Image: Spitzer's Orion

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Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech

(Phys.org) —Few cosmic vistas excite the imagination like the Orion Nebula, an immense stellar nursery some 1,500 light-years away.

This stunning false-color view spans about 40 light-years across the region, constructed using infrared data from the Spitzer Space Telescope. Compared to its visual wavelength appearance, the brightest portion of the nebula is likewise centered on Orion's young, massive, hot stars, known as the Trapezium Cluster.

But the infrared image also detects the nebula's many protostars, still in

the process of formation, seen here in red hues. In fact, red spots along the dark dusty filament to the left of the bright cluster include the protostar cataloged as HOPS 68, recently found to have crystals of the silicate mineral olivine within its protostellar envelope.

Provided by NASA