09 2011 - Rod the Reefer

Congratulations Rod on winning TOTM for September 2011 with your ever inspiring reef.

Rod is known as Rod the Reefer on the RTAW forums and
you can find out more about his tank in his tank journal.

{Mosimage
cw=300 popup=1}

Well, what a surprise, a privilege and an honor to be considered for Tank of the Month once again!!

After my current tank was voted Tank of the Month in July 2009, I thought my award winning days were over. I was very happy to just sit back and watch this tank grow out.

As this is the same tank as in 2009, I thought what I could do is report on my updated equipment, how the set up is going and the highs and lows of this fabulous hobby.

Firstly, once again, I would like to thank my lovely wife, who supports me in my hobby and helps me to make this dream a reality - she loves it as much as I do! I would also like to thank all my fellow hobbyists and friends who have supported me over the years, you know who you are!

{Mosimage
cw=300 popup=1}

System

The tank is 6’ x 28” x 28” and sits in my lounge room with a big sofa right in front of it. We often sit and chill out in front of it at the end of a big day. The stand was fabricated from 50 x 50 steel that has been sand blasted, zinc coated and powder coated, then clad with granite and has two large doors which have been vinyl wrapped front and back. After a couple of years of service the powder coating is as good as the day it was done. The granite and vinyl wrapped doors still look sensational. All I have had to do is recently replace the hinges as they were beginning to rust.

The acrylic sump has been brilliant and still offers the flexibility to drill holes and add and remove equipment as I wish. The frag area has been abandoned as I just didn’t have the time to do it justice. The Reef Octopus NW 200 skimmer hasn’t missed a beat, as is the case with the unbreakable Eheim 1260 return pump. The auto top off incorporating a solenoid and float switch to control the flow of fresh water has been a triumph although the kalk stirrer has now gone, as it was the main cause of a major Alk spike, which caused huge problems.

It was my fault entirely, but one night I put the stirrer on to manually top off the evaporation and as we had people over for dinner, forgot it was continually pumping kalk into the tank. As our visitors were leaving one of them said “Is the tank supposed to be all white?” Ahhhhh!!!! That ended up being a very late night with water changes and trying to get the pH down to somewhere approaching reasonable.

That little mistake took many months to overcome and get the tank back on track.

{Mosimage
cw=300 popup=1}

Backup Power

My latest piece of equipment probably brings with it the most peace of mind. Backup Power. I decided that with all the time invested and my commitment to my livestock a backup power system was a must. After some research I went with ATJ’s DIY system that I had my electronics friend help me with. Find out more here: http://atj.net.au/marineaquaria/backup_power.html

Lighting

My Sola Tubes continue to pump beautiful, free sunshine into my reef every day and I never get tired of the natural dawns and real moon light! The metal halide’s are now gone and wonderful LED lighting has taken its place. This decision has to be up there with the best I have made. The corals and clams just love it. The DE Lightings T5 unit with ATI Blue Plus, ATI Pro Color, KZ Fiji Purple and ATI Actinic bulbs really make the colours pop and I wouldn’t have LED lights without them.

{Mosimage
cw=300 popup=1}

Flow

This is one area I really love!

My decision to base the setup on the Gyre flow system, where you don't just have random currents, but rather imitate tidal flows and wave action was sound. The more I watch and learn the more I appreciate the changing flow patterns around the corals.

Here is a link explaining more on this concept;

http://www.advancedaquarist.com/2007/1/aafeature/view

And a link to another tank design based on the Gyre method;

http://www.reef-eden.net/2006_reef_9.htm

I kept the rock work off the back and side walls and created flow right around it. One pump creates flow anti-clockwise for three hours, then the second pump reverses it. I have programmed in a storm where they're both on a couple of times a week. I also have 2 Iwaki pumps to create additional wave action. For the main two Gyre pumps I decided to go with Pan World 150PS-MD55R pressure pumps with Penductors which give me over 20,000lph per pump. On the Iwaki’s I have flow accelerators to increase and direct the flow. These pumps have proven themselves as being quality that was worth the investment.

{Mosimage
cw=300 popup=1}

Supplementation

In my opinion there is no aspect of reef keeping more important than maintaining stable water parameters. I saw the wisdom right from the start in setting up a system that would keep my water chemistry stable.

The Calcium Reactor and Kalk stirrer have gone. In their place now sits seven channels of dosing pumps. I currently dose Calcium, Bi-carb, Magnesium, Strontium, Iron and Iodine. I am very impressed at how effortless this system is in maintaining these levels. I am a bit compulsive about testing the water parameters and do so regularly and record all details.

Live Stock

{Mosimage
cw=300 popup=1}

Most of my SPS corals have grown from small frags and as they have grown I have had to remove other inhabitants to give them room. I also, through necessity need to fragment some of my faster growing species on a regular basis, which is great for trading with other society members.

{Mosimage
cw=300 popup=1}

Current Species

CoralAcropora Pocillopora MontiporaSeriatoporaStylophoraLobophyliaSymphylia

Euphylia divisa

Euphylia Ancora

Blastumosa

Acanthastrea

Caulastrea

Fish

Yellow Tang - (Zebrasoma flavescens)
Majestic Angel - (Pomacanthus navarchus)
Anthias - (Pseudanthias dispar)
Threadfin Cardinals - (Apogon leptacanthus)

Green Coris Wrasse - (Halichoeres chloropterus)

Six Line Wrasse - (Pseudocheilinus hexataenia)

Yellow Coral Gobys – (Gobiodon okinawae)

Green Coral Gobys – (Gobiodon histrio)

South Seas Devil – (Chrysiptera taupou)

Clean up

Pair Coral Banded Shrimp

Pair Red Line Shrimp

Cucumber x 2 (Black sausage)

Sandy Cucumber

Acro Crabs

The Trochus snails and Turbo snails are now gone. I found that the Trochus were continually knocking things over and I didn’t like the look of a tank full of snails. In their place I now have three tropical abalones.

{Mosimage
cw=300 popup=1}

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all those people over the years that have helped me realize my dream of owning my very own slice of the Great Barrier Reef.

The information and help I have received from MASA and MASAOG members and “Reefing the Australian Way” is second to none.

A huge thank you to everyone for choosing my tank, once again, as “Tank of the month”.