

A Black Pearl Necklace

Contributed by Webmaster

By Michelle Yamamoto

There are certain traits, beside the color, that sets a black pearl necklace apart from the more typical pearl necklaces that are more widely advertised.

Black pearls are created by the black-lipped *Pinctata Margaritifera* oyster in the lagoons of French Polynesia, specifically the pearl farms of the Tuamotu-Gambier Archipelago. Here the oysters are seeded with an irritant. They then form a pearl around it by secreting their unique nacre as a healing mechanism. All cultured pearls are formed in this manner, but to get the pearls for a black pearl necklace, only the black-lipped *Pinctata Margaritifera* will secrete the special pigment that creates that shades ranging from pale grey to anthracite black.

The grading and selection of the pearls to go into a black pearl necklace begins from the very moment of harvest. The pearls are checked for a uniform coat over the seeding material. The nucleus, luster, and no milky loss of natural pigmentation pass this first screening. They are then judged for color, size and shape. The very best can bring in as much as ten thousand dollars apiece.

Once the pearls are sorted, the jewelers select just the right ones for the black pearl necklace they have in mind. This may not mean picking only the most round and perfect pearls if there is a different design theme that they wish to pursue. One of the special purposes in working with such an organic medium is that one black pearl necklace can be as different from another as the people who buy them are.

Selecting the necklace is a very personal choice that depends on what you want from the form of your necklace. To get a quality pearl, it is best to stick to the reputable dealers, particularly when dealing with the wide range of online dealers. Look for smoothness and uniformity of color to be sure you are getting the best, but dont be overly choosy on shape. While the perfect sphere is the most prized, go with the necklace that you personally like the best.

These are the very basics of what a black pearl necklace is all about, just get out and shop around to find the perfect one for you.

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.