

July 2008 - Paul Mason (JasJed75)

Congratulations to Paul Mason on winning TOTM for July 2008 with his healthy, thriving, eye catching tank.

Paul is known as JasJed75 on the RTAW Forums and you can read up more about his tank in his Tank Journal.

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Introduction

Well, what can I say, I finally have a tank that I am happy with. As a kid, I always wanted a marine fish tank, and was never allowed. For a year or two, my wife dabbled in turtles, but killed them all. I tried american ciclids and african ciclids always chasing the look of a marine aquarium with the colours of the fish and look of the tank, but never achieved it.

I finally convinced the missus to allow me to go marine, telling her it wouldnt really cost that much money (ha ha). I ended up with a 4 foot tank that was only 15 inches deep from front to back which was not great, and ended up selling the tank with the house that surrounded it.

We were about to build a house on a block of land that we bought and we had to rent for 12 months, and I ended up with Butters old 6 footer which was grand. It didnt look much chop because I wasnt allowed to spend the money that I wanted to on it. I realised that a 6 footer was not going to continue in our equation at the new house. Ducted Aircon, Pool, 3 kids and a soaring power bill (the 6 footer had an arcadia 3 series light with triple 250 watters).

Well, it had to go, and to tell you the truth, I was at the end of my tether with the whole marine thing..... Costing too much money, and things not looking the way I wanted and not enough time. Another member convinced me not to throw the towel in and I decided to down size into the Red Sea Max. Less maintenance, water changes being smaller, and a more concentrated look.

I moved some of the live rock across, the stuff that had the most life on it, and set about a rock structure that I liked. Well, finally I stood back at the end and was very happy with my creation, and placement of corals. Here are a few shots of it shortly after it was set up

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I believe that the second shot was taken after a couple of weeks and it had settled down. I soon learned though that with a max, I was limited to what I could put in the tank and where I could put things. A few things didnt work, and a few things did.

Anyway, the tank is now in place in the new house, and I am happy with it and hope to do another one day (if the ball and chain lets me). My kids love the tank (my 5 year old girl and the twin 3 year olds).

Current Setup

I purchased the Red Sea Max from Pet City at Mount Gravatt and of course BUTTERS looked after me.

The max I bought is black but it comes in silver also, and the entire system is 130ltrs, with the main tank being only 110ltrs. I was drawn to the MAX due to its compact, neat size, and appearance of all in one.

I already had a TC20 chiller from my 6 footer, so decided to keep that as I hoped that it wouldnt chew through the power and come on for as long. The chiller sits inside the cabinet as it is cut out at the back to allow air flow.

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Complete hidden water treatment center

1. Removable inlet grill with adjustable shutter for surface skimming
2. Two stage (course/fine) mechanical filter sponges

3. Professional turbo protein skimmer driven by a 1,200 lph/320 gph pump
4. Compartment for chiller pump
5. Access panel for chiller inlet/outlet tubes
6. Thermostat-controlled heater
7. Highly porous ceramic biological filter media
8. Activated carbon chemical filter media
9. Twin circulation pumps with adjustable direction outlets

I have my set up basically the same but I have removed or altered certain things. In position 2, (sponge filters), I have cut the course sponge into about 4 pieces and rotate them through the tank at each water change. I replace the fine filter wool every water change as well. I have my eheim chiller pump in compartment 4 with the hockey sticks going out through position 5.

I have the ceramic media in position 7, but in position 8 I have a bag of Biochem Zorb which keeps the water clear, and everything nice and balanced. I cant really remember the last time that I did a test on my water as I can usually tell what is going on in the tank by looking at it.

Lighting

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I have it timed so that the lights come on at 9am and go off at 9pm, with the blue LED lights on the remainder of the time. I dont know if the lighting would be sufficient for acro's, but i havnt tried them, and wouldnt definitely count them out. I may try them in the next tank that I do.

Maintenance

I do water changes every two weeks, during which I change all sponges, and clean out skimmer cup. I clean the glass every couple of days. I change the Biochem Zorb every three months or so, and clean out the ceramic media at the same time. You have to pull the pumps out to get at both of them, which makes it difficult to do every fortnight. Should I be doing more maintenance, I dont really know, but hey, my tank is healthy and always looks good.

Fish

I have only a few fish in the max because you are limited with what fish you can put in. Being only 110ltrs of swim space, makes territories very small, thus fish that dont really get too territorial are in order for me. I have :

2 x Oscellaris clowns

1 x Mandarin

2 x Yellow Assessors

1 x Oyster Blenny

1 x Firetail Goby

1 x Midas Blenny (RIP)

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Inverts

1 x Yellow Starfish

1 x Hairy ground sifting Starfish

Numerous turbo snails (they just keep breeding)

1 x Pistol or mantis shrimp (never seen him but clicks at night)

Various other critters.

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Corals

Green Torch

Brown Torch

Golden Torch

Ricordia

Mushies

Fluffies

Brown Hammer

Green Hammer (flouro)

Zoo's (they've died back though)

Acan's

Red Button Coral

Blasto

Orange Fungia

And whatever else I have forgotten.

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Acknowledgements

I would seriously like to thank my wife Katrina who has allowed me to venture into this hobby which I find very satisfying. She puts up with the “Darl, I just bought” lines quite regularly. My kids for not touching the tank when daddy says no. (Forever cleaning paw prints off the tank – little beggars). I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Butters from Pet City (Andrew BUTTERWORTH) for his patience, guidance, and advice that he has given me. You couldnt find a nicer guy, who is always willing to listen and help. Also just quickly, Bishop2k for keeping me in the hobby (was going to chuck it in but he persuaded me not too) and also Heathbez for his amazing corals and gifts from time to time.

I have read nearly all of the tank journals on the forum (well lots anyway) and you all inspire me to make my tank what it is today and what it is going to be in the future. I have also closely looked at most of the TOTM's, and feel quite embarrassed that my tank has won, as it is a fairly basic set up and not cost a shite load of money like a lot of your other aquariusts have shelled out. I hope you like my tank and look forward to maintaining my time in the hobby and on the forum. Thanks.