

TAL-1

VITAL STATS

- ▶ **PRICE** £190
- ▶ **APERTURE** 110mm
- ▶ **FOCAL RATIO** f/7.3 (805mm)
- ▶ **FINDER** 6x30
- ▶ **SUPPLIED EYE PIECES** 15mm & 25mm
- ▶ **WEIGHT** 20kg
- ▶ **MANUFACTURER** TAL (Russia)
- ▶ **TEL** 01359 244200
- ▶ **WEB** www.opticalvision.co.uk

- ▶ **FOR** Built to last
- ▶ **AGAINST** Weighty construction

VERDICT

VALUE FOR MONEY	85%
OPTICS	75%
EASE OF USE	85%
BUILD QUALITY	90%
MOUNT + DRIVE	85%
OVERALL	84%

In a market awash with telescopes of Far Eastern manufacture, it's refreshing to find an instrument from somewhere else. The TAL-1 is a product of the highly successful Novosibirsk instrument-making plant in the capital of Siberia and has been sold in the UK since 1993.

The TAL-1 is very solidly built, as its fully assembled weight of 20kg will testify. It's not a scope that can be described as 'grab and go'. It also comes with a complete set of beautiful coated Plössl eyepieces and optical filters – you even get a lens brush and cleaning cloth! While the engineering is aptly described by a friend of mine as 'agricultural', the quality of machining and finish of the gleaming white enamel is generally superb.

This is an instrument that is built to last and ideally suited to public demonstration and student use as very little harm can befall it.

Every TAL telescope I have ever tested – and I've had the pleasure of using the complete range over the years – has had truly excellent optics... with the exception of this one. Indeed, I'm so accustomed to seeing virtually text-book imagery that it came as something of a shock to witness an unusual astigmatic condition that I traced to the primary mirror being held too tightly in its cell. Once adjusted (and yes, the screwdriver also comes as standard) the telescope gave stunning images of the Moon, Saturn and bright deep-sky objects.

