

July 2009 - Rod Connock (Rod the Reefer)

Congratulations Rod on winning TOTM for July with your Natural Light SPS Haven

Rod is known simply 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}

Wow, what an exciting journey reefing has been for me over the years! From my first marine tank back in the early 70's when I was just a lad, right through to winning RTAW's Tank of the Month in March 2007 and going on to win Tank of the Year 2007, and now having the honour of winning Tank of the Month again in July 2009. It's been an incredible ride. Firstly, I would like to thank my 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! My latest tank is the result of the progression of four tank upgrades. Originally I set up a 9 litre nano and quickly moved on to a 75 litre tank, then on to my 350 litre which was set up in September 2003. At the beginning I was unsure of the direction that this hobby would take me and I made plenty of

mistakes. Along the way I discovered and fell in love with Acropora. I soon realised that my tank wasn't ideally set up to keep SPS corals and started planning my dream tank!

{Mosimage cw=300 popup=1}

{Mosimage cw=300 popup=1}

Current System

The tank is 6' x 28" x 28" and sits in the same spot in my lounge room as my previous tank. It is viewed from the front and right hand end. 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. From the tank's left hand, rear weir, there's a 25mm drain with a 40mm back up durso.

The sump is DIY acrylic and houses a refugium and a frag area along with the Reef Octopus NW 200 skimmer. The return pump is an Eheim 1260. My auto top off incorporates a solenoid and float switch to control the flow of fresh water through the kalk stirrer.

{Mosimage cw=300 popup=1}

Lighting

I have re-used the 3 x 250mm Sola Tubes, skylight and Mh's and installed an extra 150w Aqua One Mh pendant to help cover the length. I chose a DE Lightings 4 x 54W T5 unit with ATI Blue Plus, ATI Pro Color, KZ Fiji Purple and ATI Actinic bulbs. The Solatubes produce intense light during the middle of the day. During summer I am able to switch off the Mh's and not only conserve energy, but reduce excess heat over the tank. Some of the added advantages of the skylight that I have noticed are a beautiful natural dawn and real moon light!

{Mosimage cw=300 popup=1}

{Mosimage cw=300 popup=1}

Flow

This is one area I have really improved!

I didn't want to be able to see any equipment in the tank, yet I wanted exceptional flow, as I believe this to be one of the key areas for successfully keeping SPS.

I decided 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.

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. All the plumbing is well hidden behind the rock work.

{Mosimage cw=300 popup=1}

Supplementation

In my opinion there is no aspect of reef keeping more important than maintaining stable water parameters and keeping appropriate levels of calcium, alkalinity and magnesium. I saw the wisdom in setting up a system that would keep my water chemistry stable.

I have utilized a Reef Octopus Calfusion 2600 2x Calcium Reactor and an Aqua Medic Kalk stirrer. The combination works very well in maintaining these levels. I am a bit compulsive about testing the water parameters and do so regularly and record all details.

{Mosimage cw=300 popup=1}

Live Stock

From the beginning I wanted the corals to have room to grow. 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}

{Mosimage cw=300 popup=1}

Current Species Coral

Acropora

Pocillopora

Montipora

Seriatopora

Stylophora

Lobophyllia

Symphylia

Euphyllia divisa

Euphyllia Ancora

Blastumosa

Acanthastrea

{Mosimage cw=300 popup=1}

Fish

Yellow Tang (*Zebrasoma flavescens*)

Majestic Angel (*Pomacanthus navarchus*)

Watanabe Angel pair (*Genicanthus watanabei*)

Anthias (*Pseudanthias* sp.)

Threadfin Cardinals – shoal (*Apogon leptacanthus*)

{Mosimage cw=300 popup=1}

Clean up

Coral Banded Shrimp Pair

Red line Shrimp

Cucumber (Black sausage)

Trochus snails

Turbo snails

Acro Crabs

{Mosimage cw=300 popup=1}

Acknowledgements

I must make special mention of a few people, without whom this entire project would not have been possible. My wife and family of course, my son in law Luke (stand), Sam aka Samhaz (stand cladding and doors), Josh aka Majesticangelfish (Sump, pump selection etc), Ben aka Mr. Miagi (all round helper and good guy), Chris aka Spides (plumbing)The information and help I have received from MASA and MASAOG members and "Reefing the Australian Way" is second to none.

A big thank you for choosing my tank as "Tank of the month" for July 2009, this is an honour and a privilege for me!

{Mosimage cw=300 popup=1}

{Mosimage cw=300 popup=1}