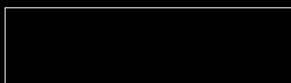
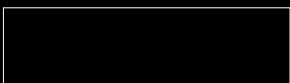


A PRECIOUS DIFFERENCE

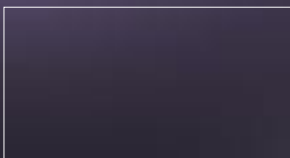


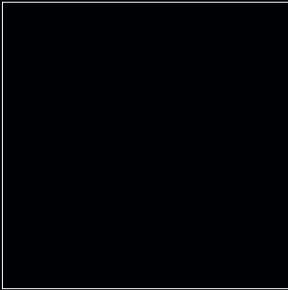
PERLES
DE
TAHITI





THE LEGENDARY
BLACK PEARL





The Pearls of Tahiti are commonly known around the world as “Black Pearls”.

They are indigenous to the remote lagoons of French Polynesia in the South Pacific.

Polynesian mythology cites Tahitian pearls as the first cases of light, which were given by the Creator to Tane, God of harmony and beauty. This latter illuminated the vault of heaven with their light, and their forms and brightness inspired him to create the stars. Tane then brought them to Rua Hatu, God of the ocean in order for him to lighten his domain. Oro, tutelary divinity of war and peace, working for Tane, entrusted human women who he coveted to conceive his descendants, with the first pearls, as love token. At the achievement of his work, he gave “Te ufi”, pearl oyster, to humans in memory of his voyage on earth.

More prosaically, the sci-

entific term for *Te Ufi* is *Pinctada margaritifera, cumingii variety* most commonly known as the black lipped oyster. In the 19th century, its shell, like that of many oysters, was in great demand by the European button industry.

As a result, commercial shell harvesting operations by local and foreign entities took place annually in the lagoons of Tuamotu and Gambier, two of five archipelagos that make up French Polynesia.

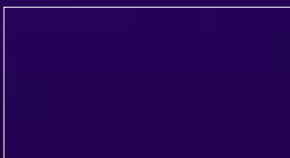
In the days of such lucrative shell harvesting, one would have to open more than 15,000 oysters before finding a natural pearl.

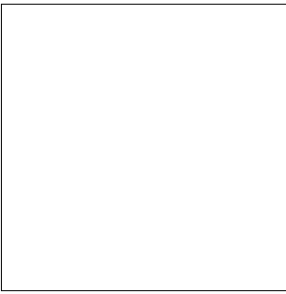
So even before the secret of pearl cultivation was discovered, the Tahitian pearl had earned a reputation for value and rarity. This reputation was further enhanced by its use in the jewellery of the world’s royalty and nobility. Soon the Pearl of Tahiti became known as the “Pearl of Queens” and “Queen of Pearls”.

The most famous of these natural black pearls was called “Azra”. It was the centrepiece of a necklace that was part of the Russian crown jewels. Today, the Tahitian pearl has become an exotic gem sought after by celebrities and pearl admirers alike.



THE PEARL CULTURING INDUSTRY
A NATURAL ART





In 1961, the first culturing experiments took place in the lagoon of Bora Bora. The harvest of 1963 proved conclusively that a pearl culturing industry in the region was possible. As a result of the success on Bora Bora, several pearl farms were set up on the islands of Manihi, Marutea and Mangareva to increase French Polynesia's pearl production.

The process of raising a pearl oyster is a long one and requires considerable care and attention due to the fragility of the oyster species.

At certain times of the year the black-lipped pearl oyster, which lives attached to coral found in Polynesian lagoons, produces spawn that is then fertilised in the water. After floating freely for a month, the baby oysters, known as "spat",

either fix themselves to the coral or perish buried in the sand.

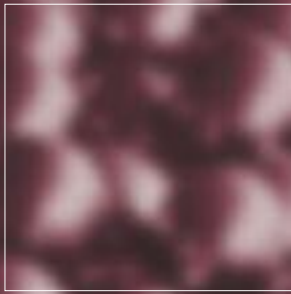
The pearl farmer collects the spat by submerging artificial collectors in the lagoon. They are then reared on underwater lines for more than three years. During this time, the oysters are meticulously cared for to ensure their health and vitality.

When the oyster reaches maturity it is ready for grafting or nucleation, whereby a small, round piece of mother-of-pearl (called a nucleus) is surgically inserted into the body of the oyster. The introduction of this nucleus stimulates the secretion of a pearly substance called "nacre", which is applied in layers by the oyster to the nucleus. After several years of nacre secretion over the nucleus a pearl is formed. The pearl is then carefully removed and the oyster put back in the lagoon to recuperate. Although the process sounds simple, the delicate nature of this species of oyster means that of every hundred oysters nucleated, only fifty will produce pearls. Out of these fifty pearls, only five will be perfect gems.

A recognised production
The official recognition in 1976 by the Gemological Institute of America of the natural colour authenticity of the pearl of Tahiti, and the adoption by the

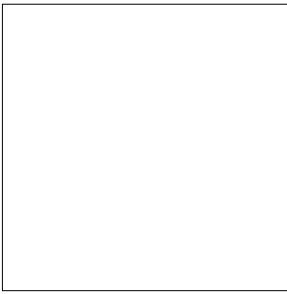
International Jewellery Confederation (CIBJO) of the commercial designation: Tahiti Cultured Pearl, allowed this jewel to truly establish an international reputation.





TAHITI CULTURED PEARL



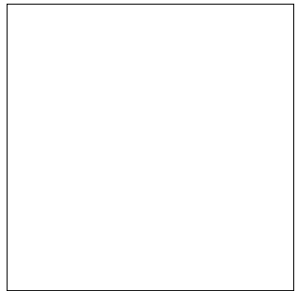


The Tahiti Cultured Pearl consists of many pearly layers containing organic substances and calcium carbonate in the form of aragonite.

They are best known for their diversity of size, shape, quality and many shades of natural colours, ranging from pale grey to anthracite black.



The trade designation "Tahiti Cultured Pearl" is reserved exclusively for cultured pearls obtained from the *Pinctada margaritifera* pearl oyster, found in French Polynesia. According to government regulation, such pearls must exhibit a continuous pearly layer over at least 80 % of the pearl surface and cannot reveal the underlying nucleus.



Any pearls that do not satisfy these criteria may not be called a « Tahiti Cultured Pearl » and will be deemed a reject. Reject pearls are best described as calcite pearls, organic pearls, pearls presenting devitalised areas and pearls which nucleus is visible to the naked eye.



When harvesting pearls, the pearl farmer performs an initial sort of this crop, discarding all the rejects. He then performs a more detailed separation of his crop sorting out pearls by size, shape and quality.



CLASSIFICATION



SIZE

Pearls are most commonly expressed in millimetres .
Cultured pearls of Tahiti generally range in size from 8.0 mm to 16.0 mm.

WEIGHT

Weight of the pearl of Tahiti is measured in grams.

SHAPE

At the production level are defined seven basic shapes that cultured pearls of Tahiti come in :

- Round
 - semi round
 - oval
 - drop or pear
 - button
 - semi baroque
 - baroque
- and one derived category :
- the circled

ROUND

Round pearl is a perfect spheres or the like accepting a variation in diameter lower than 2%

SEMI-ROUND

Semi-round pearl are slightly imperfect spheres which diameter variation rate is greater than 2% but less than 5%.

DROP, BUTTON AND OVAL

The drop or pear presenting at least one axis of symmetry .

The button presenting at least one axis of symmetry.

The oval presenting at least one axis of symmetry.

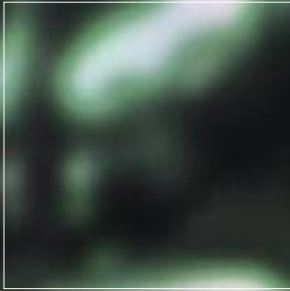
SEMI-BAROQUE AND BAROQUES

The semi-baroque in the strict sense presenting at least one axis of revolution

The baroque pearl is generally an uneven pearl which does not fall in any of the above categories

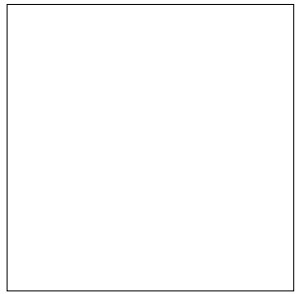
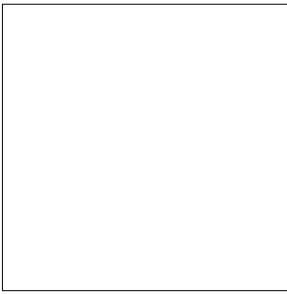
CIRCLED

Circled pearls have at least one concentric ring located beyond the upper or lower third part of the surface of the pearl , whatever its original shape. Pearls with just colour rings are not consider as circled pearls.



QUALITY





This is determined by observing the special features of the pearl's surface and luster.

The pearl's surface is measured according to the presence or the absence of imperfections. Some imperfections can be seen on the surface of the pearl, such as : spots, streaks, stripes, cracks, holes, organic deposits, calcite deposits or devitalised areas.

Luster is evaluated according to reflection of light on the pearl's surface. It depends on the regularity, the thickness and the distribution of the pearly layers.

The brighter the reflection, the higher the luster. Hence, a good luster corresponds to a total reflection of the light, creating a mirror effect. A pearl without luster corresponds to a dull aspect of its surface.

Tahiti Cultured pearls are defined by the French Polynesian parliament regulation N° 2005-42 APF of february , 4th 2005 in 5 categories : Top GEM, A, B, C and D.



QUALITY

TOP GEM

Flawless pearl.
Excellent luster

QUALITY



Flawless pearl on at least 90% of its surface : on the remaining 10% , the pearl may have some slight concentrated imperfections with only one deep tolerated. At least a very high luster

QUALITY



Flawless pearl on at least 70% of its surface. On the remaining 30% , the pearl may have some slight concentrated imperfections with one or two deep imperfections tolerated. At least a high luster.

QUALITY

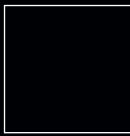


Flawless pearl on at least 40% of its surface. On the remaining 60% , the pearl may have some slight concentrated imperfections with 10% of deep imperfections tolerated. At least a medium luster .

QUALITY

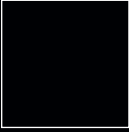


Pearl having slight flaws on at least 60% of its surface ,with a maximum tolerance of 20% of deep imperfections and/or white spot. At least a poor luster.



Round Top Gem

Drop Top Gem



Round A

Drop A

Button A

Circled A



Round B

Oval B

Baroque B

Circled B



Round C

Semi-Baroque C

Baroque C

Circled C

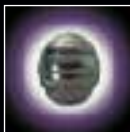
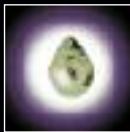


Round D

Semi-Baroque D

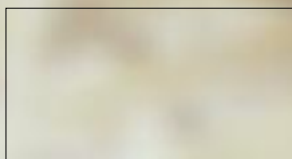
Baroque D

Circled D





ORIENT & COLOUR



The orient of a pearl results in the decomposition of the light through its nacre crystals and appears as an iridescence of its surface.

tones, blue , purple , bronze-yellow , and green. They can present a metallic, bronze ,or steel effect. However, they can never be flat, like purple, brown, dark-blue, or indigo pearls.

Tahitian cultured pearls possess two main arrays of natural colours. There are :

Clear array of colours:

- Pearls with Pastel-grey shades : they exhibit a dominant clear-grey colour on which appears a play of iridescence of the colours from the rainbow (when the pearls have a beautiful orient).
- They are silver ,blue-grey , pink-grey ,green-grey (pistachio) , yellow-grey (champagne) , gold grey (Tahitian gold).
- Pearls with Neutral grey tones : they exhibit all the grey colour variations , between the white and dark grey.

Dark array colours:

- Pearls with Dark colours : for those with a beautiful orient, they exhibit shades of profound and dense secondary colours on a dark background. An example of these pearls is the peacock and the cherry colours.
- Pearls with Shaded colours : these correspond to pearls strongly shaded with a dark-grey colour, presenting a variety of primary colour





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