Magnificent Universe by Ken Croswell

Not all astronomers are totally thrilled with the Hubble Space Telescope. That's not data, its pictures, they complain. But what pictures: never has the universe seemed so gorgeous, powerful, diverse: in a word, magnificent. Only part of the pictures in Ken Croswell's Magnificent Universe are from the Hubble, but all cleave to the same high standard. Whether of Mars, a supernova, or galaxies in collision, they are beautiful. The paper in the book is glossy black, which is ideal for bringing out colors and details in the photographs, each of which covers an entire very large page. The white-on-black text is less special, meant more for browsing than for learning. Its rather a pity, because Croswell's other books (The Alchemy of the Heavens and Planet Quest) are written in a style both witty and informative. The only astronomy coffee-table book that can begin to compare to this one for beauty is Full Moon. The black-and-white photos in the latter have a stark loveliness with something of the chill of space; the pictures in Magnificent Universe are colorful and even exciting, giving the reader sheer, sensual pleasure along with their sense of wonder. --Mary Ellen Curtin

My Personal Review:
This book is packed with stunning photographs from our universe, starting in our own 'backyard' with images from the solar system such as the planets and their moons. The close ups are amazing! We then move on to the stars and galaxies that fill our night skies. Again, the images are breathtaking. There is some background information too although not enough to keep a serious astronomer interested but with such a visual feast who cares? A delightful book for anyone with an interest in space

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