
The Elegance of Freshwater Pearl Jewelry

Contributed by Webmaster

By Michelle Yamamoto

Perfectly spherical pearls have always commanded the highest prices in the market. They are the rarest of an already rare gem. Freshwater mussels can produce spherical pearls; however, the typical freshwater pearl is a freeform shape. The pearls can come out roughly spheroid, or even shaped like a teardrop, but others come out with a lovely furrowed texture and shapes that don't fit into any category.

Besides unique shapes, freshwater mussels produce pearls in a range of colors from a luminous dark grey through blue, lavender, green, pink, and champagne.

Furthermore, freshwater pearl jewelry sometimes has a price advantage due to the ease of gathering one hundred irregular pearls rather than one hundred round pearls of identical size. Not to mention, artists are finding great ways to create freshwater pearl jewelry that is truly one of a kind.

Necklaces

Chokers or collars made of tightly massed small seed pearls or pill-shaped pearls have already become a modern classic. They look like luminous pebbles, but without the matronly aspect

associated with round pearls.

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Earrings

Teardrop-shaped gems have long been one of a jeweler's best-selling items. Especially in earrings, teardrops look elegant dangling from a fine chain. Pearls are no different. In fact, many people prefer the irregular shapes and color range from freshwater pearls.

Stick Shape

Originally produced only in Japan's Lake Biwa, one of the most unusual pearl shapes is the stick. These gems can be up to an inch long and sometimes as narrow as a matchstick. As irregular, natural products, stick pearls sometimes taper and sometimes look wrinkled. Freshwater pearl jewelry employs stick pearls drilled along either the long or short axis, or even with two small holes in one end so it can dangle. Indeed this is a very versatile form.

What Shape?

Pearls also come in a shape best described as amoebic. These gems, which look organic enough to be living creatures, should be the focal point if they are incorporated into any piece of freshwater pearl jewelry. But they are probably the opposite of jewelry tradition. Sometimes these amoeba pearls come in shapes that are pleasing to one eye and bizarre to another. A piece of freshwater pearl jewelry made out of a gem like this must be personally selected by the wearer.

Michelle Yamamoto has been writing articles for the family business on black pearls for 12 years. More information and

articles can be found at the Pearl Center.