

The Tank in my Living Room



I have 62 aquaria in my fish room. One of them has its main pane in the direction of my adjacent living room. The measurements are length of 1,25 m, height of 0,5 m and depth of 0,6 m (about 5' x 2' x 2'). I don't want to present you all my 62 tanks, my living room tank should be enough.

The BBAT (Belgium Association of Fishkeeping and Herpetology) organized a contest of home exhibition. As long I was one of the judges I didn't want to participate at the contest. But in 2014 I quitted this job as a judge and so I was able to present my tanks to the jury. It's quite obvious, that the fish room of a former judge stands in the focus of the competition and so I did my very best.

There were two ways to participate: one category is biotope and the other is community tank. The choice for the community was done quickly because it's

too hard to build a real biotope tank. But I gave my tank some strong restrictions, so only fish from Sahul will be in my tank. Sahul is the area of Australia and New Guinea, which were one landmass in the past.

I chose to put five different types of plants into the aquarium. In addition I putted a large piece of wood with some moss planted on it, about 20 quite big rocks and some smaller pieces of resinous wood. The fish-population was five males and 3 females (nearly mature) of *Melanotaenia ajamaruensis*, eight gobies *Stiphodon elegans*, and a pair of *Chilatherina* spec. "Sungai Sermowai", which I found accidentally between some other purchased rainbows. I also had some blue-eyes in it, 8 *Pseudomugil gertrudae* "Aru II" and 6 *P. luminatus*, formerly known as *Pseudomugil* cf. *paskai* "Red Neon". To complete the stocking I putted in 6 *Melanotaenia*

boesemani “Danau Uter” with their beautiful red back. Somewhere between the plants 3 big Amano shrimp eat algae, supported by some ramshorn snails.

Now, 1,5 years after the competition, the aquarium is stocked with 3 males and 5 females of *Melanotaenia pygmaea* from Australia, 2 males and one female juveniles of *Chilatherina* spec. “Unggalum” and *Melanotaenia utcheensis*, respectively, 6 *Melanotaenia praecox* and to complete the group of 8 *Stiphodon elegans*.

The main reason for the changing in the population is that in this aquarium I can take the best pictures of the fish. I can darken the living room for less reflection on the aquarium glass.

I have three neon tubes directly over the tank (Philips 840) and a spotlight pointed on the root outside the tank. To my mind these lights (with colour temperature of 4000 K) emit very natural light, like sunlight. They are switched on from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. I use a Eheim filter with a capacity of 350 l/h. The water outlet makes a lot of movement on the surface, which adds some oxygen to the water. There is no heater in the aquarium, because one side stands in contact to the living room and the rest in the fish room. That ensures temperatures of 25 °C (about 77 °F) constantly over day and night. I do all maintenance from the living room side, as water changes, cleaning glass, shorten



plants, because I can remove some wooden panels easily.

I feed my fishes once a day, except Sunday, the day of fasting and relaxing! I feed bloodworm, white & black mosquito larvae, *Artemia*, krill, *Mysis*, *Daphnia* and once a week flakes, all from Ocean Nutrition. I add some frozen salad, spinach or boiled carrots, all minced and intermixed with the other food.

Water changes of 70 to 80 litres are made every two weeks. One half is rainwater filtered with active carbon for at least 24 hours in a 150 l barrel in the fish room. The other half is cold tap water, which let the temperature decrease to some extent in the aquarium.

Over the years the plants changed as well. The back wall is completely covered with *Anubias barteri* var. *nana*, the left side with small growing javafern and the right side with javamoss. In the lateral area I planted some really nice *Cryptocoryne affinis* with fantastic hammered leaves. In the centre of the aquarium the resinous wood is still located with *Potamogeton* spec. "Victoria", (I am not 100 % sure if the name is correct).

And how went the Belgian national home aquaria competition? In the end, I won the third place with 90 of 100 points! I am really happy with the result. My congratulations are going to the two participants ahead.



Middle section of my aquarium under normal lighting and with spot light (all photos G. Maebe).



▲ ▼ *Melanotaenia ajamaruensis*





Pseudomugil gertrudae "Aru II"



Pseudomugil luminatus



Melanotaenia boesemani "Danau Uter" ♀



Melanotaenia boesemani "Danau Uter" ♂



Melanotaenia pygmaea



Chilatherina spec. "Sermowai"



Stiphodon elegans

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Titelbild:
Pseudomugil gertrudae „Aru II“ (oben) und *Pseudomugil laminatus* (unten) im präparierten Wohnzimmeraquarium. Fotos: Gilbert Maëbe

Hefrückseite:
Fundort 2 von *Pseudomugil laminatus*. Foto: Andreas Wagnitz

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