

## Best FAMA Magazine Cover

**Tell us which of the three 2009 FAMA magazine cover choices in this blog you prefer.**

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The editors of Freshwater And Marine Aquarium magazine are always looking to try new things on our front covers and 2009 was no exception. You'll notice three of our most-different-looking covers from 2009 included in this "Ebb and Flow" blog. Please chime in as to which style you find the most visually appealing, and we'll try to do more covers in the future based on the top vote-getter here.

### Problem With Fishes

Fishes are notoriously difficult cover fodder. They don't hang from a tree limb or hover in midair. When encountered, they do everything in their power to swim away and hide. Most fishes are horizontally oriented, which explains the usual cut-in-half horizontal fish that graces the cover of most aquarium-related magazines – at least when their editors choose to put fishes on the covers. Corals, sea stars, urchins and lots of other symmetric inverts lend themselves to vertically oriented photos. The photographer can position the camera lens either vertically or horizontally, whereas fishes beg to be shot in the horizontal or risk having the tip of their head or caudal fin cut off.

But the centerpieces of most aquarists' aquariums are still fishes. And while it is nice to occasionally upset the editorial apple cart with a branching stony coral or a freshwater crayfish, it's the fishes that subscribers and those perusing the newsstands still prefer to see the bulk of the time on their covers.

### Proving a Point

Fishes were the dominant subjects of 10 FAMA covers last year, and a sea star graced the cover of our May "Invertebrate Issue." And while our December "Planted Tank Issue" had a school of black neon tetras "swimming across" its cover – the emphasis was on the planted tank they were photographed in.

In 2009, Aquarium Fish International, our sister publication, ran 10 fishes, one octopus and one hermit crab on their covers.

### Thinking Outside the Plane

As you can see, there's no way around putting horizontally oriented fishes on the cover of monthly aquarium magazines. But are there ways to tweak staid cover formats in a way to breathe new life into them and to produce covers that separate themselves from the herd? Well, we tried to do this on four occasions in 2009, and we want your opinion on three of the looks.

As mentioned in a previous blog, one of my favorite covers in 2009 was May's red sea star, with two of its arms truncated as they trail off the edge of the cover, on a teal coral background. Why do I like it so much? Well, for all the reasons I've already stated – it is such a departure from the usual sideways fish. But it is still an invertebrate and not a viable option for breaking out of the fish-on-the-cover mold.

Choice A

Choice B

Choice C

### 2009 Choices

Drum roll, please. Your choices for the kind of cover you would prefer to see more of are as follows:

Choice A – The August "Reef Tank Issue" pictures a pair of maroon clownfishes hanging out among the tentacles of a bubble-tip anemone. And while a fish cover, it is different for a couple of reasons. First, it features a pair of fish rather than a lone specimen. Secondly, both fish are featured whole rather than cut in half. Both clowns are vertically oriented rather than the usual prostrate view. And lastly, the cover features an additional animal – the anemone.

Choice B – For November, we took the fish cover and stood it on its head by having our in-house illustrator do a beautiful color illustration of a Harlequin tuskfish. There was a lot of positive buzz about this cover in the editorial and design departments, but not everyone liked it.

Choice C – Again, there's a school of tetras swimming about on December's "Planted Tank Issue" cover. But the fish

are kind of secondary; it is the tank and all its plants and décor that are being emphasized. Voting for this cover means you want to see more tank shots on our covers.

Please let us know which of the three covers pictured in this blog you prefer and why. This same survey is on the Freshwater And Marine Aquarium Facebook page as well as the subject of my upcoming February FAMA editorial. Hopefully, lots of bloggers and readers will respond. By the way, if you aren't a FAMA subscriber, look at the covers and vote anyway because we want to pick your brain. Thanks for participating.

"Submit a Comment" below and tell us which type of cover you like best and why.

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