

This month Nathan Hill looks at an aquarium viewer, power filters, nuisance catcher, fish health book and new medications.

The Portal

"What use have I for a gigantic eye?" That was my first thought when I examined the Portal. As it is I must already be an alarming sight for the fish in my tank without this nightmarish huge iris glaring down at them.

The Portal took a few minutes to grow on me, after I'd spent a while turning it over in my hands and wondering "why?"

In essence it's a huge magnifying glass and you'd have to be a pretty hardcore marine enthusiast to want one — or a photographer looking for great close-up shots without spending many hundreds of pounds on macro lenses.

However, the real beauty of the Portal lies in how it can be used by retailers. Any store with pride in uber-quality corals will want one of these to show just how good its stock is.

The idea is that you can inspect corals prior to purchase, having a magnified scan at a distance that doesn't physically involve interfering with corals. As such, any acro bugs or other invertebrate blight won't have had due warning to scarp and should be clearly visible.

The model I'm playing with has the shorter of two lenses. Turning my attention to various objects, I can get a decent focus up to a distance of about 50cm/20", but after that it gets a bit hazy. This may be down to my eyes, which are

rubbish at best, but up to that distance detail is incredibly good.

The longer lens gives much more, so I'm told, but isn't as much use over shorter viewing distances.

Both lenses are easy enough to change over, being held

in place with a detachable ring.

To make life easier, the Portal connects to the tank via a magnetic holder.



Think algae magnet, as this is what it doubles for, and clean the inner glass as you move the lens around on the outside.

Given the price tag, this will be something of a luxury rather than necessity, but I suspect that stores selling corals as well as public aquaria will buy these in by the bucketload.

► **Price:** £84.95

► **More info:**
www.reef-eden-international.com



No blemish will escape the Portal's scrutiny!

TRIED & TESTED

Aqua-internal filter 400

A Maidenhead Aquatics exclusive, the first thing I see when removing it from the box is the reassuring IPX8 protection rating festooned across the side. For a fully-submerged filter, this is always a good start.

What hits me is the amount of silicone grease inside my sample Aqua-internal

400. The impeller seems drizzled and the seal ring between the impeller cover and the motor head seems to be spewing the

stuff out. That's no bad thing, but it might be worth rinsing before committing it to the tank to get shot of any excess.

The impeller itself is sturdier than a nuclear bunker. Chunky, robust and inspiring confidence, this moving part wins, hands down, against many flimsier-bladed rivals.

Annoyingly, the accompanying manual covers all sizes in the range and doesn't dwell on the fittings that come with this large model — but it's all pretty intuitive anyway.

Flow can be adjusted, with rates of 200-800lph emblazoned on the opposite side to the IP rating. However, it is only controllable with a chunky nozzle accessory that starts to make the whole thing look like the subject of a documentary about Soviet era plumbing.

On the plus side, this thing belts out flow. With or without the included spray bars, it's as though the unit simply screams water. Having spent time with many pumps that claim to have high flow rates, I know this one backs its claim with macho flair. Very impressive.

► **Price:** £29.99

► **More info:** www.fishkeeper.co.uk



Sturdy right where it counts.

The gUSH aquaware catch pen

First impressions; you get an urge to drink from it/store something in it/use it as a smoking aid.

The catch pen is a corking piece of blown glass. Smart and functional, its role is either to catch

nuisance planaria from a tank, or, even better, allow you to gather tiny shrimplets that are otherwise nigh impossible to get out of a planted tank.

Simply remove the cap from the catch pen, place in a little bait, replace the cap and sink the unit into the tank. Depending on what you want to catch, either

place the mouth facing into the substrate, allowing only planaria to get in, or leave it exposed and go shrimplet trawling.

The narrowing nozzle means that any animal finding its way in is on a one-way journey. Getting the shrimps back out is a case of merely taking the cap back off and pouring out.

It's all so basic that it's genius — just like the cat flap.

It's not the cheapest thing in the world, but a lot smarter and robust than home-made shrimp traps. If I get back into shrimps any time soon, and didn't have one to hand, I'd buy this product.

► **Price:** £22

► **More info:** www.aquariumplantfood.co.uk



Let the shrimp harvest begin.

Fish Vetting Essentials reference book

This book is written by Dr Richmond Loh (BSc BVMS MPhil MANZCVSc CMAVA DipPM CCAS) and Dr Matt Landos (BVSc HonsI MANZCVSc Aquatics) — two highly qualified aquatic experts offering an insight into the world of the aquatic vet.

Every so often something falls into my lap that makes me really sit up. When this publication arrived, I shoved other stuff to the floor and made it my focal point. It now takes pride of place.

This book is not without its flaws, however. Some images look fresh out of a 14-year-old's book of doodles, but there are also gin-clear images of pathogens. Visually, it's a mixed bag.

The information is priceless. Retailers, colleges, public aquarists, fish farmers and students should quickly fall in love with it, offering, as it does, much real world advice.

Anyone in the industry not familiar with the information it contains will want a copy and vets not overly fish-minded would do

well to leaf through it too.

It's essentially a reference handbook. Dip into it for nearly anything pertaining to the health of fish, or sit down and read it cover to cover, gaining gem upon gem of information as you go.

Not only does it tell you about disease and treatment, it tells you about water quality, explains how to calculate medicine dose rates from capsules, fish anatomy and physiology, algology — and so much more.

A prohibitive price means it won't be appearing on many aquarists shelves any time soon, but for those with fish houses, or larger investments in livestock, this should be a sensible investment.

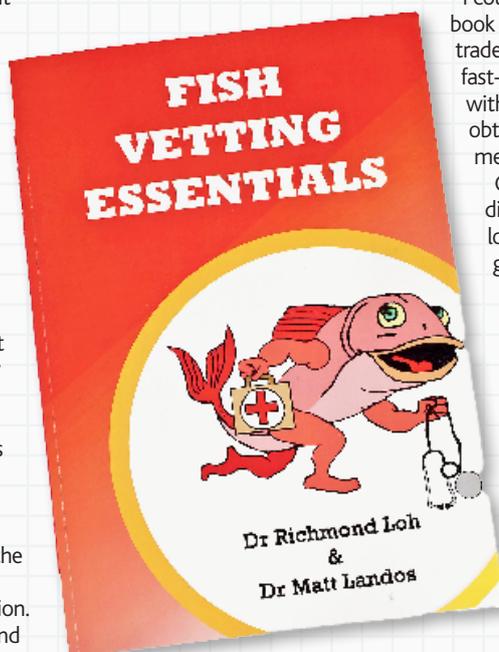
Aside the images, the only other potential drawback is the fact that it's based on the Australian veterinary profession. Although I'm struggling to find

examples, my worry is that there may be treatments listed that are unavailable in the UK. Certainly, much is already going to be

inaccessible to the everyday aquarist. However, Australian and UK fish medicines may be compatible.

I could have done with this book during my days in the trade and it would have fast-tracked any conversation with a vet when trying to obtain the right prescription medicines for fish.

Currently it's only available direct from Australia, so your local store may struggle to get hold of a copy for you.



- Price: \$99/ approximately £65
- ISBN: 978-0-9871571-0-2
- More info: www.thefishvet.com.au

Gems of information are revealed.

JBL specific aquarium treatments

JBL, always the innovator, has released new medications for specific diseases.

Gyrodol 2 is designed to counter gilt worms and tapeworms. Given its active ingredient of praziquantel, it will be useful against *Dactylogyrus* and

Bad news for pathogens.

Gyrodactylus, as well as cestode tapeworms — all target pathogens that praziquantel is known to combat well.

However, it will also blight any other invertebrate life in the tank, so using it with snails or shrimps is a no-no.

There's also anecdotal evidence

hinting that scale-less loaches and catfish are overly sensitive to the ingredient, yet this is the pay-off for a fluke treatment that genuinely works.

Aradol is a medicine directed toward surface parasites, such as *Argulus*, anchor worms and *Trichodina*. Having diflubenzuron as its active ingredient this will blight anything with a chitin shell and the ingredient is used commercially to control moths and weevils.

Aradol is good for both fresh and marine use, but of little use with temperate fish, as the ingredient loses lethality below 18°C/64°F. Like gyrodol, it will blight anything without a spine, so shrimps, corals, crabs — you name it — will need to be kept well away when treating with this.

Nedol is a worming treatment with the active ingredient

benzimidazol — a derivation of which is fenbendazol, which many who have had worms in fish may already be familiar with. This ingredient has a pretty good track record against hair worms, pin worms and *Camallanus*, and should represent a treatment that importers of wild fish and Discus keepers will appreciate.

As with the other treatments, forget using this in tanks with inverts. That may seem a hindrance, but half the time the effect a medicine has on other inverts is something of a litmus test, telling whether it's going to have an effect on pathogens or be up there with homeopathic nonsense.

- Prices: Aradol 100ml £8.29, Gyrodol 100ml £9.29, Nedol 100ml £14.79

► More info: www.jbl.de/en

