

SPOTLIGHT



20,000

LEAGUES ABOVE ORDINARY

By David Everitt- Carlson



\$300,000 and installation can be tricky. For a home still in the design stages, footings for weight support, proper electrical, water and drainage systems can be designed in, but for an existing structure, all this must be designed back into a building that may have only ever held the weight of a grand piano.

Varieties of sealife and plants can be as varied as a client's imagination and come in fresh, salt or even running water varieties. Asked about one of his more challenging assignments, Martin harkens back to the time Okeanos was asked to design an arresting display case for eyewear at the Jacob Javits Convention Center in New York. "We had a whole desertscape terrarium thing all worked up that we thought was pretty cool", he explains, "But the last minute addition of a bunch of live boa constrictors turned out to be the talk of the town."

And who knows where Okeanos will go next. The green pool business sits firmly on their horizon with investors continuing discussions with Martin and his partner and a travel option, that will immerse clients in a real world exploration of exotic seascapes including the Great Barrier reef, first class airfare, 5 star hotels and your own custom aquarium thrown in begin at just \$75,000 – but that aquarium souvenir just can't be beat. It's a whole lot cooler than buying the kids a Hawaiian snow-dome at the airport.

Martin sums up the business as such: "Using God's creations as art = design". And you can't do that if all your creativity allows is a chandelier. To submerge yourself in the world of aquascaping, visit [www.okeanosgroup.com](http://www.okeanosgroup.com). ■

*David Everitt - Carlson is a multiple New York Art Directors Show and Clio winner who now resides in Vietnam and writes the blog The Wild Wild East Dailies @ <http://wildwildeastdailies.blogspot.com>.*

In the classical era Okeanos was the name used to describe the world-ocean, which the ancient Romans and Greeks believed was an enormous river encircling the world. Now it means world-class aquascaping we used to know as aquariums. Your 5 million dollar home checklist. Black African marble driveway: Check. Wine cellar: Check. Chandelier: Check. Aquarium: Check. Aquarium? Speak with Martin Shapira from Okeanos Aquascaping and he'll tell you that his hobby from the 6th grade has grown into a multi-million dollar business and he wouldn't have it any other way. From his mom buying him a 10 gallon tank to his first 55 gallon, purchased with profits from his winter snow-shoveling business, Martin has pursued a life with the fishes and with that has come the sunken treasures of marrying state-of-the-art architecture with a unique chemical-free filtration system that allows natural bacteria to filter the water, creating startling underwater seascapes that sparkle in above sea level locations.

Visiting his grandmother's fish farm in Jerusalem as a teenager, he saw first hand a simple natural filtration system that kept the water as clean as one might find in a mountain stream and has adapted that for indoor use in Okeanos's recent installation of a carp pond for the lobby of 45 Broadway in Manhattan's financial district. He is currently designing the system for use in swimming pools, thus eliminating chlorine and harmful chemicals from the aquasphere and providing a viable green pool solution for sustainable recreation.

And sure, everyone with a 5 million dollar home gets a pricey chandelier almost thrown in for free but an aquatic environment that doubles as a room dividing wall proves not only to be a statement of style, but a statement that lives and breathes and swims with the home's inhabitants every day. A 300 to 800 gallon tank can run from \$150,000 to over

