

Dave Kriege

Founder, owner of Obsession Telescopes

Despite being born in Cleveland, Ohio, Dave Kriege considers himself a true Wisconsinite. “I’ve been a Cheesehead since I was 4 years old,” he says. It was in the Badger State that he first began a fascination with astronomy that would last his whole life.

“My dad and I built a 4-inch reflector for an eighth-grade science project,” Kriege says. “One look at the stars with it, and I was hooked.” For much of his life, though, astronomy was just an intriguing hobby. When he graduated from Milwaukee’s Marquette Dental School in 1979, he became a dentist full time, but always kept an eye on the skies.

About a decade later, Kriege founded Obsession Telescopes in Lake Mills, Wisconsin, and he’s stuck with it ever since. “In 1989, we introduced the first Dobsonian with large-diameter side bearings and anti-friction surfaces,” he says, “resulting in finger-tip guiding and incredibly easy motion in all directions.” He likes to stress that Obsession is not a factory; it produces handcrafted telescopes on a limited-edition basis. In about 20 years, Kriege’s sold more than 1,500 large-aperture telescopes to observers in 20 countries.

“I just built a few scopes [in the 1980s], and I’ve been back-ordered ever since,” he says.



Dave Kriege, founder and owner of Obsession Telescopes, displays the first 22-inch Ultra Compact telescope at the September 2009 Okie-Tex Star Party near Kenton, Oklahoma. Courtesy Dave Kriege

What’s something cool about Obsession Telescopes that nobody knows?

My wife named the company 23 years ago. When I was building my first big Dobsonian, she said with an irritated voice that I was “obsessed with it.”

always copies us. After introducing the Ultra Compact (UC) series, we changed the industry once again. Our competitors are scrambling to come up with Obsession UC clones, just as they did the Obsession Classic Dobsonians.

week between both jobs. Dentistry is all negative, though. Nobody wants to go to the dentist. The telescope biz is all positive. People love to send me money for a scope. It’s all fun and no stress.

I’ve hauled it to dozens of primo dark sky sites throughout North America. I’ve also taken an 18-inch UC to Australia to observe the southern sky.

What are some of your most popular products?

Our large-aperture UC telescopes remain very popular. We recently added a 22-inch UC to our product line, which features a large aperture that fits in nearly any vehicle.

Can you share anything about upcoming products?

We will likely continue to expand the Ultra Compact series. I also plan to update my and Richard Berry’s book, *The Dobsonian Telescope*, to include more innovations and the Obsession Ultra Compact design.

Do you personally enjoy observing?

I’m a hard-core observer and enjoy all deep-sky objects. My personal scope is a 25-inch f/5.

Where, in your opinion, is the hobby headed?

Definitely ultra-compact telescopes. Everyone wants a big scope that fits in the back seat of their car. ☺

“Obsession has been the most innovative large-aperture telescope-maker since we came out in 1987.”

How has Obsession changed through the years?

Obsession has been the most innovative large-aperture telescope-maker ever since we came out in 1987. Everybody

Is Obsession your sole job now?

I’m still doing teeth part time. In 2000, I hired another dentist to work 2 days a week at my office. Now I’m down to 100 hours per