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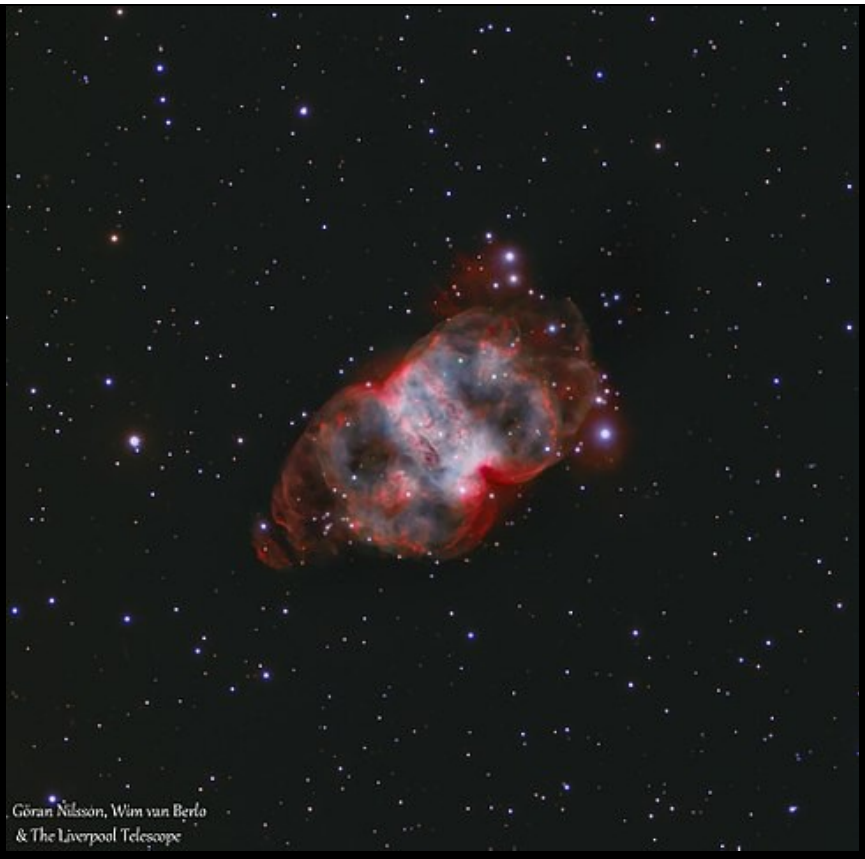
Little Dumbbell Nebula



Quick Facts:

Distance: 2,500 light-years **Size: 1 light-year**

Constellation: Perseus

A bipolar planetary nebula or shell of ionized glowing gas, the remains of a former red giant. The gas cloud is concentrated in two directions instead of being spherically symmetrical. Once the red giant loses its outer layers, the extremely hot stellar core energizes the former stellar atmosphere and causes it to visibly glow. Also called Messier 76.

Find it: Use the first 2 stars in the Cassiopeia W and follow the line for twice this length SE to find 4th mag Phi Persei. Look 1 deg N to locate the nebula. GOTO: M(Messier).

Image by The Liverpool Telescope. Quick reference card by Derek Wallentinsen.