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Isaac Newton Group of Telescopes/Nik Szymonek & Ian King

[1] ABOVE THE CLOUDS

A composite view of starfields above three of the Roque de los Muchachos telescopes. From below left: the William Herschel Telescope, the Dutch Open Telescope and the Swedish Solar Telescope.

Isaac Newton Group of Telescopes/Mischa Schirmer (NG) & Gilles Brgond (IAA, Granada)

PEAK VIEWING

The Roque de los Muchachos Observatory is set above the cloud bank on a volcanic peak that, as the images in our gallery show, offers one of the premier observing sites on Earth.

Set on La Palma, one of the Spanish Canary Isles off the coast of Africa, the Roque de los Muchachos Observatory has 15 powerful telescopes (see this issue's Space Science). The peak's special conditions – high altitude, no light pollution, dry climate and clear skies – provide a purer atmosphere and therefore give spectacular views of the night skies.



[2]

[2] RING WITHIN RING

The spiral galaxy NGC 7217 in the constellation of Pegasus, taken by the William Herschel Telescope. A curious ring of dust surrounds the galaxy's nucleus.

[3] SPIRAL STUNNER

The Isaac Newton Telescope captured this image of the well-defined barred spiral galaxy, NGC 6946, also known as the Firework Galaxy.

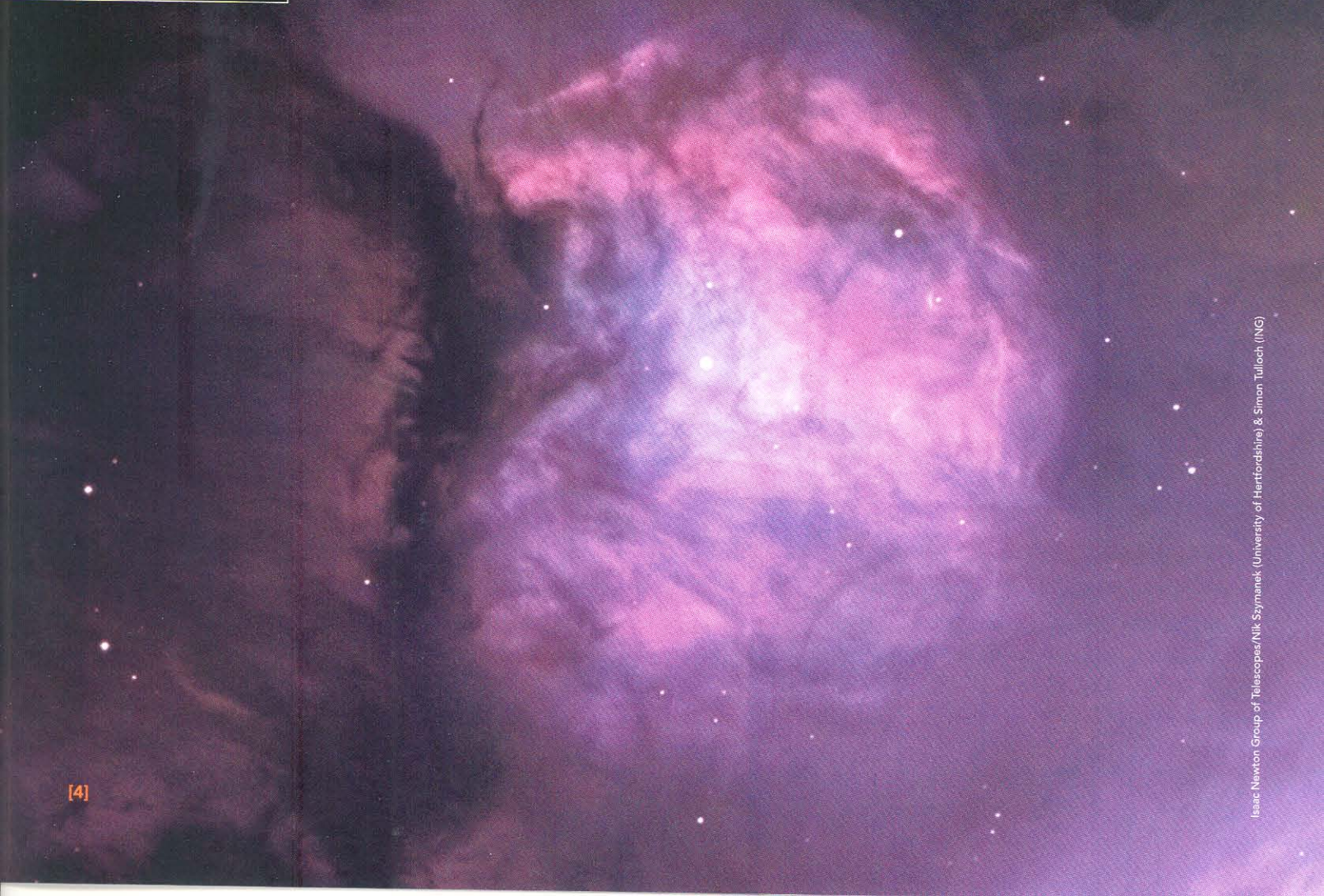
[4] FUNNY FACE

Look carefully and you might see the features of a human face in this image of the M43 Nebula, taken by the Isaac Newton Telescope.

Isaac Newton Group of Telescopes/Simon Driver (St. Andrews)



[3]



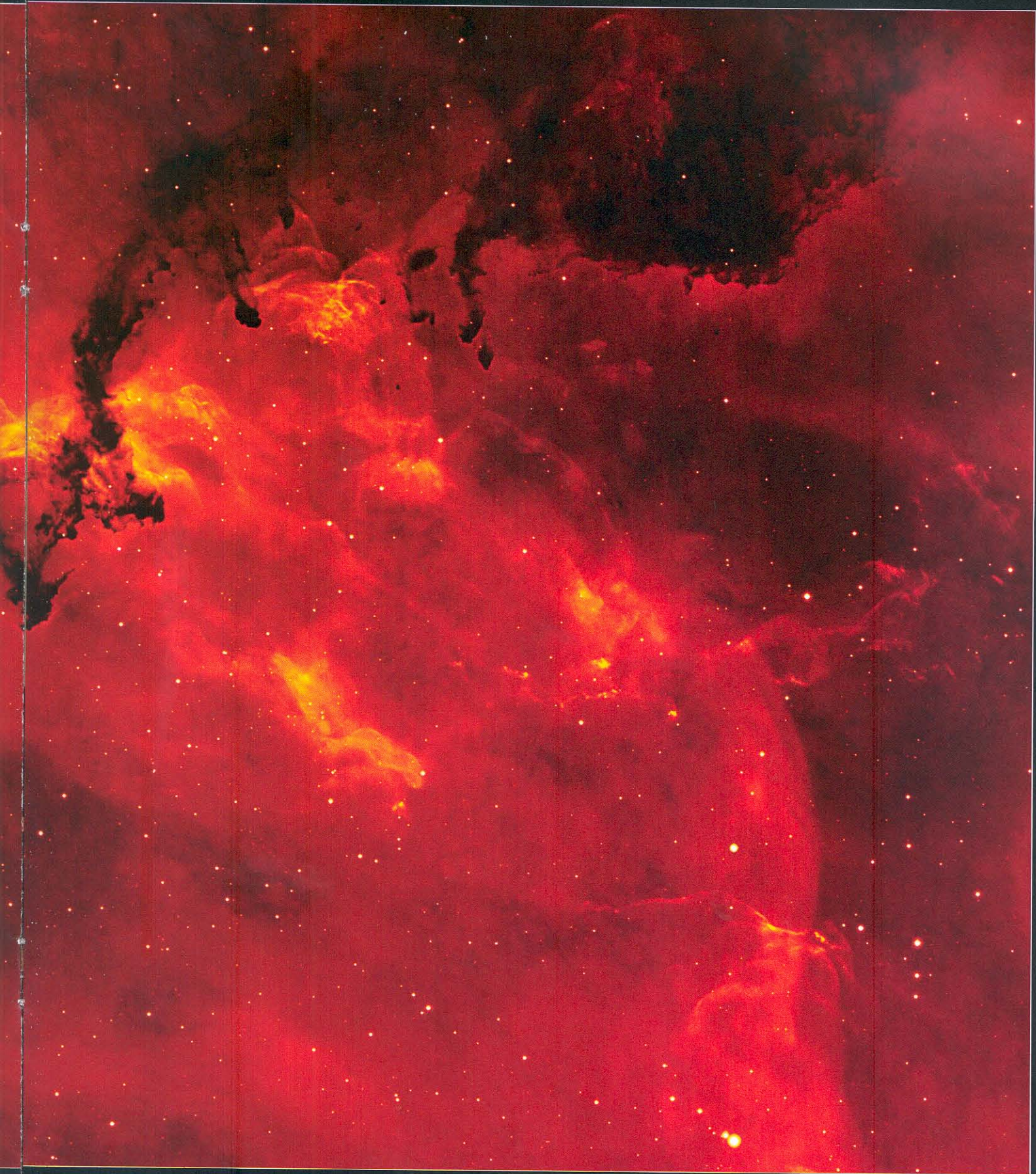
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Isaac Newton Group of Telescopes/Nik Szjmanek (University of Hertfordshire) & Simon Tulloch (ING)



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[5] RED AS A ROSETTE The Isaac Newton Telescope captured these large, clumpy dust lanes in the Rosette Nebula – a huge cloud of dust and gas that extends over an area five times as large as the Moon. The Rosette Nebula is actually listed as four different nebulae in the NGC



catalogue, all discovered in the 18th and 19th centuries before astronomers realised they all belonged to a single, large emission nebula. The section above is NGC 2237. Its amazing red colour comes from hydrogen – the most abundant element present here.