

April / May / June 2010

Volume 19, Number 2

Contents:

- **The 2010 Tucson Gem Show: an in-depth report by Lois Berger on what was being displayed and what consumers were buying.**
- **Beginning a report on the nautilus and its unique pearl, to be continued in another issue.**
- **Micronesian Blue Peacock and Emerald Green pearls debut April 24th on Pohnpei.**



**PEARL
WORLD**

The International Pearling Journal

A

new type of CFWCP introduced at The Tucson Gem Show: initially called a “soufflé pearl.”

(see pages 2 and 6)

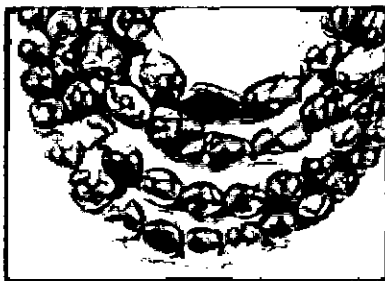
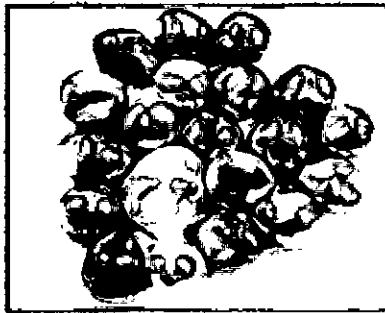


Photo courtesy of
Jack Lynch of Sea Hunt Pearls.

EDITORIAL

A NEW PEARL?

In the report by Lois Berger on the Tucson Gem Show (see pages 6-14), she mentions a new type of CFWP called a "soufflé" pearl. We were alerted to this some time earlier by Jack Lynch of Sea Hunt Pearls who sent us photos and a brief blurb on this new find of his.



These are a new type of Chinese freshwater pearl on the market and I thought it might be of

interest to you.

The method of cultivation is a new step in the coin pearl/ spherical bead nucleation process.

First a coin pearl is grown in the mussel and after it is harvested there is then a pearl sack. Previously, the choices after that were to insert a bead nucleus for a "fireball" type pearl or put it back in the water with no nucleus in hopes of a keshi pearl.

With this new process, they take some pond "muck" and form a dried hard mass and insert that as a nucleus. As the pearl is forming, water eventually seeps into the area with the nucleus and dissolves the hardened "muck."

When the pearl is drilled, a very putrid liquid drains out from it and leaves a negative interior space. After rinsing out the pearls and drying completely, the smell is gone. The walls of these new pearls are very thick and stable. This is a rough idea of the process.

Nick Sturman of GIA Gem Lab in Bangkok, along with Elisabeth Strack of Germany, are working on an article on these pearls for Gems & Gemology. They will be able to provide you a more scientific explanation for this process when the article comes out.

I will be showing these beauties at the AGTA show in Tucson this year. These new pearls are 13 to 20+ mm.

My thanks to Jack for his

courtesy, and to Lois for her usual comprehensive coverage of this annual event.

On other note, we were preparing for a major article on nautilus pearls when our space shrank due to the report on the Tucson Gem Show, and we were informed that the full story on the nautilus pearls had yet to unfold.

For the pearl report, we salute our intrepid friend, Lois Berger, once again... and we thank another friend, Steve Metzler, for getting us involved in the story of the rare and beautiful product of the cephalopod mollusk from the South Pacific which we hope we may be able to bring to this journal in the next issue.

A late notice from an old friend of ours informs us: *The College of Micronesia Land Grant Program has been working on pearl quality improvement research for developing a new "Micronesian Pearl" industry. As this young industry is ready to take off this year, we would like to introduce you to the world's finest and rarest pearls, "Micronesian Blue Peacock" and "Micronesian Emerald Green" from our work at Pakin Atoll and Nett Point.*

Date: Saturday, April 24th, 2010. Time: 10AM-4PM. Venue: Conference Room, COM Pohnpei Campus in Kolonia. Contact: Masahiro Ito, Project Director, College of Micronesia, Land Grant Program, PO Box 1179, Kolonia, Pohnpei 96941, Federated States of Micronesia. Tel: 691-320-2728/22462. Fax: 691-320-2726. E-mail: E: hiroito@mail.fm.



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THE NUMINOUS NAUTILUS

The Critter

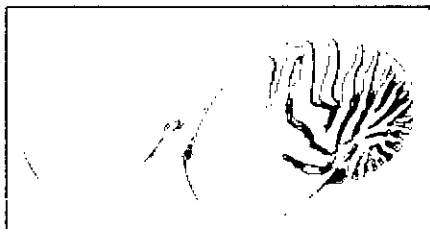
numinous / 'n(y)oōmənəs / adjective:
having a strong religious
or spiritual quality; indicating or
suggesting the presence of a divinity.
ORIGIN mid 17th cent.: from Latin
numen, numin- 'divine power' + -ous

Many, too many years ago, I ran across my very first nautilus. A transplant from the desert of Arizona, I somehow ended up in Japan as a copywriter for the then-largest advertising agency in the world.

As fate would have it, I became quite well-known in other circles for my scrivening, and a wonderful gentleman from Tokyo asked me to travel through Micronesia for him and his company, to dig out stories and write advertising for his airline and his people.

Thus, the prize-winning nautilus ad to the right (note the old, outdated spelling of the creature). There are many more terrific tales... but maybe at some other time, in some other issue.

Fast forward to the nautilus of today. Fine photos accompany various blogs on *Pearl-Guide.com* for this creature, the nautilus.



Nautilus: a cephalopod mollusk of the South Pacific with a spiral, chambered shell, four gills, and four auricles.

This fish story

begins some years ago when a diving team from a well-

known university captured fifteen live nautiluses in deep water off the island of Palau. These extremely rare and fragile creatures were destined for an aquarium in Hawaii and were flying fish class on Continental Air Micronesia.

At the stop on Majuro, a Continental flight attendant... concerned about a nautilus that was having difficulty breathing... picked up its tank, ran down the steps of the plane and plunged into the surf, fully clothed, to revive the creature.

Other Continental staff kept applying ice packs throughout the flight, and the flight crew radioed ahead to Truk and Kwajalein for 50 pounds of crushed ice to be delivered at each stop. Out of the 15 nautiluses that landed later that day in Honolulu, fourteen survived... an incredible percentage.

This all happened a few years ago. But today we still coddle our passengers on Continental flights to Micronesia. Plunge them straight into the surf from the airplane, if required.



"Nautilus" from page 3

The Critter's Pearl

This forthcoming treatise on the nautilus pearl was occasioned by the input of a friend of *Pearl World* and passionate pearl collector/aficionado named Steve Metzler of Seattle, Washington, who constantly amazes me with his diverse and wide-ranging pearl interests. We have chronicled his acquisitions for some years now, and he never fails to surprise us with what what new pearls— and types of pearls— he has either on his mind, in his hand, or poised to buy.

In our last issue we wrote of his attempts to acquire a natural SSP to adorn a special necklace of his wife's which, alas, turned out not to be natural but, rather, nucleated (after X-rays and GIA identification).

Steve has has admired the pearls from the nautilus for quite some time now, and always has an eye out for appropriate acquisitions to his collection. In fact, he posts items about his pearls regularly on *Pearl-Guide.com*, and is regular contributor to this valuable pearl information site.

Speaking of which, if you turn to the nautilus section of this site, you shall find a wealth of data on these unusual pearls... such as:

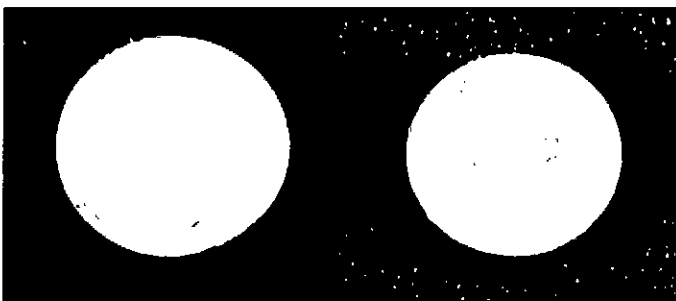
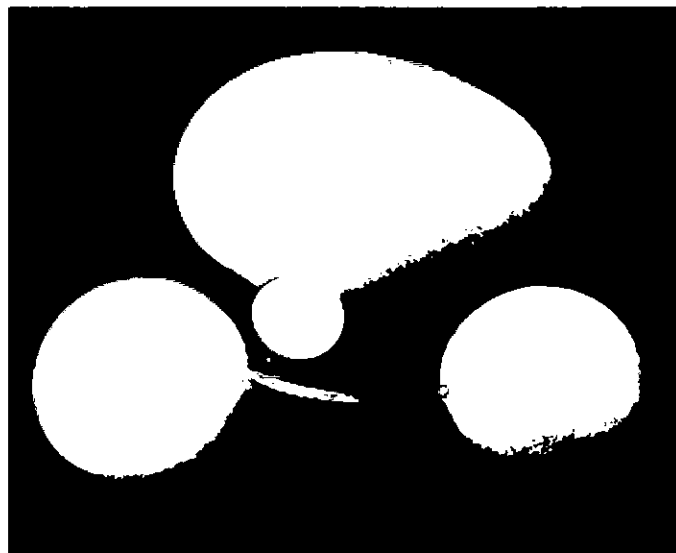
Nautilus pearl: Natural pearl from Nautilus pompilius, extremely rare. Osmenda imitation pearls are often incorrectly called nautilus pearls.

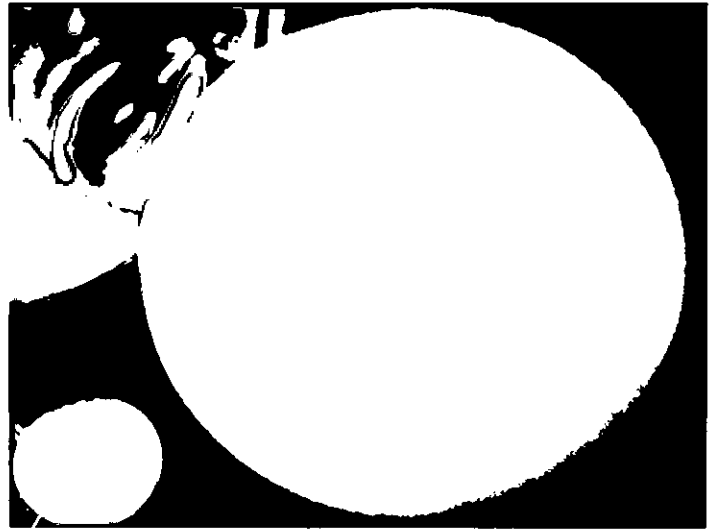
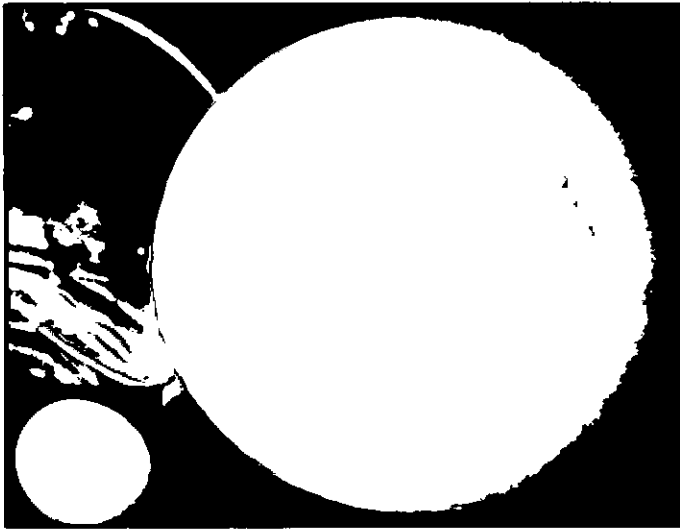
And fellow bloggers who chip in with observations of their own:

I looked up nautilus pearls just now in Strack (I'm like a kid with a new toy with this fantastic book.) She has a section on osmena pearls, but for nautilus pearls she says (page 111): "Pearls from Nautilus pompilius are absolute rarities. Indeed, it cannot be even said with any certainty that they do exist. They are described as having a baroque or pear shape and a white colour without lustre. Some rare, pink samples have also been reported...."

And: I did some research, and the only reference to a nautilus pearl I could find is an article in a French magazine La Nature in 1912. This article says that a photography of a nautilus pearl was given by a Mr. Lyster Jameson to Nature Magazine (14x11mm, 18 carat). I don't know if the photo has been published in that magazine.

Stephen's fascination with this interesting creature and its hithertofore relatively unexplored pearl makes for a rather complicated tale which shall be further explored in an upcoming issue. He was generous enough to stop by *Pearl World* around the time of the Tucson Gem Show and share many of his observations, writings and photos. Our grateful thanks for his input. ❖





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Tucson Pearl Report 2010

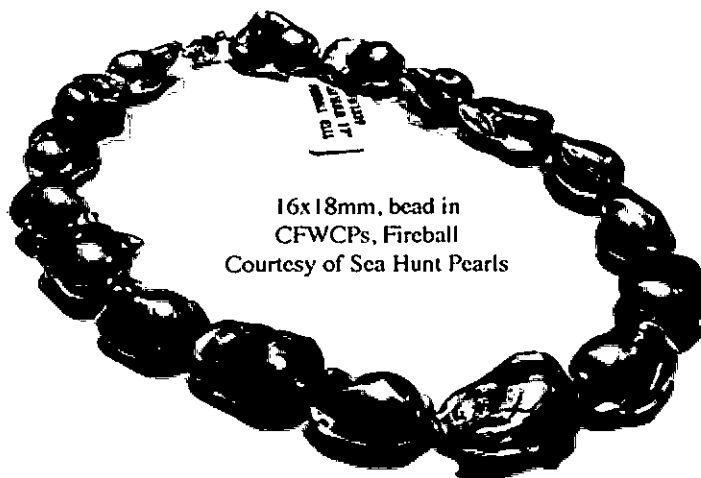
by Lois H. Berger, G.G., NAJA

The Tucson AGTA Gem Show 2010 showed its resilience during economic tough times. Thinking of last year's show, we do see a break through, albeit small, of better times to come. Talking with the dealers, some felt that although business was better this year, it would take awhile to see normalcy. Hopefulness was there but economic distress and discretionary buying was clearly evident.

Buyers were intrigued as they checked out a new type of Chinese Freshwater Cultured Pearl, informally called "soufflé" which was introduced at the Tucson Show. These pearls are unique in that they lack a conventional bead nucleus. Instead, a spherical bit of desiccated soil is inserted into the pearl sac of the mollusk from which a coin pearl had been previously harvested. The bead nucleus in these pearls gradually disintegrates and a hollow pearl results. These pearls are large baroques with spectacular pastel colors. Range of size is 13-20mm. The nacre thickness on the "soufflé" pearls is very good and thus stable. Normally this would be a heavy weighted necklace but because of their hollow interior, they are actually very light and easy to wear. What a welcome addition – the newest member of the pearl family!

For years, Chinese growers have tried unsuccessfully to develop a round CFWCP without a tail. For the Chinese, this achievement would lead to an even more prosperous market than currently exists.

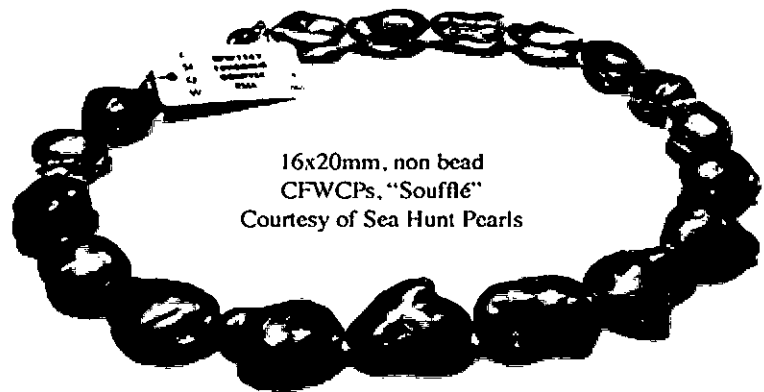
In comparison to the "soufflé" pearl, fireball CFWCPs are bead nucleated, heavier, and have a tail.



16x18mm, bead in
CFWCPs, Fireball
Courtesy of Sea Hunt Pearls

These pearls share with the "soufflé" pearls the same very high luster, baroque shape, and brilliant natural color.

The information contained in this report represents wholesale pricing of low, medium, and high end pearls available at the AGTA 2010 Show.



16x20mm, non bead
CFWCPs, "Soufflé"
Courtesy of Sea Hunt Pearls

CFWCP "Soufflé" Baroque, non bead

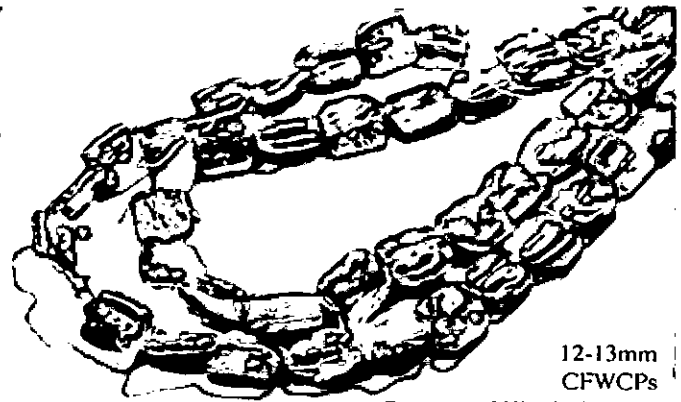
Size (mm)	Color	Price
12+	Pastel mix	\$ 600
13x16	Multi lavender peach	\$1,500
14x15.5	White	\$1,000
14x15.5	Pastel colors	\$1,000
14x17	Multi lavender peach	\$2,500
15x15.5	Multi lavender peach	\$1,000
15x16	white	\$1,200
15x18	Light lavender	\$2,000
16x18	Multi lavender peach	\$2,000
16x20	Light pastels	\$2,000

CFWCP Fireball Baroque, bead in

Size (mm)	Color	Price
16x18	Multicolor	\$2,000
15x18	Light lavender	\$2,000

**Chinese Freshwater
Cultured Pearls**

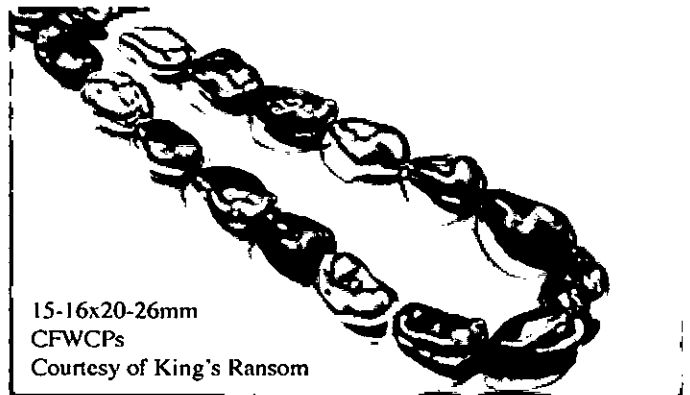
Chinese Freshwater Cultured Pearls are without a doubt the leading supply in most jewelry stores. Pricing is at all levels. We see CFWCPs in many shapes: of potato, off round, round, coin, and baroque with very high luster, great color, and very well priced. For instance, a 5x5.5mm, potato shape, metallic lavender with very high luster is priced at \$20 a strand. Pricing can range from \$20 to as much as \$2,000. There is something for everyone.



12-13mm
CFWCPs
Courtesy of King's Ransom



14-15mm
CFWCPs
Courtesy of King's Ransom



15-16x20-26mm
CFWCPs
Courtesy of King's Ransom

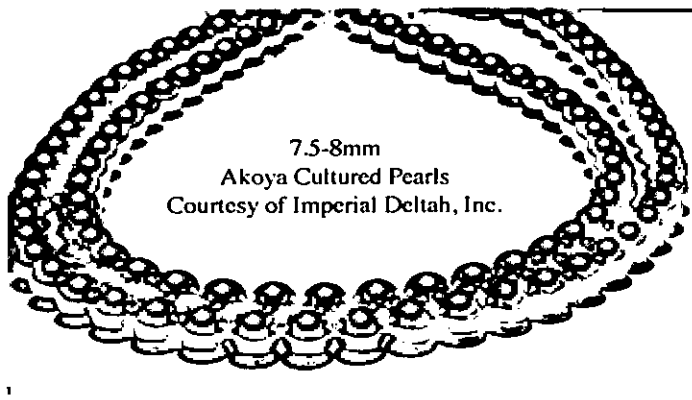
Chinese Freshwater Cultured Pearls

Size (mm)	Shape	Color	Price
2x2.5	Potato	Light lavender	\$25
3.5x4	Off round - round	Medium lavender	\$20
5x5.5	Potato	Medium metallic lavender	\$20
6x6.5	Potato	Light metallic lavender	\$20
7.5x8	Potato	Light pink	\$20
7.5x8	off round	Dark lavender	\$150
8.5x9	Potato	Medium lavender	\$250
8.5x9	round	Dark lavender, orange peach, white, apricot	\$250
8x8.5	slight off round	Medium lavender	\$200
8x8.5	round	Multicolor	\$100
10x11	Potato	very light lavender	\$500
11.5x12.5	Off round	Pastel mix	\$1,000
12 plus	Baroque	Pastel mix	\$600
13x16	Baroque	Multi lavender peach	\$1,500
14x15.5	Baroque	White	\$1,000
14x15.5	Baroque	Pastel colors	\$1,000
14x17	Baroque	Multi lavender peach	\$2,500
15x15.5	Baroque	Multi lavender peach	\$1,000

"Tucson 2010" from page 7

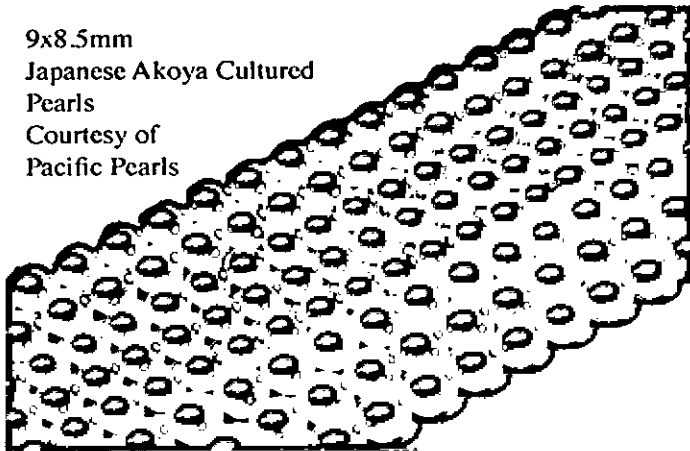
Japanese And Chinese Akoya Cultured Pearls

Chinese Akoya Cultured Pearls have very high luster. Treatments have taken care of blemishes and pits. Even smaller sizes had the same luster as larger beads. The pearls are indeed beautiful. Japanese and Chinese Akoya Cultured Pearls really are not distinguishable. Prices have remained fairly stable although we may see higher pricing from the Chinese in the spring.



7.5-8mm
Akoya Cultured Pearls
Courtesy of Imperial Delta, Inc.

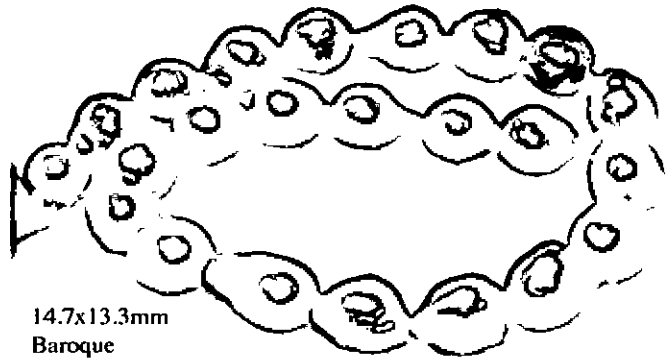
9x8.5mm
Japanese Akoya Cultured
Pearls
Courtesy of
Pacific Pearls



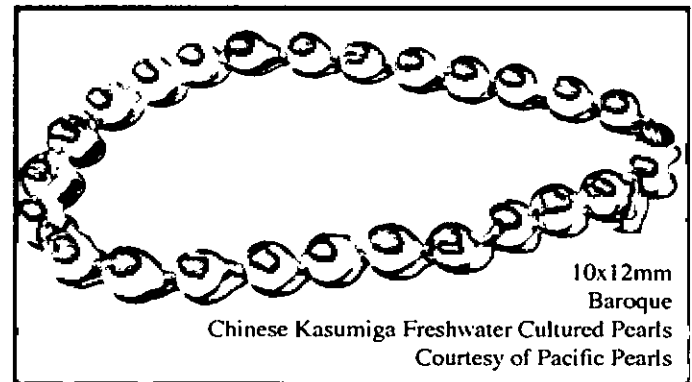
Kasumigaura Cultured Pearls

Kasumigaura Japanese bead-in freshwater Cultured Pearls are very unique. These pearls have an unusual surface with metallic colors which catches the eye.

The Chinese have also cultured CFWCPs that are very similar to the Japanese Kasumigaura. It is very difficult to distinguish between the two. Pricing varies widely between these origins. For instance, the Japanese Kasumigaura freshwater Cultured Pearls are 10-12mm baroque, multi-metallic, with high luster and priced at \$8,000. Chinese freshwater cultured pearl look-alikes are also 10-12mm, baroque, white pastels and priced at \$1,400. Caveat emptor (buyer beware)!



14.7x13.3mm
Baroque
Japanese Kasumigaura
Courtesy of Pacific Pearls



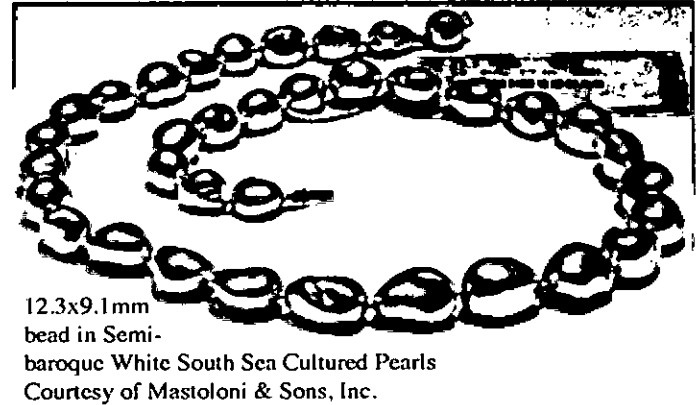
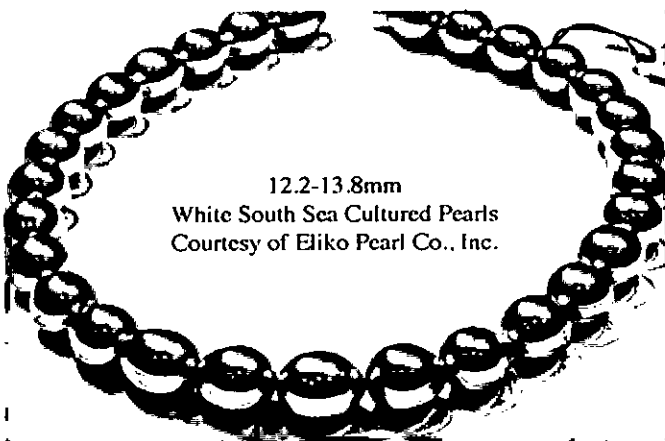
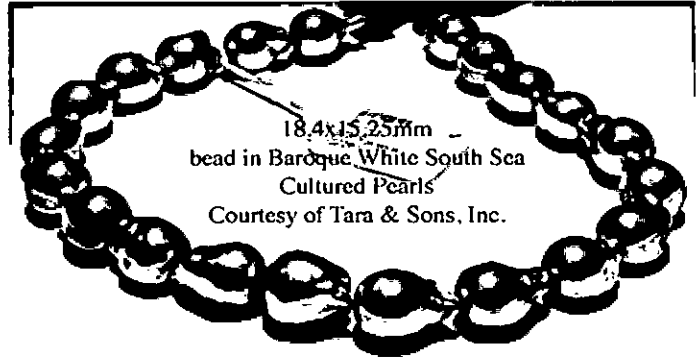
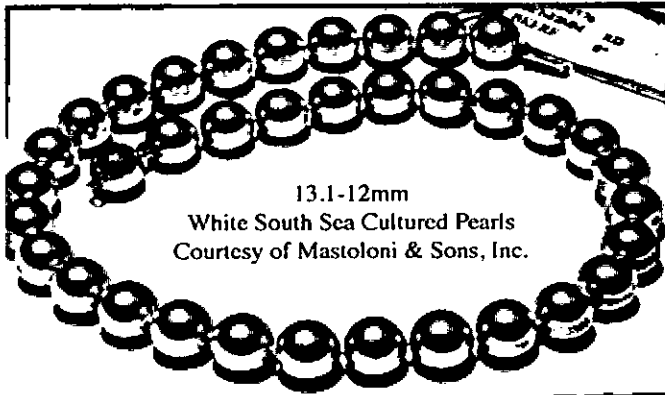
10x12mm
Baroque
Chinese Kasumiga Freshwater Cultured Pearls
Courtesy of Pacific Pearls

White South Sea Cultured Pearls

South Sea Cultured Pearls are exceedingly beautiful. Overall demand has diminished. Pricing is high and sales are slow, particularly in the mid to high end range.

We see round, white South Sea Cultured Pearls with affordable pricing. These sizes are smaller. For instance a strand of 6-7mm, round, slight rosé, very high luster, clean, and excellent match sells for \$700. These hard to come by strands were seen at the show.

South Sea baroque Cultured Pearls are very desirable. Even with discounting, strands were not selling well.



White South Sea Cultured Pearl Round, bead in		
Size (mm)	Color	Price
6x7	White slight rosé	\$700
8x9	White rosé	\$2,900
9-12.4	White	\$950
10-13.	Rosé	\$4,500
10-15.7	Rosé	\$9,500
10.2x14.6	slight pink	\$2,500
10.6-13.4	Rosé	\$6,500
11.3x9	White	\$9,000
11.5x10	Light cream	\$5,600
12x15.4	Yellowish	\$9,700
12.4x14.9	Slight Rosé	\$9,700
13x12	White	\$10,500
13.1-12	Rosé	\$17,000
13-13.9	Rosé	\$33,000
14-10.8	Rosé, and Yellow	\$6,000
14x16.3	Rosé	\$18,000
15-11	Rosé	\$14,000
16.7x14.1	White	\$18,000

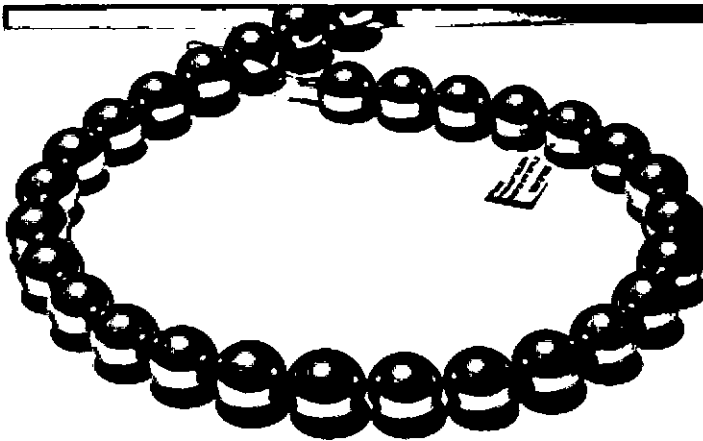
White South Sea Cultured Pearl Baroque, bead in		
Size (mm)	Color	Price
13.1x18	White silver	\$10,000
13.2x15.9	Silvery Blue	\$9,000
13.8x12	Slight Rosé	\$5,000
17.5x14	Silvery Grey	\$10,500
17.8x14	White	\$18,750
18.4x15.25	Silver Pink	\$26,250
18.5-14.4	Light silver blue rosé	\$27,500

White South Sea Cultured Pearl Semi-Baroque, bead in		
Size (mm)	Color	Price
12-15.1	slight pink	\$1,800
12.2x13.8	Slight Rosé	\$8,000
12.3-9.1	Rosé	\$3,500
13.1x14.5	Light Silver rosé overtone	\$5,800
13.2-14.8	slight pink	\$4,000
14.4-12.1	Silver blue rosé	\$5,500
15.05-11.8	Distinct Rosé	\$6,500

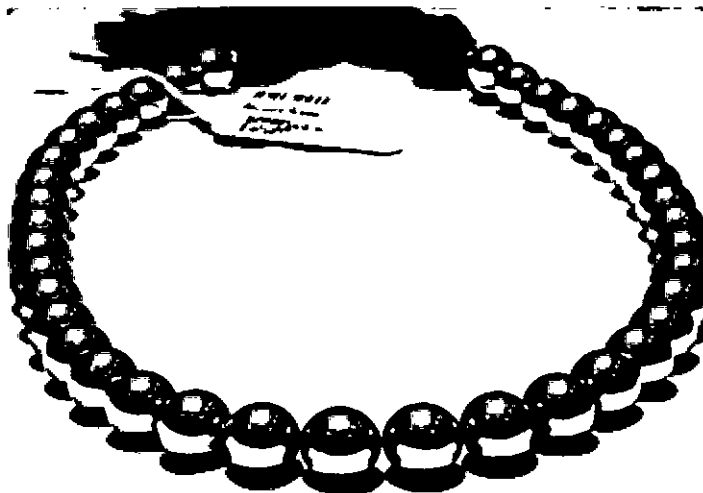
"Tucson 2010" from page 9

Golden South Sea Cultured Pearls

Round Golden South Sea Cultured Pearls appear to be in plentiful supply. They are primarily produced in the Philippines and Indonesia. Very large high quality beads are pricey. It is exceedingly difficult to know if there has been color treatment. Buyers themselves may not be given full disclosure but laboratories can answer these questions. Intense golden seems to be the preferred color but lighter golden shades are also very beautiful and desirable.



14-16mm
bead in Golden South Sea Cultured Pearls
Courtesy of Imperial Deltah, Inc.

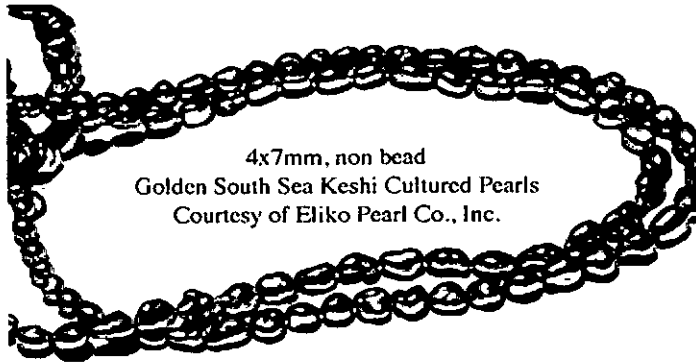


South Sea Keshi Cultured Pearls

We spotted a few strands of golden keshi South Sea Cultured Pearls priced at \$900 gauging at 4x7mm. These delightful strands are hard to find. Keshi Cultured Pearls are a by-product of the culturing process from the Pinctada Maxima oyster.

Golden South Sea Cultured Pearl, Round, bead in		
Size (mm)	Color	Price
10.1x10.2	golden	\$525
10.1x10.2	golden	\$525
10.1x10.2	golden	\$525
10.1x14	Golden	\$2,200
10.5x12.7	Intense golden	\$7,500
10-12.	natural golden	\$2,800
10-12.8	light medium golden	\$5,500
11.1	golden	\$900
11x13.5	Medium-Light golden	\$4,000
11.4x9.15	Dark golden	\$6,000
12.2x12.28	light golden	\$660
12.2x12.28	light golden	\$660
12.2x12.28	light golden	\$660
12.6x12.8	golden	\$1,200
12.6x12.8	golden	\$1,200
12.6x12.8	golden	\$1,200
13.2x16.8	Intense golden	\$28,000
13.7x13.8	golden	\$2,250
13.7x13.8	golden	\$2,250
13.7x13.8	golden	\$2,250
14.1x11	Dark golden	\$12,750
14.7	Intense golden	\$3,400
14.9x12	Medium golden	\$13,500
14-16	natural golden - mixed	\$7,500
16x13	Medium golden	\$18,000
16.25x16.32	golden	\$7,500
16.25x16.32	golden	\$7,500
16.25x16.32	golden	\$7,500

11.4x9.15mm
bead in Golden South Sea Cultured Pearls
Courtesy of Tara & Sons, Inc.



4x7mm, non bead
Golden South Sea Keshi Cultured Pearls
Courtesy of Eliko Pearl Co., Inc.

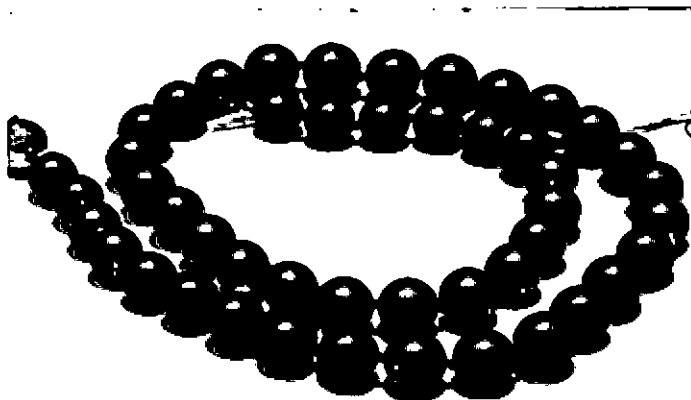
Tahitian Cultured Pearls

Tahitian cultured pearl production has had its share of political unrest. Farms have closed their doors and money is tight. For many farmers in French Polynesia, this has been a difficult period. Prevailing government regulation has resulted in lower quality exports. We still see beautiful Tahitian Cultured Pearls in round shapes with excellent overtones and very high luster. Pricing has come down. Very high end strands were not the main item on buyer's lists.

Tahitian keshi Cultured Pearls are available. A strand gauging 14x10 mm with green overtone and very high luster listed at \$5,500.

Mixed Strands

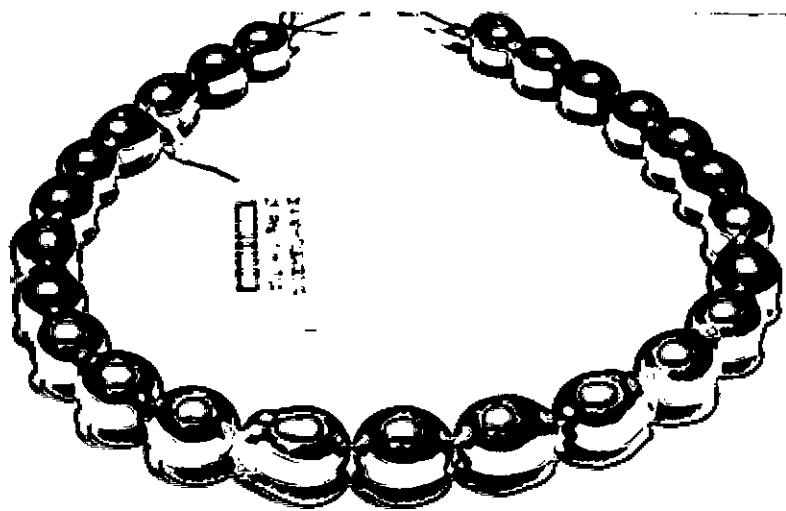
Mixed strands encompass white and golden South Sea Cultured Pearls, mixed Chinese Freshwater Cultured Pearls and Tahitian Cultured Pearls. Mixed strands are a sight to behold. As long as Nancy Pelosi continues to wear hers, we are in good shape.



8.5x10mm
bead in Tahitian round Cultured Pearls
Courtesy of Mastoloni & Sons, Inc.

Tahitian Cultured Pearl Round, bead in		
Size (mm)	Color	Price
8.1x10.7	Mixed -medium dark to dark color - mint green, aubergine, greenish yellow, light grey,	\$3,300
8.5-10	Green	\$4,500
8-9.	multicolor	\$250
9x9.1	Black with green and rosé overtone	\$2,900
9-10.	multicolor	\$250
9-10.5	multicolor	\$700
9-11.	multicolor	\$1,875
9-11.5	green overtone	\$4,300
10.1-12	green overtone	\$1,800
10.1x12.3	Black with green overtone	\$1,600
10.2x12.7	Yellow green	\$2,200
10.3-12	green overtone	\$3,800
10.9-8	Black with green overtone	\$2,500
10.9x14.9	Greyish greenish yellowish	\$2,500
10x12	Pistachio	\$6,000
10x13.2	Black with purple overtone, slight green	\$4,800
11.6x10	Slight bluish green	\$5,250
11-14.	Light Grey	\$2,500
12-14.	Black with peacock overtone	\$11,750
12-14.3	Black with strong green overtone	\$7,000
12-15.5	multicolor	\$6,000
13.1x15	Black with green and slight rosé overtone	\$8,000
13.4-10	Black with green overtone	\$3,500
13.6-12	Black with green overtone	\$14,000
14.8-12	Black with green overtone	\$9,000
14.8x13.1	Light grey	\$10,500
14-10	Black with green overtone	\$5,500
17.4-15	Greenish grey	\$14,000

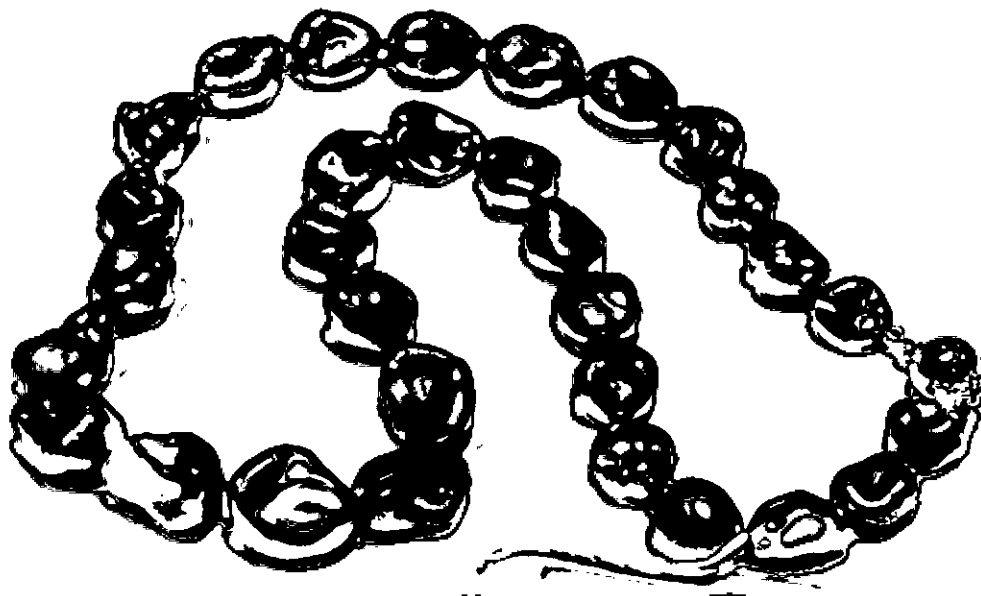
"Tucson 2010" from page 11



14.8x12mm
bead in Semi-Baroque Tahitian Culture Pearls
Courtesy of Mastoloni & Sons, Inc.



10x12mm
bead in
circles Tahitian baroque
Cultured Pearls
Courtesy of
Sea Hunt Pearls



10x14mm
non bead
Tahitian Keshi
Cultured Pearls
Courtesy of
Mastoloni &
Sons, Inc.

Tahitian Cultured Pearl Baroque			
Size (mm)	Shape	Color	Price
9x14	Semi-baroque	medium silver	\$1,200
10x12	Baroque	Multi color	\$850
14.8x12	Semi-Baroque	Silver with greenish bluish overtones, yellow, rosé	\$3,500
14x10	Keshi Baroque	Green overtone	\$5,500
15.5-13	Semi-Baroque	Rosé, green, peacock,	\$3,900



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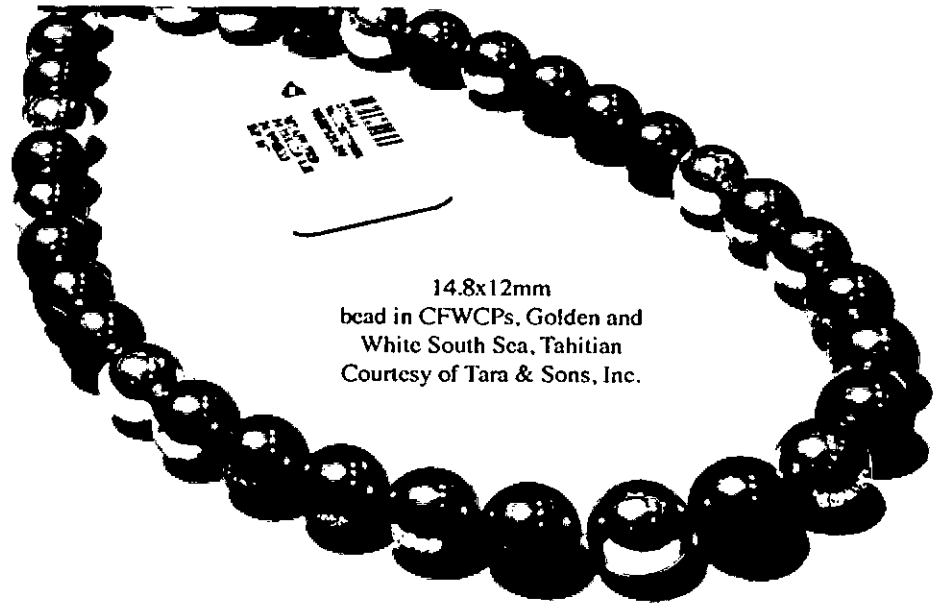
"Tucson 2010" from page 12

Summary

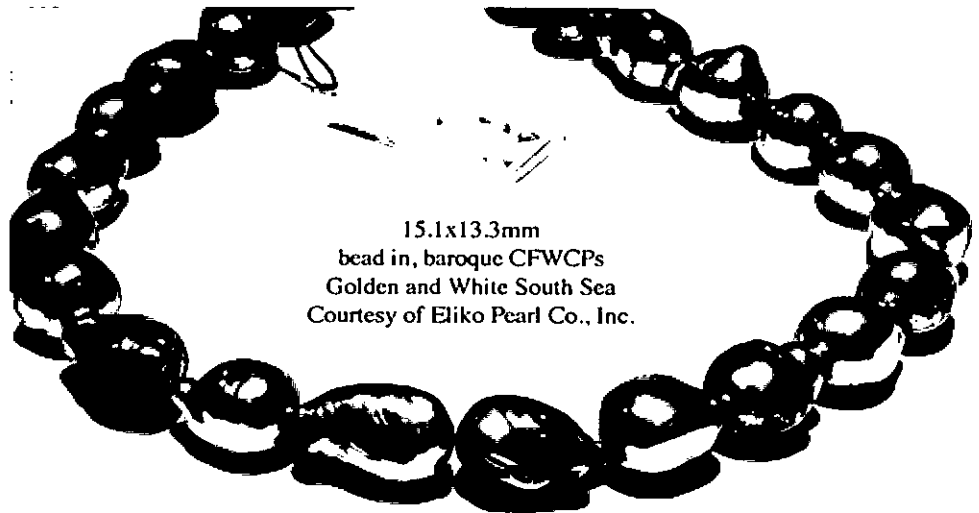
The information contained in this report is intended to provide a cross section of what is available in the current pearl market at the wholesale level. The tables, listings, sizes, and prices are not intended for grading purposes. All pictures were taken by Lois H. Berger, G.G.

My sincere thanks to the members of our pearl group: K.C. Bell, David Blount-Porter, Sara Canizarro, Jo Ellen Cole, Mary Dona Dirlam, Al Freedman, Heidi Harders, Josh Humbert, Carolyn Jacoby, Dr. Cigdem Lule, Renee Newman, Stuart Robertson, Gary Roskin, Andrew Schoenecker, Elisabeth Strack, Gabriele Weinmann, and Fuji Voll.

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14.8x12mm
bead in CFWCPs, Golden and
White South Sea, Tahitian
Courtesy of Tara & Sons, Inc.



15.1x13.3mm
bead in, baroque CFWCPs
Golden and White South Sea
Courtesy of Eliko Pearl Co., Inc.

Mixed Cultured Pearl Strands			
Size (mm)	Shape	Color	Price
9.5x10	Off round - round	Some beads, lower luster - CFWCPs, Tahitian, Golden SS - mixed pastels	\$2,000
12x13	Round	CFWCPs, Tahitian, Golden SS - mixed pastels	\$6,500
14.8x12	Round	CFWCP, White SS, Golden SS, Tahitian	\$9,000
15.1x13.3	Baroque	CFWCP, South Seas, Metallic, excellent match - purple, lavender, cream with rosé, pink, blue, intense golden, white, metallic peach	\$5,400
15x17.5	Off Round	Mixed Tahitian - Black with purple, silver rosé, pistachio, mint green, natural chocolate, white, silver with blue overtone	\$17,000



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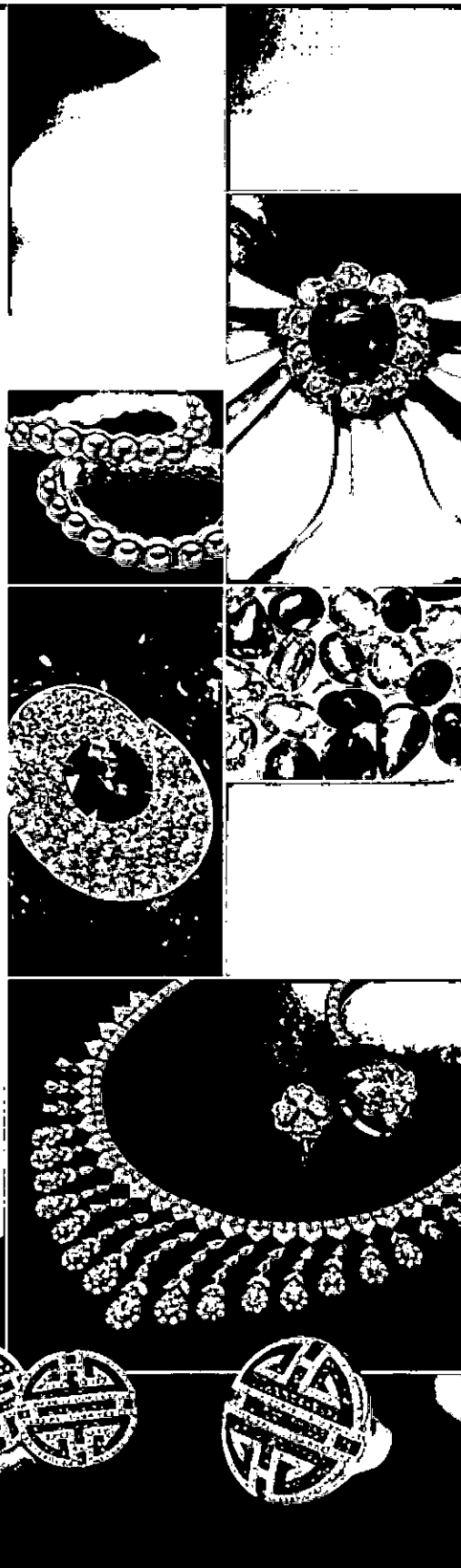


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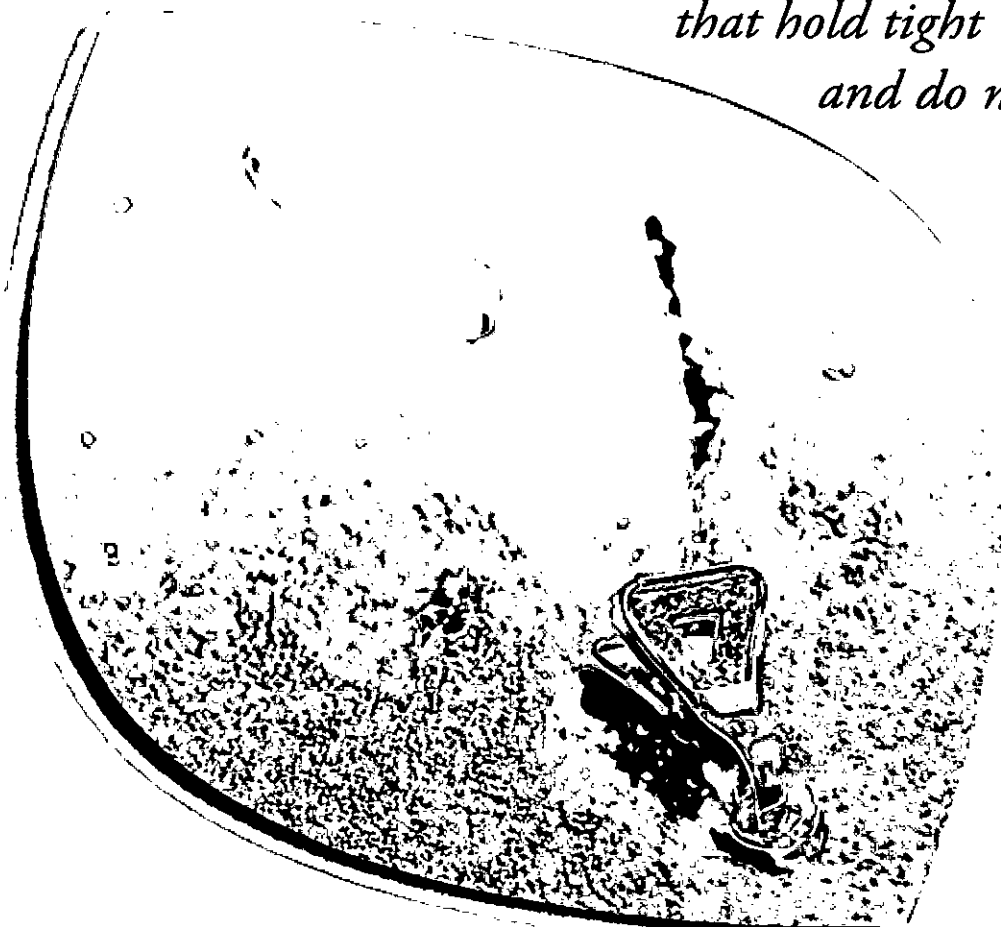
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