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The \$1 Million Aquarium: Customized Fish Tanks as Home Decor

Some homeowners like their art underwater, putting in luxury aquariums with 'aquascapes' that re-create a rainforest or a favorite dive



Aquarium Architecture's 2,645-gallon saltwater tank is valued at \$310,000 with rare Gem Tang fish. *PHOTO: AQUARIUM ARCHITECTURE*

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In some homes, the priciest design elements are underwater.

A home aquarium can be an “interactive piece of art,” says Dennis Wightman, of Acrylic Tank Manufacturing, the company featured on the Animal Planet show “Tanked,” which this season is putting luxury aquariums in celebrity homes.

Custom aquariums can be made in nearly any shape, from traditional rectangular tanks to three-story cylindrical ones filled with thousands of fish, plants and coral.

The more unusual the tank and its contents, the higher its price. They can start at about \$5,000 for a 10-gallon tank and reach \$1 million or more for a 5,000-gallon one or larger that has rare fish. And that doesn't include maintenance, which typically is done weekly and costs 50 cents to \$1 a gallon every month.

When

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deciding on an “aquascape” for their tank, some people want to showcase the fish from a favorite snorkeling or scuba-diving trip. Others choose rocks, plants and crystals to create a small-scale representation of a mountain landscape, rainforest or even a rice paddy.

More than aesthetics are at stake. A study of 84 people by British and American researchers found aquariums can lower blood pressure. The results of the research—funded by the U.K. marine-biology nonprofit National Aquarium Ltd.—were published this year in the journal *Environment & Behavior*.



PHOTO: ANIMAL PLANET

Celebrity Tanks

Acrylic Tank Manufacturing, based in Las Vegas, has created tanks for basketball's Shaquille O'Neal, actor David Hasselhoff and Nate Morris of *Boys II Men* in the TV show “*Tanked*.” A growing part of the company's business is creating pool windows so clients can have an underwater view of their pools.

Price: About \$50,000 for a 500-gallon tank, outfitted as shown



PHOTO: AQUARIUM ARCHITECTURE

Underwater Gardens

Aquarium Architecture, a London-based company, has seen more demand for freshwater tanks to create underwater, Japanese-style gardens for their fish, with typical green, red and brown plants instead of seaweed and coral. The maker also simulates sunrise and sunset with LED lights, said to reduce

stress for some fish, and creates storms to stimulate breeding.

Price: \$40,000 for a 1,057-gallon freshwater tank



PHOTO: LIVING COLOR AQUARIUMS

Fire and Water

Living Color Aquariums specializes in saltwater tanks and is featured on the show “Fish Tank Kings” on National Geographic channels. This year, the Fort Lauderdale, Fla., manufacturer has started installing ventless fireplaces underneath aquariums for clients who want to combine water and fire in their home design. A brick inlay between

the tank and the fireplace ensures the heat doesn’t escape the fireplace and harm the fish.

Price: About \$150,000 for a 1,600 tank, outfitted as shown

Edgy Design



PHOTO: ZEROEDGE AQUARIUMS

ZeroEdge Aquarium, based in Elburn, Ill., patented the infinity aquarium, where water runs over the tank edge. ZeroEdge clients can get updates on their phone if a pump or other aquarium part malfunctions, or use a phone app to activate an automatic system to release food into the tank when they are traveling.

Price: \$4,995 to \$10,000 for a 46-gallon infinity tank

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