
The Essence Of Pearl Fashion Jewelry

Contributed by Webmaster

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Pearls have been used as in jewelry for a few thousand years now, and pearl necklaces, bracelets, and other pieces of jewelry are the quintessential fashion jewelry that have been valued possessions since pearls were first incorporated into jewelry a few thousand years ago.

The term pearl is today synonymous with fine, rare and valuable. Although, the use of pearls today is largely confined to the jewelry industry, in centuries past, pearls have also been sewn on to costumes for royalty as well. Pearls today are also sometimes incorporated into cosmetics, and the popularity of pearls can largely be attributed to their luster and iridescence.

A pearl begins to develop when a foreign body or an irritant such as a parasite or sand particle enters the soft tissue or mantle of an oyster or other mollusk. As a defensive measure, the mollusk secretes a material to coat the irritant in fine layers. This substance, which is called nacre, is a fine crystalline calcium carbonate, which is held together by an organic glue. The nacre gradually increases in size and hardens, leading to the formation of a pearl.

Prior to the twentieth century, the introduction of the irritant that triggers pearl development was left solely up to Mother Nature. Pearls of this type are called natural pearls. Divers would dive down to the bottom of the seas to collect oysters from pearl beds. The oysters would be pried open and the creature killed in order to identify and collect the pearl. Since the introduction of the irritant needed to trigger the development of the was left entirely to chance, a large number of mollusks were destroyed in order to find just a few pearls. This is what made, and continues to make, natural pearls expensive.

Today, cultured pearls are quite common in the world of fashion jewelry, and this is largely due to the development of peri-culture. For cultured pearls, the stimulus needed to trigger the development of the pearl is provided by man. An external irritant such as a small bead or tissue from a donor mollusk is inserted into the tissue of the host mollusk. Each host oyster can have up to a dozen such insertions, which results in a dozen or more pearls from each host.

Pearl farms in Asia and primarily China are now mass producing cultured pearls. Cultured pearls are significantly less expensive than natural pearls, and therefore very popular with fashion jewelry designers. Although pearls are available in a variety of colors, the most common colors for pearls are white or light cream. The color can vary depending on the mollusk that produces the pearl. Dark colored pearls such as the Tahitian pearls are rare and quite expensive.

In general, other properties being equal are the larger pearls, which are more expensive than smaller pearls. Pearls can generally be found in eight basic shapes such as round, semi round, button, drop, pear, oval, baroque, and circled. Perfectly round pearls are the rarest and most valuable. Semi rounds are also used in necklaces or in pieces where the shape of the pearl can be disguised to look like it is a perfectly round pearl. Button pearls are like a slightly flattened round pearl and can also make a necklace, while drop and pear shaped pearls are largely used in pendants and earrings.

Victor Epan is an expert consultant for personalized gifts, invitations, and fine jewelry. Find the best shopping for personalized gifts, invitations, greetings, and essence of pearls.