

Quarterly News

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Where we pay attention to the details

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Pearls 101



Describing, Valuing & Care

Pearls, natural or cultured, begin their formation inside of a mollusk. There are three saltwater pearl mollusks: The first is the *Pinctada fucata* better known as the akoya oyster. It is found in coastal waters of China, Japan, Australia and New Guinea. The second is the *Pinctada margaritifera* which is a black lipped oyster that produces the Tahitian pearl. They are located in the southern Pacific and are black or gray. Third is the *Pinctada maxima* and are silver or gold lipped oysters. They produce South Sea pearls that are white or golden in color and are large.

As for freshwater pearls, the *Cristaria plicata* and the *Hyriopsis cumingi* mussels produce the majority of Chinese freshwater pearls on the market today and the *Megaloniais nervosa* are used to culture freshwater pearls in North America.

These mollusks build a mother-of-pearl lining inside of the shell. The iridescent lining

Pearls require special care. When Cleaning your pearls use a soft damp cloth. Occasionally use warm water and a non detergent soap. Place

inside of the shell is called mother-of-pearl and when it is on the pearl it is called nacre.

The mollusk deposits layers of nacre over intruders and foreign matters that enter its body. In freshwater pearls a mantle tissue called tissue nucleation is inserted in the mussel.

Today cultured pearls include: Akoya which are saltwater pearls that come from Japan or China and range in size from 6mm and as large as 10mm. South Sea pearls come from Australia, Indonesia and the Philippines. These saltwater pearls are cultivated in commercial farms and range in size from 8mm to 15mm. Freshwater pearls are found in all shapes and sizes up to 14mm. Keshi pearls are the accidental byproducts from salt and freshwater culturing processes. They are irregular in size and come in all shapes and colors. The Blister pearl has a flat side as it is attached to the Mollusk shell. Mabe' are assembled blister pearls. They are cut from the shell and the nucleus is removed and filled with a resin or a bead. It is then glued to a mother-of-pearl backing.

Pearls are valued based on seven factors. Size, shape, color (body color, overtone and orient), luster (light reflected from the surface of the pearl), surface quality, nacre quality (determined by thickness and layering) and matching.

the pearls on a clean towel and do not wear them until they are completely and totally dry. Never use an ultrasonic or steam cleaner. Keep them

away from cosmetics, perfumes and hair spray. Don't let your pearls rub against harder gemstones. Before you put your pearls away, wipe your pearl jewelry with a soft cleaning cloth. Store your pearl jewelry in a soft cloth and keep it away from abrasive objects. Re-string your pearls about every two years. Make sure that the knots between the pearls are tight, with no slack between the knots and pearls. If you have any questions about your pearls or you need to re-string them, give us a call and we will take care of that for you!

Brilliant Quote

It has been said the wedding ring is the world's smallest handcuff.

**Gerald Chapman (1938-2005)
Fayetteville, Tennessee**

Before You Buy Fine

Jewelry. . .

- 1) Deal with a knowledgeable jeweler you trust or a gemologist.** Stay away from untrained salespeople.
- 2) Purchase the finest quality you can afford.** Even smaller stones that are a higher quality will appreciate more in value over time.
- 3) Be careful when you comparison shop for gemstones.** If you are thinking of purchasing a lower priced item, first consider clarity, cut and workmanship. The lowest priced item may not be the deal.
- 4) Be especially leery of large discounts.** Most of the time it really is too good to be true. If a jeweler has an 80% off sale all of the time, are you in fact getting a sale? Did they ever sell the item at the regular price?

5) Know what metals you are buying. Pure gold is 24-karat. Gold can come in 18k, 14k and 10k. Qualified jewelers should be able to prove what karat it is, the weight and value of your precious metal jewelry.

6) Caveat emptor when purchasing via mail, internet, television or phone. The piece in the photograph may not be the actual item that you are purchasing. Get everything in writing as well as a return policy.

7) Know and understand the store's return, repair and service policies.

8) Always insure your fine jewelry. We very often see clients after a jewelry loss. Do not let this be you! Use a qualified jewelry appraiser (like us!) to correctly identify or evaluate your jewelry replacement cost to determine insurance coverage.

9) Get the best information, facts and education that you can before you purchase.

10) Follow steps' 1-9 and then BUY JEWELRY. Love it, enjoy it and wear it!

What's New? Beautiful strands of natural beads with matching earrings and bracelets. We have high quality labradorite, jade, lapis lazuli, garnet and Iridescent quartz.