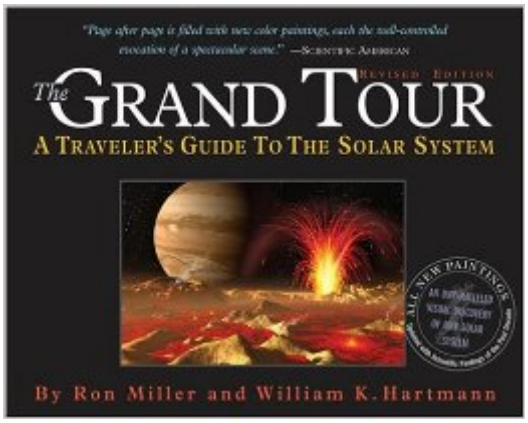
The Grand Tour: A Traveler's Guide To The Solar System



Synopsis

Hurricanes so enormous that the earth itself could be lost in one; a volcano larger than the state of Missouri and higher than Everest; a planet with a billion moons; a planet that rotates on its side; worlds made of solid ice; a world where it rains gasoline. These are not inventions of fantasy or science fiction, but are places that really exist-in our own solar system.Now with 190,000 copies in print, here is a spectacular Grand Tour of the solar system featuring a unique blend of science and art-photographs along with dazzling full-color paintings, drawings, and maps based on years of astronomer William Hartmann's research, personal observation, and interviews with colleagues. In text and diagrams, too, The Grand Tour explains how the strange and uncanny worlds on the journeys came to be, and what it would be like to actually set foot upon them today. The book includes an atlas of the planets and their satellites, and of the Earth's moon. Complete with a selection of previously unpublished photographs taken by the Apollo astronauts, and by the Mariner, Viking, and Pioneer planetary probes, The Grand Tour is unique and breathtaking, majestic and eerie, and wonderful, taking the reader to more, and to the beyond. Selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club, Quality Paperback Book Club, and Newbridge Book Club.

Book Information

Hardcover: 304 pages
Publisher: Workman Publishing Company; 3rd edition (May 23, 2005)
Language: English
ISBN-10: 0761139095
ISBN-13: 978-0761139096
Product Dimensions: 8.2 x 0.9 x 10.2 inches
Shipping Weight: 3.1 pounds
Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (18 customer reviews)
Best Sellers Rank: #1,711,813 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #147 inÂ Books > Science & Math > Astronomy & Space Science > Solar System #1670 inÂ Books > Textbooks > Science & Mathematics > Astronomy & Astrophysics #3554 inÂ Books > Science & Math > Astronomy & Space Science > Astronomy

Customer Reviews

This excellent coffee-table book is a fascinating exploration of the solar system. It is gratifying to see this book, now in its 3rd edition, revised regularly to reflect the many continuing new discoveries of the last 25 years.This survey, written for the layman, thoroughly covers all of the important worlds of

our solar system. It also discusses our solar system's formation and what we know about extrasolar planets.Most books on the solar system introduce each planet in turn from Mercury outward to Pluto. This book starts with Jupiter and proceeds in descending order by size. This unusual approach emphasizes that these worlds vary as a continuum, encouraging comparison between small planets and large satellites, between satellites and asteroids, between asteroids and comets.Part I covers the 28 largest worlds in the solar system, from Jupiter to Ceres. Part II covers selected interesting worlds, such as Halley's Comet, asteroids Vesta, Eros, Hektor, and Chiron, and moons Amalthea, Mimas and Miranda. Part III discusses extrasolar planets. A glossary covers terms such as centaurs, differentiation, millibars, and retrograde.The illustrations and photography are especially worthwhile. Miller and Hartmann dramatically illustrate the wonder and majesty of space with a mix of actual photographs and artist's renditions.The book reflects the current indecision regarding Pluto. However, the authors opine that the solar system is most sensibly viewed as having eight planets, with Pluto the largest Kuiper Belt object and Ceres the largest asteroid.

Of all the sciences, astronomy has always been my personal favorite, and it's typically a pleasure to look through a book filled with pictures of planets and stars. The Grand Tour by Ron Miller and William Hartmann is one such pleasure.The Grand Tour offers a look at the solar system (outside of the sun), but unlike most such books, does not opt for the standard start-at-Mercury and end-at-Pluto approach. Instead, Miller and Hartmann treat their book as a travel guide for some aliens from another star. Such visitors would notice the biggest objects first and work their way down to the smaller worlds.Thus, the book starts with Jupiter, providing some general statistics (gravity, size, etc.) and a small essay about the largest planet. The big feature, however, are the pictures: both photographs and wonderful paintings that offer views that we haven't received from telescopes or probes. The first in this chapter is an example: a view of Jupiter from the surface of Europa as the planet eclipses the sun.We then go through the other "major worlds": the remaining gas giants take the next three slots, followed by Earth, Venus and Mars. Then the chapters begin to alternate between moons and planets: Ganymede and Titan precede Mercury, and then five more moons are listed (including our own) before Pluto comes up in a chapter shared with its companion, Charon (this edition of the book was written in 2005, prior to Pluto's demotion from planetary status, though the debate is discussed). There are a few other major worlds, down to the asteroid Ceres, and then a section on selected smaller worlds (moons, asteroids, and comets).

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