible for me to choose one. Some of them have a particular value for me because they represent important steps in my practice of astrophotography. For example Barnard 150 is the first image where I understood the importance of the quality of the sky. The nebulae of the constellation of the Coachman because it made me discover the happiness of collaborating with a close friend on a common image. Simeis 147 is the image that changed my practice because it allowed me to meet the StDr team, which turned my vision of astrophotography upside down. Angelo's Nebula (Martino-Sainty Object 1) because it allowed me to share the experience of discovery with a close friend. Of course the Oiii arc of M31 (Strottner-Drechsler-Sainty Object 1) because it was a crazy experience on the astronomical, scientific and human level. But if I had to choose only one, it would obviously be StDr Object 32 since it is forever named after my mum Joëlle.

<https://www.youtube.com/@Strottner-Drechsler/about>



Joëlle's Nebula (StDr Object 32)

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

Yann - As I live in an apartment in the city, I have to move around all the time to shoot. There are many places that are dear to me because I lived beautiful moments there, I can't name them but I cherish the places where I shared beautiful astronomical nights with my friend Nico or with my girlfriend Marie. I also like to shoot at my father's place because it makes me share this passion with my family. The most important thing when choosing a place is the quality of the sky, since it is an important criterion to make a beautiful image. Then if the place is beautiful and pleasant, it's a plus. It's always cool to wake up with a beautiful sunrise on a beautiful landscape.

nPAE – With what equipment do you photograph?

Yann – I have different setups, but my favourite setup is the following:

Takahashi FSQ106 EDx4

Zwo asi 2600MM Pro

Antlia filters 3nm

Skywatcher Eq6R pro

PrimaLuce focuser, Pegasus Powerbox as accessories

nPAE – Talk us through some of your favourite images.

Yann – Since I was too chatty on question 2 I think I already answered this question ahead of time. But to summarize I would say that the images that are dear to my heart are not necessarily the most beautiful ones but the ones that have a beautiful story, that remind me of beautiful moments when I look at it.



Angelo's Nebula (Martino-Sainty Object 1)

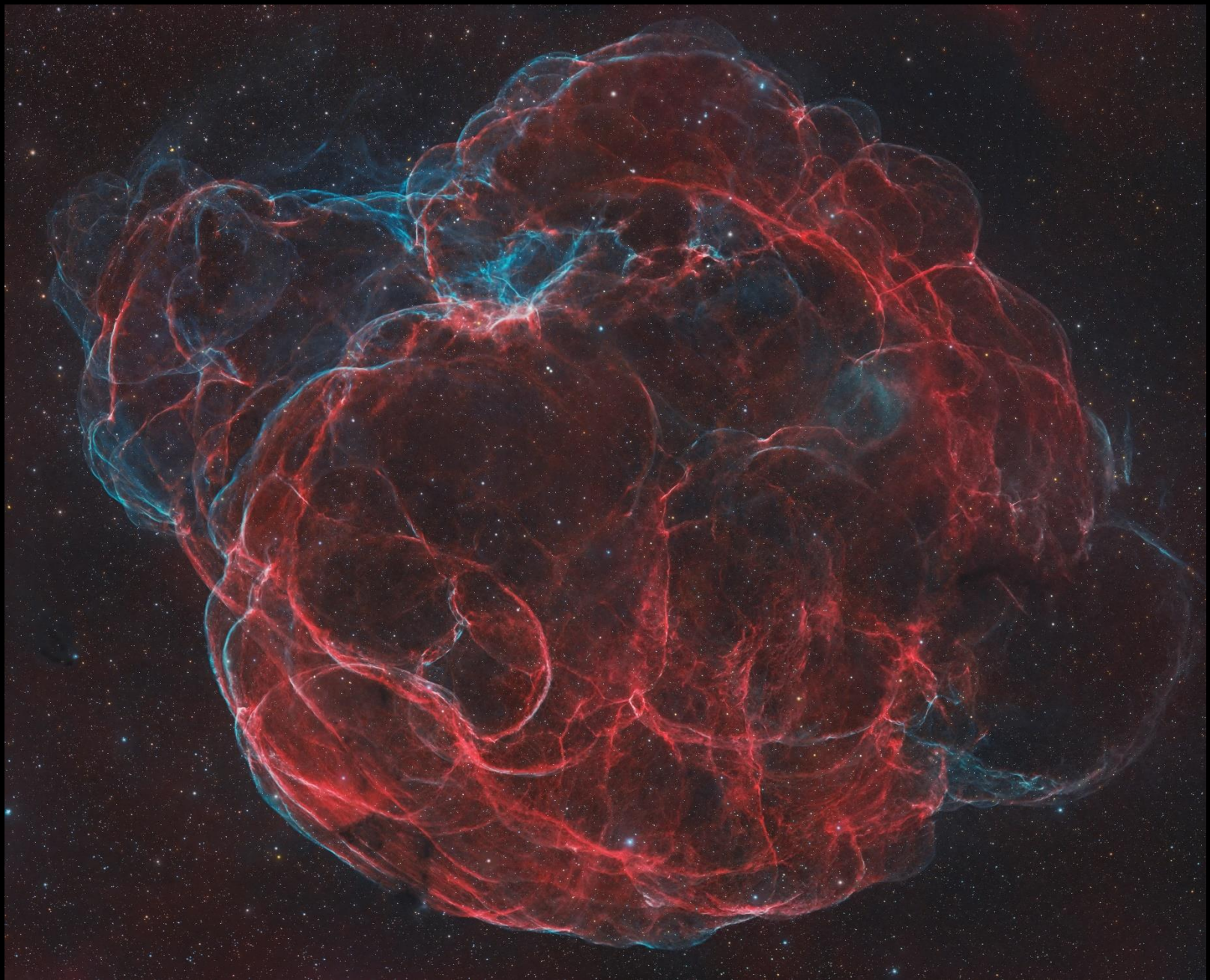


Strottner-Drechsler-Sainty Object 1

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

Yann – As I said in the first question, I started 3 years ago and I fell in love with this passion. The big turning point was the meeting of the StDr Team who gave me a taste for research and for using astrophotography as a tool and not as an end. The discovery of the Oiii arc of M31 was, of course, another big turning point as it allowed me to meet many wonderful people. I have now joined the Atlaskies Team, which is the resident team of the Atlaskies Observatory in the Atlas Mountains in Morocco. Our observatory is dedicated to Pro-Am science collaboration and is located in the Atlas Mountains in Morocco and hosted at OUCA (Observatoire Universitaire Cadi Ayyad) with which we are in partnership. The site was previously shortlisted by the European Southern Observatory (ESO) for the Very Large Telescope (VLT) project, making it an ideal location for stargazing and astronomical research. The observatory is located in the future biggest dark sky reserve in the world, which is bigger than the Mont-Mégantic reserve. The site benefits from about 250 clear nights per year with a median seeing of 0.84 arcseconds and it is located in a Bortle 1 area. We are also the highest remote observatory in altitude open to amateur in the world (2800 m), and that gives us the best sky in the north hemisphere open to amateur astronomers. These exceptional conditions as well as the emulsion of this Team is a unique chance for me to practice in the best conditions and shares the wonders of the sky.

You can get details here: <https://atlaskies.com/>



Simeis 157 – Spaghetti Nebula

nPAE – What advice do you have for aspiring astrophotographers?

Yann – I would simply say that it is important to study the theory to avoid wasting time when you are in front of your setup at night, but the most important thing is practice. Every setup is different, every sky is different, every astrophotographer is different, so there is no single way to do it right. The best way to do it is the one that makes you happy and fulfilled, so don't listen too much to what bad people say and share it with the people that are important to you.

nPAE – What's it like being world champion?

Yann – I don't consider myself as a world champion because there are an infinity of astrophotographers better than me, I just won your contest. There is always a part of pride when you win a contest, and it is a source of motivation to do even better because it shows that what you do is not bad. This contest allowed me to share with the greatest number of people an image that is important to me and to make it accessible to everyone and I am very grateful for that. Moreover this passion force to be humble because we are already not much at the scale of our world then facing the immensity of the universe...

A very big thank you to have allowed me to share my image with the greatest number of people.





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