



Twin-pack energy bundle: This graphic depiction shows a microquasar, formed by a massive common star circling a neutron star or a black hole. From the star, the extreme gravitational forces suck up matter that collects in a rotating disk around the companion and, as a result, heats up tremendously and emits high-energy X-rays – a portion of which are concentrated in tightly bundled jets directed along the companion's axis of rotation. Now, using such a microquasar (cataloged as "LSI +61 303"), researchers from the international MAGIC project have measured fluctuations in the high-energy gamma radiation at a period of 26 days, probably reflecting the orbital period of this binary system. The measurement is something of a baptism of fire for the MAGIC telescope, which was mounted on the Canary Island of La Palma from 2002 to 2004 and is principally supervised by the Max Planck Institute of Physics in Munich (MAXPLANCKRESEARCH 1/2004, page 69 f.).

GRAPHIC: NASA/ESA-FELIX MIRABEL

