

PEARL

Perfect shining spheres. Lustrous baroque forms. Seductive strands, warm to the touch. Pearls are simply and purely organic.



ABOUT PEARLS



Perhaps the best-loved gems of all time, pearls—natural and cultured—occur in a wide variety of colors. The most familiar are white and cream, but the palette of colors extends to every hue.

Natural pearls form around a microscopic irritant in the bodies of certain mollusks. Cultured pearls are the result of the deliberate insertion of a bead or piece of tissue that the mollusk coats with nacre.

BIRTHSTONES & ANNIVERSARIES

Pearl is the birthstone for June and the gem of the third and thirtieth anniversaries.

TREATMENTS

There are a number of processes used to alter the color, apparent clarity, or improve the durability of gems.

SYNTHETICS

Some gemstones have synthetic counterparts that have essentially the same chemical, physical, and optical properties, but are grown by man in a laboratory.

IMITATIONS

Any gem can be imitated—sometimes by manmade materials or by natural materials chosen by man to impersonate a particular gem.

2206 BC

A Chinese historian writes about pearls for the first time.

653 FIFTH AVENUE

In 1917, Pierre Cartier traded a double strand of natural pearls for a mansion on Fifth Avenue in New York City.

1893

Kokichi Mikimoto successfully cultures a pearl in Japan.

FACTS

MINERAL: Calcium Carbonate

CHEMISTRY: CaCO_3

COLOR: White, black, gray, yellow, orange, pink, lavender, green, blue

REFRACTIVE INDEX: 1.52-1.69

SPECIFIC GRAVITY: 2.60-2.85

MOHS HARDNESS: 2.5-3.0

BIREFRINGENCE: None



WHY WE LOVE THIS GEMSTONE

LUSTER

Luster results from reflection of light rays off the pearl's surface, and from concentric inner layers of nacre, like light bouncing off a convex mirror.

IMITATIONS

Imitation pearls are smooth when rubbed against your teeth, while natural or cultured pearls have a slightly rough texture.

NATURAL PEARLS

Natural pearls can be separated from cultured pearls by taking X-rays to reveal their inner structures.