



A Look Back At: The Ritzow Bros. - All-Glass Aquarium

By Phillip Cooper



There was a time when you walked into any pet store you would see a stack of 25, or more, 10 gallon aquariums or aquarium kits for sale. This stack of low priced starter kits helped create new aquarium hobbyists. Many of these hobbyists came back to buy larger sizes or multiple aquariums. This simple strategy drove growth in the aquarium hobby more than almost any other.

There was also a time when every aquarium had a stainless steel frame, because it wouldn't rust, a slate bottom and was held together by a black non-toxic tar within the frame. Then, came the invention of silicone sealant by GE.

The Ritzow bros. in the Milwaukee area, avid aquarium hobbyists, saw the potential of gluing five pieces of glass together with silicone sealant and started making all glass aquariums using extruded plastic as frames to cover up the exposed glass edges. After a couple of years they also saw the need to improve and increase the production of glass aquariums and were one of the first to use one piece molded plastic frames. This simple, but expensive innovation, brought production from a few hundred units a day to well over a thousand. This was revolutionary because it brought down the cost significantly.

When I first started selling glass 10 gallon tanks in 1973 the distributor cost was \$7.95 each. With the one piece frame that cost went down to \$4.95. In the 1980s retailers were selling starter 10 gallon tanks for \$4.99 as loss leaders and we couldn't make enough of them.

I always felt that Jerry and Roger Ritzow deserved an industry award and recognition for almost single handedly growing the tropical fish hobby for over 30 years by being the leading supplier of low cost starter kits to encourage new hobbyists. Without these low cost glass boxes, we wouldn't have sold air pumps, power filters, heaters, plants, gravel, fish, reptiles or small animals.

NEW Vers-a-life  **IMPROVED Design Offers the Brightest Idea in Aquarium Strip Lights**

Adjustable end cap feature provides perfect fit for most aquariums . . . drastically reduces inventory!



Vers-a-Life is 100% electrically tested after assembly and individually packaged for immediate sale.



- **ADJUSTABLE LENGTH . . . FITS VIRTUALLY ALL AQUARIUMS, REDUCING INVENTORY**
Breakaway spacers in end caps allow adjustment up to 1/2" which provides perfect fit on most aquariums. If you sell more than one brand, you need stock only Vers-a-Life which comes in standard sizes of 16", 20", 24", 30", 36", 48" and 72" . . . custom lengths to 12'.
- **BULB PROVIDES SOFT, GLARE-FREE LIGHT**
Vers-a-Life is furnished complete with popular Penn-Plax Aquari-Lux fluorescent bulb which yields softly uniform, glare free light throughout the entire aquarium.
- **SOCKETS DESIGNED FOR POSITIVE HOLDING**
New, edge type sockets grip tight for positive bulb seating.
- **LENS OFFERS RELIABLE, MOISTURE PROOF PROTECTION**
Removable plastic lens protects Vers-a-Life internal parts from moisture when used on aquariums without glass tops.
- **EFFICIENT TROUBLE AND WARP FREE SERVICE**
Remote in-cord ballast keeps heat and weight from vinyl hood assuring years of trouble and warp free performance.

ALL-GLASS AQUARIUM offers a complete line of:

- All-Glass rectangular and extra high aquariums, with or without mirror backs.
- All-Glass hexagon aquariums with or without matching wrought iron stands.
- Aquarium lights and hinged glass canopies.



A fine product of

ALL-GLASS AQUARIUM CO., INC.

PROFIT PRODUCER
The improved Vers-a-Life with its clean, modern styling, is now available from your distributor at no increase in price.

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All-Glass Aquarium ad from March 1973 edition of *Pet Dealer Magazine*



The Ritzow Bros. were brilliant engineers and marketers because they had a vision and developed many innovations that turned the fish aquarium into a piece of furniture that you would be proud to have in your living room instead of the garage. Their innovations included one piece plastic frames in sizes up to 220 gallon, state of the art full hoods with incandescent and fluorescent lighting, knock down wood aquarium stands, solid wood cabinets and canopies, bow front aquariums and stands in many sizes and mini-bow desktop aquariums. They started out with black frames only, then walnut wood grain finishes and ultimately introduced the revolution into oak trimmed aquariums.

With their expertise they turned a small aquarium company into the largest aquarium manufacturer in the world. They invested in technology and facilities that improved manufacturing at all levels, and year after year they continued to introduce new products that helped drive growth in the entire aquatics industry.



The unusual "Wave Tank" introduced in 2005.

95 WAVE

wave tank New for 2005 the All-Glass 95-Wave Aquarium will showcase the underwater world with grace & beauty. This uniquely curved glass aquarium offers a more natural view of the beauty aquarium fish in a comfortable 95 gallon size. Large enough to make a dramatic impact in any room, the AGA Wave offers the wave-front "glass ripple" in either a left or right version. Furniture quality stands in maple, cherry and black finished are available in 32" heights for optimum viewing. Wave tank stands fit both left and right styles by simply inverting the stand to fit your needs.

The 95-Wave Aquarium is topped by an AGA Versa Top glass top, which allows the buyer to customize their lighting utilizing the numerous strip light options available from All-Glass Aquarium. The new 95-Wave Aquarium is available in standard or MegaFlow pre-drilled versions.

SHOPPING LIST

- Wave Tank Aquarium (18096)
- Stand Cherry Finish (36334)
- Versa-Top (29693)
- 48" Compact Fluorescent (26508)
- 48" Single Tube (23948)



NEW

SHOPPING LIST

- Wave Tank Aquarium (18095)
- Stand Black Finish (36330)
- Versa-Top (29693)
- 48" Compact Fluorescent (26508)
- 48" Single Tube (23948)



SHOPPING LIST

- Wave Tank Aquarium (18095)
- Stand Maple Finish (36332)
- Versa-Top (29693)
- 48" Compact Fluorescent (26508)
- 48" Single Tube (23948)



TANK SIZE	APFX. LxWxH	AQUARIUM		VERSA-TOP ALL COLORS		
		BLACK	BLACK	BLACK	MAPLE	CHERRY
95L	48x24x25	18095	29695	36350	36352	36354
95R	48x24x25	18096	29695	36350	36352	36354
95L MegaFlow	48x24x25	12425	29695	36350	36352	36354
95R MegaFlow	48x24x25	12426	29695	36350	36352	36354

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AQUARIUMS

standard aquariums

The All-Glass standard size aquarium is made with care to assure that it can stand up to almost any application. These aquariums come in a wide range of sizes as well as black and oak trim styles. Large aquariums feature one-piece center-braced frames that eliminate glass bowing.

TANK SIZE	APPX. LxWxH	BLACK TRIM	OAK TRIM
2 1/2 Mini-tank*	12x6x8	10002	-
5 Gallon	16x8x10	10005	-
10 Leader	20x10x12	10010	12010
15 Gallon	24x12x12	10015	12015
15 High	20x10x18	10016	12016
20 High	24x12x18	10020	12020
20 Long	30x12x12	10021	12021
25 Gallon	24x12x20	10025	12025
29 Gallon	30x12x18	10029	12029
30 Gallon	36x12x16	10030	12030
30 Breeder	36x18x12	10031	-
33 Long	48x13x12	10033	-
37 Gallon	30x12x22	10037	12037
38 Gallon	36x12x20	10038	12038
40 Breeder	36x18x16	10040	-
40 Long	48x13x16	10041	-
45 Gallon	36x12x24	10045	12045
50 Gallon	36x18x18	10050	-
55 Gallon	48x13x20	10055	12055
65 Gallon	36x18x24	10065	12065
75 E Gallon	48x18x20	10075	12075
90 Gallon	48x18x24	10090	12090
120 Gallon	48x24x24	10120	12120
125 Gallon	72x18x22	10125	12125
150 Gallon	72x18x29	10150	12150
180 Gallon	72x24x24	10180	12180
210 Gallon	72x24x29	10185	12185
20 X High	20x10x24	17202	17720
30 X High	24x12x24	17203	17730
110 X High	48x18x29	17211	-
10 Hexagon	14x12x18	17001	17510
20 Hexagon	18x16x20	17002	17520
35 Hexagon	23x20x24	17003	17535
60 Hexagon	27x24x28	17006	17560



small aquarium combos

The small aquarium combos are economical starter kits. Each combo includes a quality, black trim All-Glass aquarium and a sleek, redesigned incandescent full hood—an economic introduction into the hobby of fishkeeping!

TANK SIZE	HOOD SIZE	BLACK TRIM
5 1/2 Gallon	16"	09008
10 Gallon	20"	09009

trim styles

*2 1/2 accessories



Glass Top	29202
Screen Top	29203
Betta Dividers	29204

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AQUARIUMS

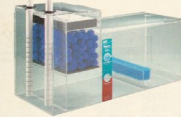
megaflow™ sumps

NEW

MegaFlow
SUMP FILTRATION

The new MegaFlow™ Sump Filters have been painstakingly engineered to provide quiet and efficient filtration for your fresh or saltwater aquarium. These new sumps are available in 4 sizes and are designed for aquariums from 54 to 240 gallons. The MegaFlow™ sumps are the perfect fit for both MegaFlow™ and Corner Overflow Aquariums.

These high quality acrylic sumps are extremely functional and are loaded with options. As the water from the main aquarium enters into the sump the enclosed "Drain / Bubble Chamber" allows air to expel quietly. The water then passes through the prefilter media and out the bottom of the removable filter media tray. This tray can easily be removed and filled with blue bio balls and the molded media grate keeps the biological media above the water line for effective filtration. Each sump has a large main sump reservoir allowing the user to add protein skimmers, calcium reactors or fluidized chambers. Prior to the water entering the pump chamber it passes through a bubble defusing sponge. The pump chamber is designed to accommodate most major brands of submersible pumps. Each sump also comes complete with flexible drain hoses and hose clamps.



Model 4



Model 1



Model 2



For Model 4



Model 3



For Models 1, 2 & 3

SUMP MODEL	ITEM NUMBER	FITS TANKS	PRE-FILTER MEDIA 3-PACK
MODEL 1	19000	54 Corner, 55	19030
MODEL 2	19005	55, 72 Bow, 75	19035
MODEL 3	19010	65, 75, 90, 110x, 92 Corner, 95-Wave	19035
MODEL 4	19015	120, 125, 150, 155 Bow, 180, 210	19040

adjustable drainpipe

Quiet your old Corner Overflow or add the adjustable feature to your existing overflow aquarium. Press fits right into the standard 1" bulkhead provided in the All-Glass Overflow Accessory kits.

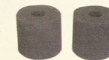
NEW

ITEM NUMBER
29252

NEW

twin flow™ prefilter sponge

2 pack replacement sponge for Twin Flow™ Overflow accessory kit.



ITEM NUMBER
29265

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Different aquarium styles and sizes All-Glass made, and they even made sump filters!

What impressed me most about the Ritzow Bros is the way they did business and the relationships they had with family, friends, customers and employees. In the early years, they had cash flow problems, as did all of their competitors, and had to tighten up liberal receivable and shipping policies. All of their customers rallied behind them. The Ritzow's supported all community groups and local projects as well as the WPA, APA, PIJAC, Pet Industry Trust and many aquarium groups and societies. They are and were true gentleman and made doing business with them a pleasure.

The growth of the aquarium industry may have grown without their vision, but I doubt it would have grown as large or as fast, or would have been as much fun. Ask anyone who knows Jerry or Roger, or worked with them professionally and I'm sure you will hear how loyal, supportive and generous they were their entire career. Any dealer who stopped by to visit their booth at any trade show will remember the warm welcome they received as well as the giant cashews in the snack bowl!

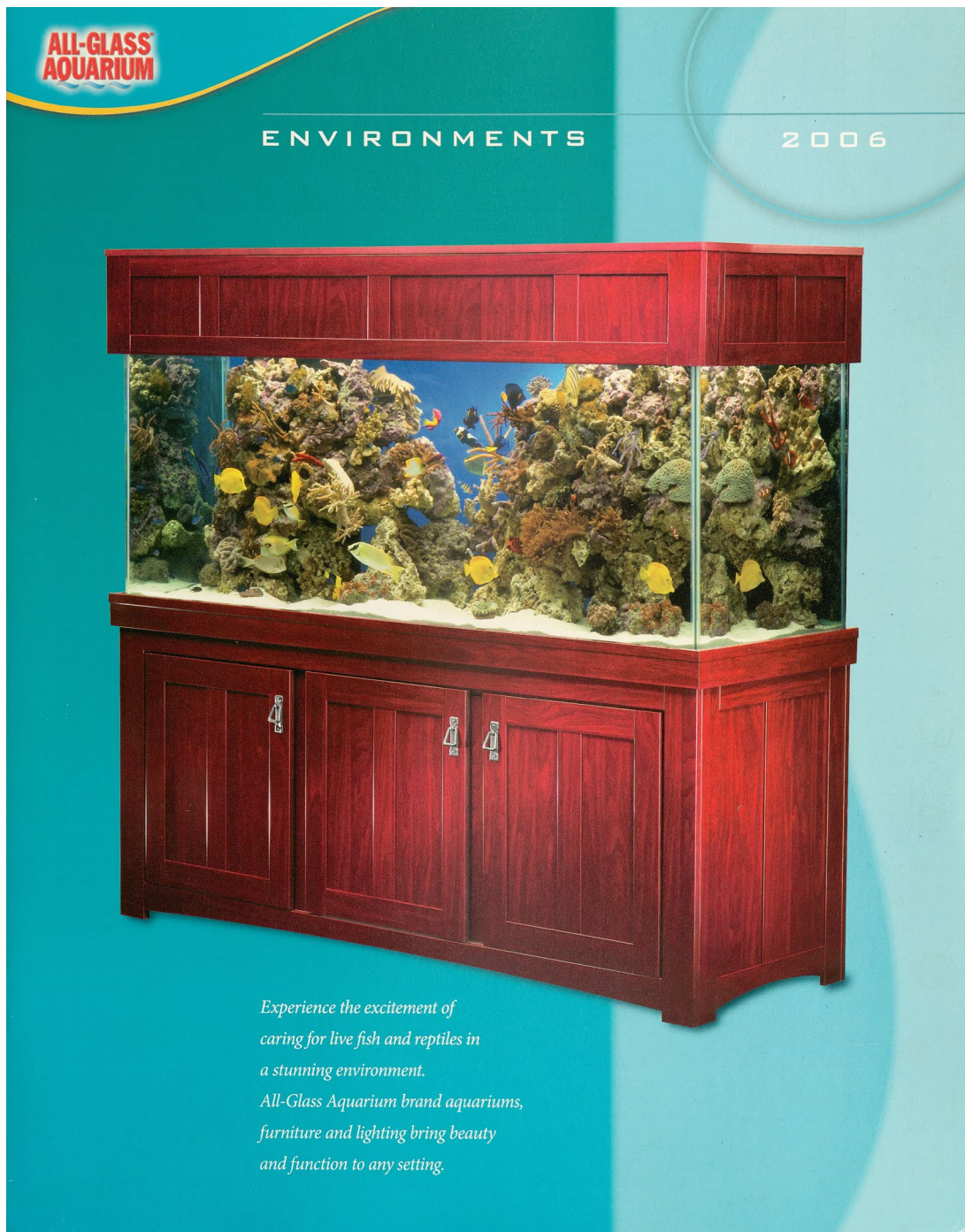
In 2000 The "All Glass Aquarium" (the best possible description of the item they sold) Company was acquired by Central Garden and Pet. The brand disappeared because it was re-named. The aquarium segment of the pet industry saw a downturn. Kids today spend more time on their smart phones rather than keeping an aquarium. The stack of 25 aquarium kits has disappeared. For those of us who love tropical fish we still feel kids and parents alike would enjoy our hobby if we encouraged them with a new All Glass Aquarium.

The Ritzow Bros. are retired and doing well and still love the business. They've seen many changes and like me, they remember the glory days of fish keeping. We had many other friends who played important roles in the pet industry, but few had the impact or left the footprint of the Ritzow bros. Thank you Jerry and Roger for helping the tropical fish industry in becoming an important part of the pet industry.

- Phillip M. Cooper

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Update: Phil believe's the Ritzow brothers are still alive to this day. They would be in their late 80s.



**ALL-GLASS
AQUARIUM**

ENVIRONMENTS 2006

Experience the excitement of caring for live fish and reptiles in a stunning environment. All-Glass Aquarium brand aquariums, furniture and lighting bring beauty and function to any setting.