Indo Reefs – The best all-round marine tank money can buy.

Marine · https://shirleyaquatics.co.uk/knowledge/indo-reefs-the-best-all-round-marine-tank-money-can-buy/

Marine enthusiasts tend to develop very strong brand loyalty. However, it can sometimes blind consumers to other opportunities. For instance, our Indo-Reef aquariums have been developed with Cleair Aquatics as direct competition to the biggest name in marine tanks - Red Sea Reefers. The Indo-Reef aquariums, whilst not as well known as 'Reefers, offer an upgrade in almost every department and cost less.

So, what do we mean by 'direct competition' to the Red Sea Reefer? Cleair has considered all the practical elements of keeping a marine tank or reef tank and built those considerations into a design around the user.

The Indo Reef vs the Red Sea - no contest.

Reef tank stands

Whether you are using a rimless tank as a reef tank, fish-only marine with live rock (FOWLR), tropical or tropical planted aquarium, the cabinet is a pretty fundamental piece of kit. It not only needs to hold up the weight of your aquarium and its contents but also stand up to the everyday runnings of an aquarium.

Each cabinet holds the sump filtration unit, which has a number of open aspects. Water will evaporate, splashing will occur, salt deposits happen, and pretty much everything else you don't want

on a piece of furniture. Constructed with a combination of solid wood, acrylic trim and glass doors the Cleair Indo Reef cabinets have been built to last and will look as good in ten years' time as they do now.

It's not just what it looks like. These tanks weigh well over half a ton when filled with water, let alone any rocks or reefs you put in. They've got to be super strong and reliable.

Red Sea Reefer cabinets used to be made of MDF. They're now made of laminated ply with plastic. And you don't get any aluminium supports until the 625-litre model (at least a ton of weight needs to be supported at this point!). The IndoReef tank cabinets are all wood, glass and acrylic. This ensures every aspect of the tank is sturdy and secure. We've never once had an issue reported back from a customer about the Cleair tank cabinets, and some of them are more than 20 years old!

Marine tank sump

The sump on a marine tank is where the 'hard work' takes place. This is where the filtration, protein skimmer, and return pump go. The top half aquarium is the show that reflects the effort going on below. Every marine tank requires a sump. A reef tank needs much more hardware to keep running than a freshwater tank so you need somewhere to put everything!

A marine tank sump usually looks like another glass tank underneath the 'display' tank on top. They are typically split into three sections with filtration, dosing, and water conditioning being the main focus. Many reef keepers will also choose to include a 'refugium' in their sump. This is an area for cultivating macroalgae (for water conditioning) and even a breeding area for copepods to ensure your inhabitants always have a ready supply of live food.

[an Indo Reef aquarium sump.]

A typical sump area for an Indo Reef - it looks more complicated than it is!

Sumps are fed by a weir. A weir is basically a grate at the water level which allows water to pass through it down to the sump and the filtration. This is also very useful for maintaining a constant water level. Whilst it's true that both the Red Sea Reefer and the IndoReef options come with a sump in place, the weirs are a different story.

Marine tank with weird weirs

The IndoReef has a corner weir. Meaning exactly what you think it does, the weir is in the corner of the tank. This means the water flows out in one corner and is returned to the tank from the same corner. This has a few benefits, it keeps everything out of the way and allows a viewer a full, panoramic view of the tank. It doesn't encroach on swimming space for the fish or inhibit your layout of live rock and coral. You also create a gentle current, that you can beef up with a wavemaker if you please, to get more oxygen into the water and add some movement to your tank.

It also makes maintenance very easy as most marine tanks will have their backs to a wall. So, if you need to get your hands in there you can do so from the side, rather than reaching over the middle of your tank or having to move the whole aquarium to achieve easy access.

[an indo reef corner weir.]

A nice, simple corner weir.

The Red Sea Reefer has a central weir. Slap bang in the middle. Where it's difficult to get to and you have to think about hiding if you'd rather not look at a weir when there's glorious coral you want to show off. The water return nozzles come out of either side of the weir housing, pointing in different directions. In fairness to the 'Reefer, this does create good water flow and helps move more of the surface protein to the filtration in the sump quicker, but it's a small benefit when you consider; how difficult it is to manually access your weir should you need to, and how much you have to look at it.

In both cases, every attempt has been made to blend the weir into a background of the same colour, but they do still protrude into the tank. When aquascaping it is often a lot easier to slope your rock up in one direction to a corner and at least cover some of the weir as you have the full length of the tank to do so. A central weir can often mean you are banking up a rock structure on either side at quite a steep angle. Rock slides in a glass tank are never welcome.

[the red sea reefer g2 350 marine tank central weir]

The grill on the Reefer weir is also pretty small. This is important so as not to suck up smaller inhabitants but a larger grille will allow for more water flow.

Marine tank covers

Rimless tanks have been around for some time now, with most people liking the clean look of them, with no ugly bracer bars or canopy to obstruct your view. It also allows for maximum light penetration, great for plants or corals. However, a rimless tank does pose some challenges. Marine tanks lose a lot of water to evaporation, made worse if you don't have a cover or lid. This is bad news for a few reasons. First, this is saltwater so evaporating water will carry salt deposits. These will end up staying on whatever this water vapour condenses on.

Secondly, your salinity is very carefully balanced in marine tanks. Having litres of the stuff disappearing out of the top can really play havoc with your levels. Stressful for your inhabitants at best, fatal at worst.

Thirdly, if your water levels are dropping in your sump your pump will overheat and break if not submerged. Water not being pumped is water not being filtered and reduced oxygen. Stressful for your inhabitants at best, fatal at worst. Oh, and expensive to replace!

Finally, the less water you have, the less stable your water chemistry is. Less water leads to problems spreading quicker as there isn't enough water to 'buffer' issues. Stressful for you.....you get the picture.

This is, in effect why automatic top-up systems were created; to maintain aquarium stability, an open-top tank will clearly lose a great deal more water to evaporation than a covered tank. On some bigger tanks in warm rooms, we have noted in excess of 25 litres per week lost to evaporation. Increasing the humidity in your room can bring its own problems, that's is not to say your magnolia wallpaper will start peeling off but it's a point worth noting.

Covers also stop your more adventurous inhabitants leaping out for no good reason. No-one wants to come downstairs in the morning to a Tang on the floor or a Puffer 'all puffed out'.

With all that in mind, you'd think a lid would be a sensible thing to have. Indo Reef tanks come with sectioned top covers that allow easy access without having to remove your lighting. You don't have to use them if you would prefer an open top but they are a nice thing to be included free of charge. Some people opt to put them on at night, cutting down on evaporation, stopping fish jumping out, and does not interfere with the amount of light getting into your tank from those expensive lights you

bought.

Want a cover for your Red Sea Reefer? That will cost you extra.

Clear or black silicone?

'Reefers have black silicone, Indo Reefs have clear silicone. Cleair took the view that you are paying a premium for low iron glass and you have opted to go for the clean lines provided by a rimless tank. So why would you then put a thick black line around the front of your viewing window? This is often a matter of personal choice, black silicone does look good on many aquariums but in this case, we feel the clear silicone adds to the sleekness of a rimless aquarium

Rimless marine tank

Both of these tanks are rimless, to allow clearer viewing of the inhabitants. Both have low iron, ultra clear glass, and opti-white (or black) colour options.

What is the best marine tank?

In all honesty, the best marine tank is the one you like. We will always suggest the tank with the most practical considerations will be the simplest to maintain - allowing you more time to enjoy what's in the tank, rather than faffing about with hardware and sumps.

We might be biased, but we genuinely believe the Indo Reef range is a better option than the Red Sea Reefers. They don't have a snazzy black and red colour scheme or a glossy brochure, but they do have real build quality, extras you'll need (like a lid) and cost you a few hundred quid less (the flagship Reef-scape 1800 jumbo is actually just over £1000 less than the red sea equivalent). What's not to love?!

If you'd like to take a look at the Cleair range, click here.