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The world's oldest science is a hot topic on the Net

This is weird. Decide for yourself whether it means anything. I had dinner on Saturday night with a Nobel Prize-winning physicist, who discussed the history of paranormal research and told me of Isaac Newton's reputation as an alchemist.

On my fax machine when I arrived home was a message from an Internet friend, Dennis Hauck, announcing the launch of his online alchemy lab. In its encyclopaedic array of background facts, I discovered a mind-bending essay on Isaac Newton.

The greatest scientist in history, who discovered the laws of gravity and motion and spectra, would work till dawn for nights on end in his locked laboratory, deciphering the 3,500-year-old secrets of alchemy.

His translation of its key text, the alchemist's Bible called the *Emerald Tablet*, is still one of the best versions available.

Hauck, who edits an e-mail digest of paranormal news, has created one of the most stunning web archives I have ever seen. From the clear, inspiring definition of alchemy as a system for purifying the mind, to the arcane and mystifying details of its occult philosophy, Hauck has all of the information under control.

The research, writing and artwork must have taken thousands of hours.

Go to www.alchemylab.com and choose the sun symbol.

This 'male' alchemical symbol arranges the information in a logical, left-brain way that downloads quickly. An index, overview and search engine appear in frames.

When you've found your way around, return to the homepage and chose the 'female' moon symbol, for an intuitive, right-brain approach.

No index here - instead a Renaissance engraving gradually appears (it's 385k, and Hauck advises you to meditate while you wait). Every detail in the engraving links to something in the laboratory - a sumptuous illustration, a historical essay, a biography, a n extract of text.

It will take weeks to digest everything here, but for new converts the journey will not end at the lab.

About 200 alchemy links are provided - the world's most ancient science appears to be one of the web's hottest topics. And why not? Netscape and AOL have agreed a \$4.2 billion merger, which is real alchemy - turning a virtual universe into gold.

Uri Geller's novel *Ella* is published by Headline Feature at £5.99, his *Little Book Of Mindpower* by Robson Books at £2.50 and Jonathan Margolis's *Uri Geller, Magician or Mystic?* by Orion Books at £17.99. Visit his website at <http://www.urigeller.com> and e-mail him at urigeller@compuserve.com