

Color view from orbit shows mars rover beside crater

March 10 2011



The High Resolution Imaging Science Experiment (HiRISE) camera on NASA's Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter acquired this color image on March 9, 2011, of "Santa Maria" crater, showing NASA's Mars Exploration Rover Opportunity perched on the southeast rim. Image credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech/Univ. of Arizona

(PhysOrg.com) -- NASA's Mars Exploration Rover Opportunity has nearly completed its three-month examination of a crater informally

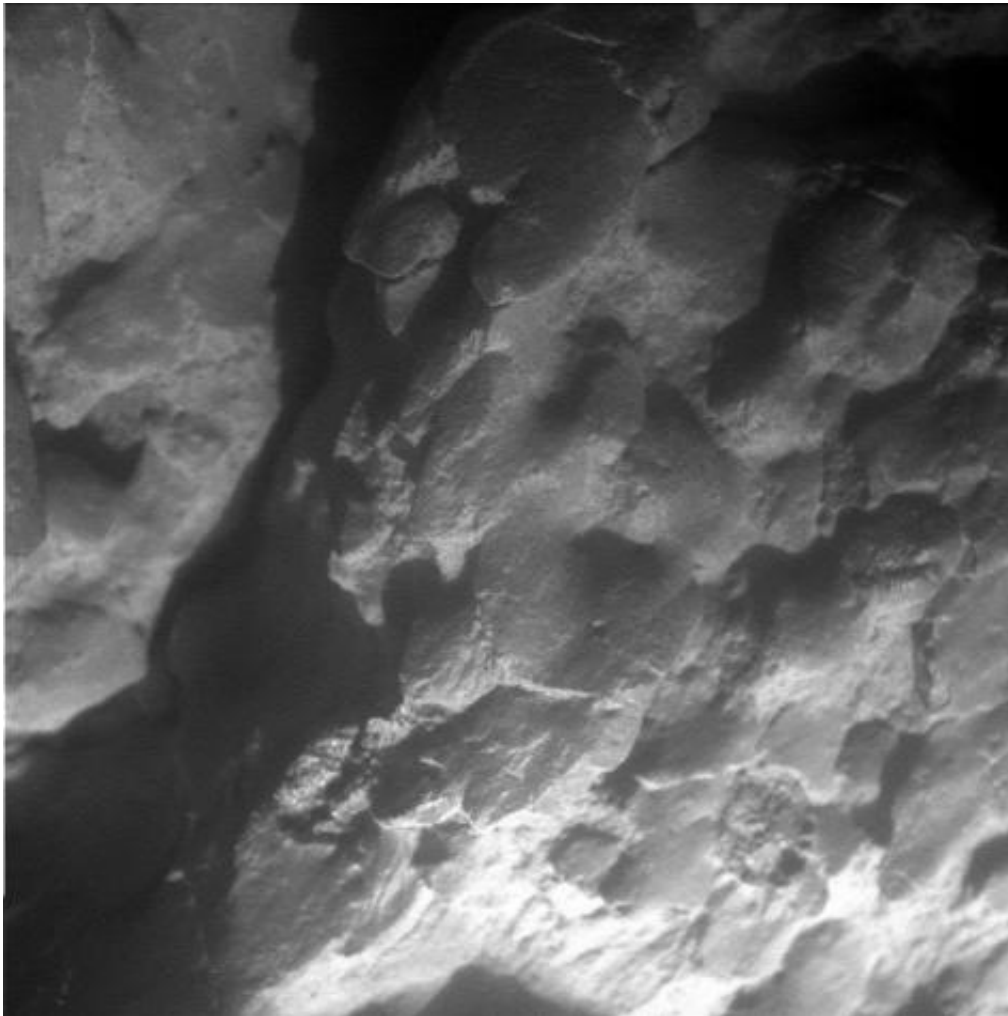
named "Santa Maria," but before the rover resumes its overland trek, an orbiting camera has provided a color image of Opportunity beside Santa Maria.

The High Resolution Imaging Science Experiment (HiRISE) camera on NASA's [Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter](#) acquired the image on March 1, while Opportunity was extending its robotic arm to take close-up photos of a rock called "Ruiz Garcia." From orbit, the tracks Opportunity made as it approached the [crater](#) from the west are clearly visible. Santa Maria crater is about 90 meters (295 feet) in diameter.

March 1 corresponded to the 2,524th Martian day, or sol, of Opportunity's work on [Mars](#). A raw image from Opportunity's front hazard-avoidance camera from the same day, showing the arm extended to Ruiz Garcia, is below.



To complete the scale of imaging, a raw image taken by Opportunity's microscopic imager that day, shows textural detail of the rock:



Opportunity completed its three-month prime mission on Mars in April 2004 and has been working in bonus extended missions since then. The Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter, which arrived at Mars on March 10, 2006, has also completed its prime mission and is operating in an extended mission.

Provided by JPL/NASA

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