**From Cloud Architect to Cosmic Explorer: My Dual Life in Automation and Astrophotography**

Hey everyone! By day, I'm a **Solutions Architect**, playing around with **Infrastructure Automation and AI tech**. But when the sun goes down, I turn into an **astrophotographer**, capturing awesome pictures of nebulas, galaxies, and star clusters right from my backyard. It's a double life that keeps my brain busy and my creative side happy.

**After-Hours: Chasing Starlight!**

As soon as I close my work laptop, I switch from thinking about computers to thinking about faraway galaxies. Astrophotography is my absolute favorite thing to do. It's super calming and connects me to the huge universe out there. There's nothing like spending hours under the night sky, patiently collecting light from stuff that's light-years away, and then seeing it pop up on my screen.

Here's a look at what I use and how I do it:

**My Gear (My "Space Toys"):**

* **Telescopes:** My main scope is a **William Optics RedCat 51 Apo Refractor**. It's small, easy to carry, and gives really sharp, wide views – perfect for big nebulas and star fields. For a closer look at galaxies, I also use an **Orion 8" Astrograph Reflector**.
  + *[Image 1: Insert picture of your RedCat 51 and Orion 8" scopes side-by-side or individually]*
* **Mount:** You need a super stable and accurate mount! I use a **Sky-Watcher EQ6-R Pro Go-To Equatorial Mount** to precisely follow things in space as Earth spins.
  + *[Image 2: Insert picture of your EQ6-R Pro mount, maybe with a telescope on it]*
* **Camera:** For deep-sky pictures, I use a special camera called the **ZWO ASI294MC Pro (Cooled Color Camera)**. It's cooled down to keep images clear during long exposures. For wider shots, I sometimes grab my modified **Canon EOS Ra DSLR**.
  + *[Image 3: Insert picture of your ZWO camera or Canon DSLR, perhaps attached to a telescope]*
* **Guiding System:** To make sure stars look like tiny dots even in really long exposures, I use a smaller **ZWO 30mm Mini Guide Scope** with a **ZWO ASI120MM Mini** camera. This setup works with software to make tiny adjustments to the mount.
  + *[Image 4: Insert picture showing your guide scope and camera setup on your main telescope]*
* **Filters:** City lights are annoying! So, I use filters like an **Optolong L-Enhance Dual Bandpass Filter** for colorful nebulas and a **Baader UHC-S Filter** to cut through city glow.
  + *[Image 5: Insert picture of your filters]*
* **Control Software:** My whole photo session is usually run from a tiny computer (like a **Beelink Mini PC**) with **ASIAIR Plus** on it. This smart little box lets me control all my cameras, mount, and filters wirelessly from my tablet or phone.
  + *[Image 6: Insert picture of your Beelink Mini PC or a tablet showing the ASIAIR Plus interface]*

**From Pixels to Nebulas: How I Do It**

1. **Planning:** I use apps like **Stellarium Mobile** and **Clear Outside** to check for clear skies and moon phases, then I pick what I want to photograph.
2. **Setup & Alignment:** First, I set up all my gear – telescope, mount, cameras – and then precisely point my mount at the North Star. This is super important!
3. **Imaging:** This is where the cool stuff happens! I take dozens, sometimes hundreds, of long "light" pictures. I also take "dark," "bias," and "flat" calibration frames to clean up noise and fix any camera quirks.
   * *[Image 7: Insert a raw "light" frame before processing, showing just the faint object]*
4. **Processing:** This is where my "day job" skills with data come in handy. I use special astrophotography software like **PixInsight** and **Siril** to stack all the images together, clean them up, and then carefully make them brighter, enhance them, and fix their colors. I even use AI tools like **NoiseXTerminator** and **StarXTerminator** to make the final picture look even better.
   * *[Image 8: Insert a final, processed astrophoto (e.g., Orion Nebula, Andromeda Galaxy, etc.)]*

**My Two Worlds Connected**

It might seem like I'm living two totally different lives, but they actually connect. The careful thinking and problem-solving I do at my day job are super useful in astrophotography, especially during the detailed processing part. And honestly, the patience and creative ideas I get from astrophotography often spark new thoughts in my daily work.

Whether I'm setting up computer systems or taking pictures of space dust, it's all about making complex things clear and organized – whether they're digital or way out in the universe. Clear skies, everyone!