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Water world

Aquariums expert **ROLAND HORNE** on why bespoke fish tanks are the height of interior luxury

For many, a bespoke aquarium is much more than just an illustration of wealth. Over the past few years of designing them for clients all over the world, we've noticed that an aquarium can be quite a personal thing and people are reluctant to show them off as they would, say, a sports car or private yacht. Aquariums offer a small but perfectly formed world that can be surveyed from the comfort of one's own home, and allow time-poor people to indulge in a hobby: maintaining and cultivating an abundant ecosystem.

Rare tropical fish, dazzling colours and light effects create instant yet soothing glamour, and provide a constantly moving light show.

The bespoke aquarium is a 21st century expression of ultimate luxury.



At first, our clients care most about the welfare of the fish, however as time goes by, they see how the coral is alive and constantly changing, and understand that it too must be conserved. We're very conscious about where we source the materials. One thing we often use is 'live rock', an interesting porous rock-like material that acts as the foundation for the living coral we install and it supports life. We always ensure it is sourced from sustainable harvesters in Fiji.

When it comes to aesthetics, our aquariums are designed in such a way that they meld with their immediate surroundings, rather than stand out. One of my favourite projects of ours was small in size, but memorable be-

cause its edges were almost invisible to the naked eye, and it looked less like an aquarium and more like a window into the ocean.

People generally like to fill their aquariums with the world's most rare and exotic fish, however sometimes the commissions can be a lot more intricate. We recently had a client who wanted his aquarium to support an exclusively Fijian biotype, so that even when he was in London, he would be in touch with his holiday home. The sourcing was of course trickier than usual and at 32,000 litres, it's one of the largest projects we've ever done, but the finished aquarium is beautiful, and something I'm incredibly proud of.

ABOUT AQUARIUM ARCHITECTURE

Roland Horne and Jeremy Clark are co-directors and founders of Aquarium Architecture, a British company with offices in London and New York, established in 2006. Their team of 12 experts, including three field engineers, one structural engineer and an aquascaper, have designed aquariums for a galaxy of famous names – including commissions from Norman Foster, Richard Rogers, Facebook, and Estee Lauder. They have been installed around the world: Africa, China, Australia, throughout Europe and America, and even in restaurants in Dubai.

www.aquariumarchitecture.com

