

Some things to observe in the early evening skies:
during December 2021

The Moon:

To view craters (with a small telescope or binoculars) the best time is around **first quarter Moon** which will be about the **10th December** (around 6.00pm and later) looking South.

The Planets:

In the early evening (5.15 ish) throughout December bright JUPITER is due South (ish) and not so bright SATURN is off to the right and a little lower and they are a joy to behold. Steady binoculars will show moons of Jupiter as tiny pricks of light while a small telescope will show the rings of Saturn. However by the end of the month they will have drifted much lower off to the Southwest.

The good news is that from the beginning of the month until mid-month they will be joined by very bright VENUS low on the Southwestern horizon, so bright it can't be missed!

Indeed from the 7th to the 10th all three will be joined by the Moon as it goes from crescent to first quarter phase. Please let there be clear skies as the view should be something memorable!

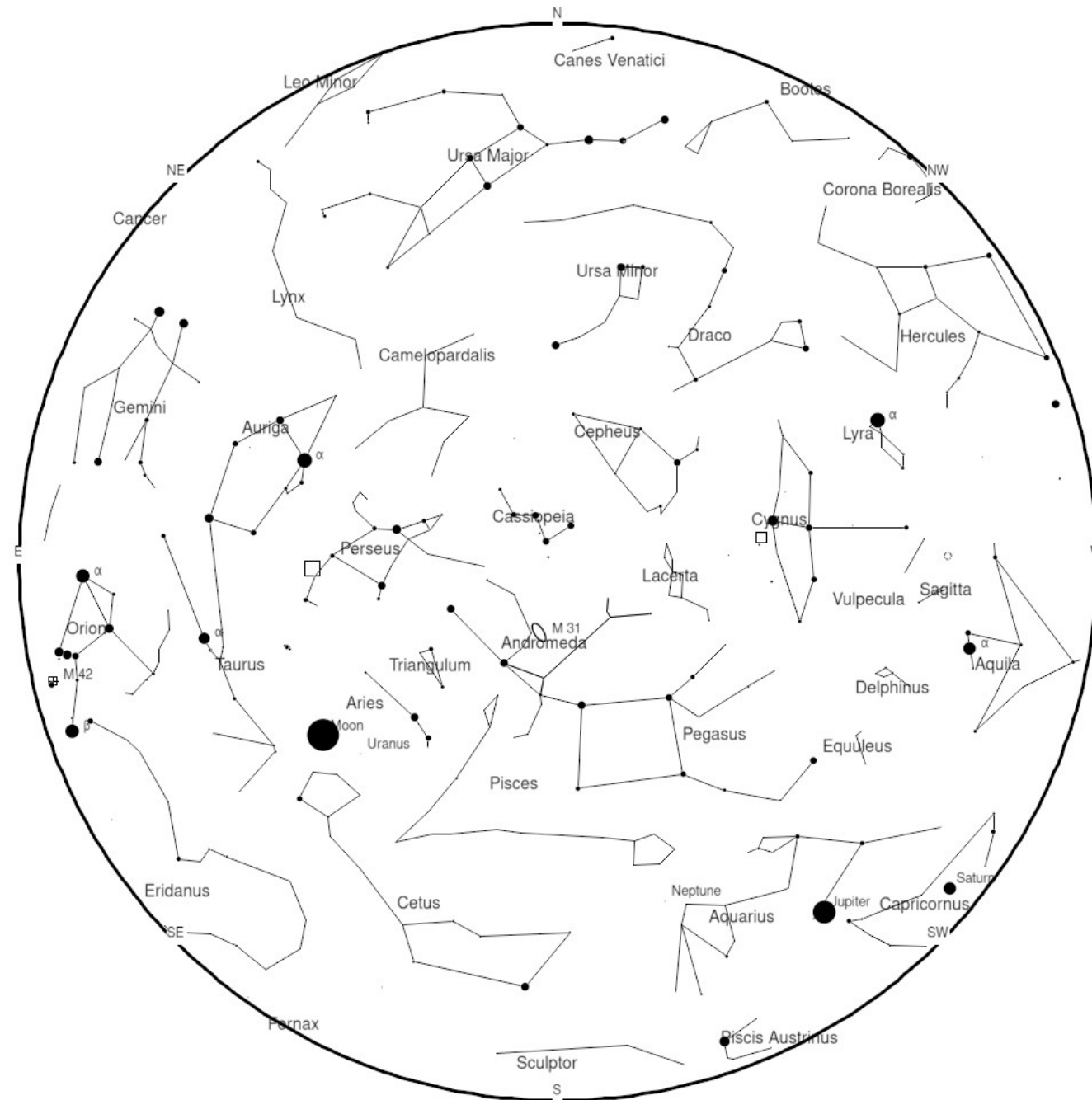
A few constellations to learn and recognise: (see SKYMAP)

Constellations are just patterns of stars in the sky. They have LATIN (and English) names.

Among the many some constellations you might view at this time of the year:

High to the South is the constellation of PEGASUS (The Winged Horse) with a large square of stars at its centre .. 'The Square of Pegasus'. I use this square to find the ANDROMEDA GALAXY (our closest major galaxy nearly 2 million light-years away). The SKYMAP shows two lines of stars coming out top left of the square (actually part of the constellation of ANDROMEDA) and the attached photo shows the galaxy circled. On a clear, dark night you can spot it with the naked eye as a fuzzy patch but a pair of binoculars helps. If you have a telescope so much the better.

Clear Skies!



Skymap for:

December 2021

The map shows the night sky at about 7.00pm on the 15th of December, when it should be dark enough to begin observing.

Note that the map will drift westwards during the night and from one night to the next.

Hold the map with 'S' at the bottom when looking South and rotate with 'N' at the bottom when looking North etc.

