



Fishing for Compliments

Ask Justin Muir—a self-proclaimed “almost millionaire” who graduated from Georgetown, sports Marc Jacobs, lives in Gramercy Park, and just happens to run a business called City-Aquariums—what the ultimate holiday gift is this season and he will tell you: fish tanks. Yes, fish tanks. “Aquariums have become quite a status symbol,” says Muir, who looks like a *Dawson’s Creek* character and speaks with the down-and-dirty know-how of a second-generation fisherman. After all, his company has grown from a one-man show with 500 bucks in the bank in 1998 to today selling the ne plus ultra New York City style-statement. “I prefer to be called an aquarium designer,” says the entrepreneur who has a degree in zoology and has spent time studying marine biology at the New York Aquarium in Coney Island.

Muir lists hedge-fund managers, traders, and corporate big shots as the types who typically enlist his company to create masterpiece habitats for their underwater creatures; fill them with fashionable fish like octopus, shark, and angelfish; and maintain them for thousands of dollars each week. At the end of the day, the cost of his services can range from \$35,000 to a couple of million—a big price to pay for slimy little suckers. But as Muir assures, “It’s an absolute focal point in interior design today.” The cutting-edge tanks, complete with livestock, are splashing around Gotham from the Coral Room to Duvet to Vikram Chatwal’s Dream hotel to the Sultan of Oman’s private villa.

“Personally I have Two Kidako moray eels,” Muir says humbly of the three-foot-long treasures that cost \$1,500 each. “They’re called Kid and Ako.” Not bad for a fishmonger, now is it? Call 212-243-0503

for more information.—ALYSSA SHELASKY