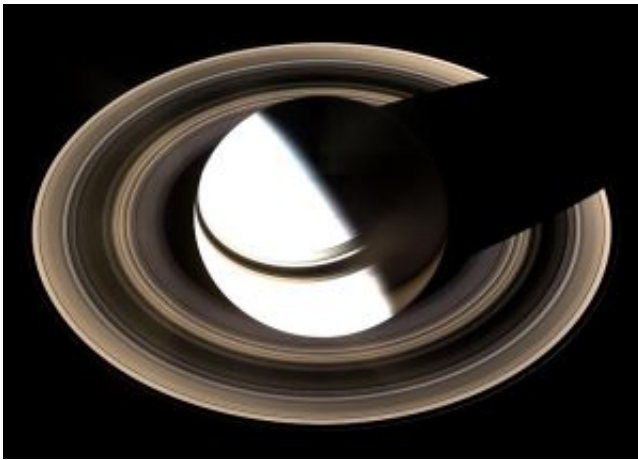


Cassini Returns Never-Before-Seen Views of the Ringed Planet

March 1 2007



Taking in Saturn's rings in their entirety was the focus of this particular imaging sequence. Image credit: NASA/JPL/Space Science Institute

NASA's Cassini spacecraft has captured never-before-seen views of Saturn from perspectives high above and below the planet's rings. Over the last several months, the spacecraft has climbed to higher and higher inclinations, providing its cameras with glimpses of the planet and rings that have scientists gushing.

"Finally, here are the views that we've waited years for," said Dr. Carolyn Porco, Cassini imaging team leader at the Space Science Institute in Boulder, Colo. "Sailing high above Saturn and seeing the rings spread out beneath us like a giant, copper medallion is like

exploring an alien world we've never seen before. It just doesn't look like the same place. It's so utterly breath-taking, it almost gives you vertigo."

The images taken over last two months are being released today and include black and white and color mosaics, as well as a dramatic movie sequence showing the rings as they appeared to Cassini while it sped from south to north, rapidly crossing the ring plane. Also released is a playful view of the rings from high above, with the planet removed.

Cassini's highly inclined orbits around Saturn will be progressively lowered so that, by late June-- three years after entering orbit -- the spacecraft will once more be orbiting in the ring plane.

Source: NASA

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