



ANANDIA PEARLS
presents

"Pearls of Wisdom" Educational Series Part 1: The Pearl Buying Guide

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Welcome to the ANANDIA PEARLS "Pearls of Wisdom" Pearl Buying Guide!

We're so happy you have chosen us to be your trusted advisor to help guide you through the pearl-shopping process.

We created this quick but comprehensive guide to *get you up-to-speed quickly* on the pearl buying process, so that you can make the right buying decisions for you, and to help you save tons of money in the process!

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Rule #1: Shopping For Pearls is NOT Difficult!

Despite the deluge of "information" out there, know this: **Shopping for pearls does NOT have to be difficult!**

It's like anything else - when you're in the market for, say, a new car or a new computer, when you **know what to look for and what questions to ask**, you feel more confident, right? That's because you're ahead in the game!

So, our goal is that you get the most value for your money, *and enjoy the process* of shopping confidently for pearls. Pearls can be a big investment, so we really hope you invest a little time first to go through this buying guide.

We'll do our best to make it **EASY and FUN!**

What you'll learn in the Pearls of Wisdom Buying Guide

- **The 7 Pearl Value Factors:** How to Choose the Best Pearl for the \$\$
- How to Avoid the 5 Mistakes Most People Make When Buying Pearls!
- Knowing the Four Main Types of Pearls and How Much You Should Pay for Each
- Discover the 7 Secrets that the “Mass-Market” Chain Jewelry Store Doesn't Want You to Know!
- How to tell Fake Pearls from the Real Thing
- Tips on Negotiating the Best Deals Possible
- Pearl Care, Handling, and much more!

We promise that by the end of this short series, not only will you be confident about what to look for and what questions to ask, but that you also have the buying advantage over 95% of the jewelry stores out there selling pearl jewelry.

Who are we, and how can we make this promise?

Because for over 25 years the Anandia Pearls jewelry family has been on the inside track of the jewelry industry, and in particular the pearl industry. You've probably never heard of us before, because we work behind the scenes. We know how the system works.



- ◆ **ANANDIA PEARLS** is a pearl importer and wholesaler, traveling directly to the sources: the pearl markets and farms.
- ◆ We negotiate volume purchases at the source - pearl farms and dealer markets - and sell directly (and discretely) to the very jewelry stores you see in the malls and on television.
- ◆ A limited volume of our sales are offered direct to the public.

So, we're willing to share with you how pearls are priced, how most jewelry stores operate, and how to save yourself a small fortune on your pearl jewelry! Ready? Ok, let's get you up to speed on pearls and the pearl buying process!

The Four Main Types of Pearls... and how much you should pay for each!

As you may already know, there are four major kinds of cultured pearls. Each type comes from a particular species of mollusk (an oyster or mussel), and the value of each varies considerably. In the next section of this guide, you will learn more about each of them, especially judging value, but let's start with an overview of the different pearl types:

- 1) **Freshwater Pearls** are generally the least expensive and the most common variety of pearl. This variety is cultivated in vast quantities in freshwater lakes, mostly in China and the United States. They often appear in pink or pastel colors, but are very commonly dyed to any color. You'll see this variety sold in malls and your local Costco.



- 2) **Akoya Cultured Pearls** were the first pearl variety to be cultivated commercially at the beginning of the 1900's in Japan by Mikimoto and others. In general, the Akoya Pearl is considered a “step above” freshwater pearls in quality. This is the pearl type that often what comes to mind when someone mentions the word “pearl”: small, white, and shiny.



- 3) **Tahitian Black Pearls** might be called the “rock stars” of the pearl world, at least in terms of their popularity! Actually, black is a misnomer since Tahitian pearls come in many hues of greens, blues, browns, and grays. While no one color is really “best” or most valuable, except in terms of personal preferences, green “peacock” shades are quite popular. Grown in Tahiti (French Polynesia) these pearls come much bigger than Akoyas and Freshwater pearls, and tend to cost more. (While Tahitian Pearls are sometimes referred to as “South Sea Pearls”, for the sake of clarity, we'll treat them separately in this Guide.)



- 4) **South Sea Pearls** are the biggest and most valuable of all pearls, and come in two varieties: White and Golden. **White South Sea Pearls** are mostly grown in the waters off Australia and are the largest pearls on record. But the most valuable pearls in the world are the rare **Golden South Sea Pearls**, which come from the waters off Indonesia and the Philippines; most people have never even heard of Golden pearls, let alone held one up close.



In this Guide, you will learn more about what to look for when shopping for each pearl specific type, so that you know that you are in charge during your shopping process!

The #1 Factor: Luster

As we're sure you want to get started looking at pearls right away, remember that the number one factor determining a pearl's value is its luster. This is the pearl's inner glow, the reflection you observe on the surface of the pearl.

The importance of good luster in a pearl cannot be underestimated! In a pearl with better luster, you should be able to see the reflection of your finger clearly as you move it closer to the pearl.

An easy way to choose luster is to compare two pearls of different prices side-by-side using your finger's reflection as a guide. If the reflections are fuzzy, move on... don't spend your money wearing a lackluster pearl around town! Those who know pearls will notice (and you did intend to show your pearls off, right?)

Using this suggestion alone will save you hundreds - even thousands - of dollars!

The pictures below show increasing luster from left to right. Notice the spot of light appears “tighter” and most distinct on the rightmost image.



Illustration 1: Low Luster



Illustration 3: Medium Luster



Illustration 2: High Luster

Wanna know a Secret about most Jewelry Stores?

While we're at it, do you want to know another little secret? Many jewelry stores may claim to follow a grading system for pearls but, unlike diamonds, pearls really do not have a standard grading system. Surprised? While there are key factors that contribute to the value of a pearl - which you will learn shortly - in the real world these are often judged subjectively through experience.

So, it's important that you always ask the pearl vendor how they determine the grade. If they can't tell you, that not a good sign!

Quick Review

Just to review: so far, we've briefly introduced the four major types or "species" of pearls you're likely to see in the marketplace, and mentioned the importance of luster as a pearl value factor.

- 1) Freshwater Pearls
- 2) Akoya Cultured Pearls
- 3) Tahitian Black Pearls
- 4) South Sea Pearls (White and Golden)

This list is roughly in ascending order of price, with Freshwater pearls tending to be the least costly and South Sea pearls tending to be the most expensive. However, this is a **very general rule**.

The truth is that it is really the **7 Value Factors**, discussed next, which determine how much an individual pearl or pearl strand is worth.

The 7 Value Factors for Pearls

Now, we're going to bring you up to speed on the 7 Value Factors you will need to know when looking for the best pearls at the best price.

Just as diamond shoppers use the "Four C's" to evaluate stones, pearl shoppers should keep in mind these seven factors that follow. We'll explain the relative importance of

each when it comes to price, and how these value factors relate to each of the four species of pearls you've learned about already.

Understand the section below, and **your Kung-Fu will be strong!** You will know more than many long-time jewelers know about pearls. If you happen to be a jeweler reading this guide, I really hope you will absorb and share it freely with your clients so that everyone benefits!

The 7 Value Factors - What to Look For

We have already introduced luster, the most important subjective factor in choosing pearls. Below are all seven factors in relative order of importance. We will describe each in turn. Afterwards, we will discuss these factors for each pearl species.

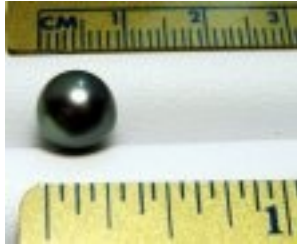
- 1) Luster
- 2) Size
- 3) Surface Quality
- 4) Shape
- 5) Color
- 6) Nacre Thickness
- 7) Matching

The “Holy Trinity” of Pearl Grading: Luster, Size, Surface

Luster (sometimes spelled "lustre") is the queen of value. As mentioned before, this is the shine or the reflection that your eye observes when light hits the surface of the pearl. Look for sharpness of reflections; the light source should appear as tight and clear as possible.

Size. All things else being equal, the larger the pearl, the better and the more expensive. It takes a long time for an oyster to produce larger pearls, and there are fewer of them. Big pearls with high luster are rarer still and command higher prices. See the sections below for the size ranges to expect for each species of pearl.

Example pearl sizes are shown on the next page.



9 mm



10 mm



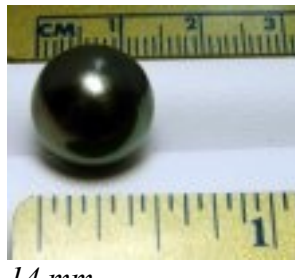
11 mm



12 mm



13 mm



14 mm



15 mm

Surface Quality. Just like most diamonds have natural "inclusions", most pearls have natural surface characteristics, which may appear on the pearl's surface as "dots" or "dashes". Ideally, the fewer of these that you see, the better. Surface marks like these are very, very common, and are the result of a natural process over which pearl farmer has little or no control. Therefore, perfectly clean pearls are very rare and expensive. Just keep in mind that, like most things in life, marks tend to be obvious only when you're looking for them, but often are not even noticeable when the pearls are worn.



Moderate Surface



Slight Surface



Clean Surface



Very Clean Surface

The Other Important Value Factors

Shape. There are several ideal shapes: round, tear-drop, and baroque (free-form). In general, the closer a pearl is to one of these ideal shapes, the better and more valuable it is. For example, if the look of the pearl seems to be round, it should be as round as possible. Rounds used to be considered the most valuable, but these days a nice drop-shape or baroque-shape can cost as much or more as a round, depending on how it will be used.

Color. The primary color you observe in the pearl is called "body color". In addition, some pearl species also exhibit additional minor colors as overtones or orient. More on this later. While there is no wrong color, some colors are considered more desirable than others, depending on the species of pearl.

Nacre Thickness. When the nucleus is inserted into an oyster to create a pearl, the oyster responds by coating the nucleus with layer upon layer of a substance called conchiolin, or nacre. The thicker the nacre, the bigger and more durable the pearl will be. Pearls with thin nacre may show cracks or chipping around the drill holes, and should always be avoided.

Matching. When looking at multiple pearls which will be worn together, be sure that they look beautiful together! As a general rule, pearls worn together should be similar with regards to each Value Factor described above. This is especially true for luster. The many exceptions to the rule are designs for "artistic liberty". For example, a multicolor strand will by definition have more than one color. Some people love subtle ranges of color or size, which is perfectly acceptable, too. Remember, it's the overall "look" that is most important.

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Ok, now that we've covered the **7 Value Factors**, let's see how they apply to each pearl species!

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Freshwater Pearls - Value Factors

Freshwater cultured pearls are raised in lakes in vast quantities, especially in China. A given mussel will often produce many pearls at one time - sometimes as many as 50

pearls at once! This, coupled with the faster production time (and even faster capitalism!) of the Chinese market has led to lower prices and, surprisingly, pearls of better and better pearl quality. Freshwater pearls are cultivated with a technique different from that used with other pearls species; there is no bead nucleus.

What to Expect:

- Freshwater pearl sizes are usually in the range from 4mm-12mm. Larger sizes are possible.
 - Natural colors are whites, pinks, pastels, lavenders, but color treatment is also common. If in doubt, ask... it effects the price you should pay!
 - Freshwater pearls may appear slightly less round than the more expensive Akoya pearls, but this is changing as cultivation techniques improve.
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Akoya Pearls - Value Factors

Akoya pearls are the "original" cultured pearl, and are usually the image that comes to mind when you mention the word "pearl". As with all pearls, look for as high luster and as few surface characteristics as possible within your budget.

What to Expect:

- ◆ Akoya Pearl sizes are usually from 6mm-9mm.
 - ◆ Natural body colors are neutral whites and creams. Dark colors like blue or black are not natural colors, but can still be desirable.
 - ◆ Overtone colors are often highly desirable, including pink/"rose".
 - ◆ For Akoya pearl strands, it's especially important to check the nacre thickness. Check for chipping around the drill hole. Also, hold the strand at either end and roll back and forth. Variations in color (called "blinking") indicate thin nacre and should be avoided!
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Tahitian Pearls - Value Factors

Tahitian pearls are cultivated in French Polynesia (Tahiti) in oysters using techniques originally developed for Akoya oysters. The Tahitian oysters are much bigger however,

and grow in warmer waters. The result are pearls which are bigger than Akoya pearls and most Freshwater pearls. The thicker nacre also makes overtones (minor colors appearing "underneath" the main body color), and orient (a "rainbow-like" effect) more common.

What to Expect:

- Tahitian pearl sizes usually range from 9mm-17+mm, or even bigger in rare cases.
- **IMPORTANT:** Pearls which are smaller than 8mm may be beautiful, but except for rare cases are almost certainly **not** Tahitian pearls. It's probably a treated Akoya or freshwater pearl.
- Natural body colors are typically darker but are incredibly diverse, ranging from blacks and browns, to greens, blues, purples, grays, and goldens. With so many options to choose from, and so many varied personal tastes, no one color is "most" valuable these days.
- Common color terms: the term "peacock" describes a black pearl with green (and possibly pink) overtones. "Aubergine" or "Eggplant" describes a pearl with purplish cast.
- Orient is very attractive in Tahitian pearls, as is an overtone color in green, blue, or pink.
- In addition to round, baroque ("free-form") shapes are very popular, as are nice drop-shapes.

South Sea Pearls - Value Factors

South Sea Pearls grow big in the warm waters of the south Pacific, larger than any other species. White South Sea pearls are the giants, cultivated off the coast of Australia, and the even more rare Golden South Sea pearls near Indonesia and the Phillipines. Because of their size and distinctive look, it's hard to confuse them with anything else. However, Freshwater pearls in the same size range are becoming more common in baroque shapes, so be sure to confirm with the vendor.

What to Expect

- Sizes usually from 10mm to 18mm+, and occasionally even bigger!
- Natural colors are white or golden. For golden pearls, it's extremely important to ask whether the color is natural. Color treated pearls abound, and are worth much less than natural goldens, since the color may fade over time!
- Baroque shapes in White South Sea pearls are very popular, in addition to the classic round.

What's Next?

You may have heard the terms "natural pearls", "cultured pearls", or "treated pearls", and wondered what the difference was between all these.

Or you may be asking right now, "How can I know if this pearl is a 'real' pearl? What should I know to avoid paying too much?"

Rest easy! We'll cover that and much more shortly, including:

- How to Tell Fake Pearls from the Real Thing
- The 7 Secrets that your Local Mall Jewelry Store Doesn't Want You to Know!
- Negotiation tips, and How to Make Your Pearls Last a Lifetime!

We're going to have some fun applying our new pearl expertise in the marketplace! We'll use our knowledge to decide on pearl authenticity, spot fakes and treatments, and get the best deals possible on pearls by understanding the lingo and also how "the system" works! Plus, we'll touch on caring for your pearls after you take the plunge.

Quick Review: Pearl Types and The Value Factors

First, another quick review. There are four major types or "species" of pearls common in the marketplace today: 1) Freshwater, 2) Akoya, 3) Tahitian, and 4) South Sea (in both White and Golden varieties.)

Each of the pearl species should be evaluated according to the **7 Value Factors**: 1) Luster, 2) Size, 3) Surface Quality, 4) Shape, 5) Color (Body, Overtone, Orient), 6) Nacre Thickness, and 7) Matching.

Although each pearl species has specific qualities, always remember that luster, size, and surface quality have the greatest impact on value.

Now, let's continue and discuss some "lingo" and see how the pearl market works from farm to consumer.

Where Do Pearls Come From?

We are often asked, "What's the difference between a 'natural' pearl and a 'cultured' pearl? Is a cultured pearl a real pearl?"

The answer is 'Yes' - a cultured pearl is a real pearl. In fact, 99% of all pearls you're likely to see in your lifetime are cultured pearls. In fact, it's everything we've been discussing so far.

The Decline of Natural Pearls

The difference between “cultured and “natural” is in how the process of pearl formation begins. Natural pearls form when a foreign object, such as a parasite, lodges itself in the soft body of an oyster. The oyster attempts to protect itself by secreting nacre, a smooth crystalline substance that surrounds and ultimately encases the object. As layer upon layer of nacre is added, the object becomes larger and a pearl is formed.

However, due to over-harvesting of oysters and ocean pollution, natural pearls have largely disappeared from the world market, and haven't been seen in any volume since the 1800's. The extremely rare ones which do exist today tend to be small, or family heirlooms. Fine quality natural pearls can command extraordinarily high prices.

The Solution: Cultured Pearls

About a hundred years ago, a little ingenious human intervention enabled a more controlled method of producing high-quality pearls. The result is the **cultured pearl**, which represents nearly all pearls on the market today.

Cultured pearls are formed when a highly skilled pearl technician inserts a particle called a **nucleus** (usually a small round piece of shell) and/or a piece of oyster tissue mantle into a specific spot inside oyster. It's considered a delicate surgery.

The oyster is then returned to its habitat and nurtured for up to three years, sometimes longer. The process of putting oysters on lines and cages, lifting them up and down to clean and inspect them, is labor intensive and expensive!

However, one problem... there is no guarantee that an oyster will ever produce a pearl!

Oysters are particularly sensitive creatures; even slight changes in water temperature or

nutrition can kill off entire crops. The skill of the pearl technician is reflected in the quality and quantity of pearls produced - the painstaking procedure of implanting the nucleus requires talent and precision.

Only about 20% of pearl cultivation results in marketable pearls. Of these, perhaps only 1-2% are of top quality. These rarities are always in high demand.

From The Pearl Farm to You

From the farm, pearls are usually bought by distributors who contract to buy a large volume of loose pearls from the farmer. These distributors may sell the pearls to dealers, or the pearls may be auctioned off at set times throughout the year. One way or the other, pearls usually make their way to either Japan or Hong Kong, where they are parceled up for distribution to the rest of the pearl-loving world.

Price is always a factor of quantity purchased, quality, and the relationship between buyer and seller. In general, volume purchasers get better terms than would most retail jewelry stores looking to purchase a smaller amount. As a result, most retailers buy smaller quantities from wholesale distributors.

Next, we'll reveal Seven Secrets which your local jeweler may not disclose to you if you don't ask. We at ANANDIA PEARLS believe strongly in transparency, because we've learned that in the long run it benefits everyone - buyers and shoppers - to know what's going on. Fewer misunderstandings, better service, better prices!

7 Secrets that Your Local Jewelers Might Not Want You to Know!

SECRET #1:

Most Jewelers Don't Know Pearls.

Yes, it may sound incredible, but most jewelers are not well-versed in pearls or the pearl market. Although they may be very well-educated in diamonds or jewelry, many have never taken a single class on pearls. In fact, at last check the Gemological Institute of America (GIA) currently offers only one in-class, one-day seminar on pearl grading. It's not a required course for a GIA degree, so most jewelers never even take it (however, you can sure that all of the professionals at ANANDIA PEARLS do!)

SECRET #2:

Many Jewelers Don't Own the Pearls In Their Showcase.

One secret of the jewelry industry is extensive use of "memo", or consignment. Since most jewelry stores sell fewer pearls than say, diamonds or gold, it is common practice for the jeweler to "borrow" the pearls from a pearl dealer to show a client. Nothing wrong with that in itself, but this practice usually results in a higher price passed on to the end consumer than if the pearls are purchased and sold directly

SECRET #3:

Many Jewelers Must Sell Pearls at Two or Three Times What They Paid

Most retail jewelry stores have high overhead - rent, marketing, merchandising, salespersons commissions, in addition to the cost buying of the merchandise itself. Markups need to be high enough to cover all this. Again, nothing necessarily wrong here, but as a consumer you should know where your money is going.

High markups are especially common on pearls. Most jewelry stores simply won't buy pearls in volume, because it is a niche product compared to diamonds. As a result, they must pay a higher price (either on memo or outright) and pass this on to the consumer.

SECRET #4:

Jewelry Salespeople May Claim a Standard Grading System for Pearls

Unlike diamonds, there is no standard grading system for pearls. In practice, most pearl dealers typically define their own grading systems, and visually rate what they see within their own system.

However, many retail sales presentations may show a strand of pearls as "AAA" without disclosing how that grade was assigned. Without a standard chart or other pearls to compare against, such a grade is often meaningless.

About Grading Systems

That being said, you're likely to encounter various grading systems: Mikimoto "pyramids", GIA, Tahitian A-D, etc. etc. Just remember that the purpose of any system is to provide a common language for people to discuss pearl quality.

One very common system (we use it ourselves at Anandia Pearls) is the AAA-A Grading System. AAA is the highest grade, with a very high luster and at least 95% of the surface free from blemishes. AA will have high luster, with at least 75% of the surface free of blemishes. Grade A is still a nice pearl, but has lower luster than the higher grades and/or more than 25% of the surface showing blemishes. You may also see intermediate grades, like AA+ or A+, for pearls that fall between two of these grades.

Just remember, use your new knowledge to evaluate pearls on their actual merits, and use grades to just get a "ballpark" idea when you discuss pearls with the sellers.

SECRET #5: Client Education on Pearls is Often Lacking

Many sales presentations will extoll the "benefits" - that pearls are "beautiful" or "cherished for generations". What they often can't tell you are all the facts.

- "What makes a given pearl better than another?"
- "Why is this pearl so much more expensive than that one?"
- "How do I care for pearls?"

A great salesperson should educate you on all these questions, and help you make an informed decision.

SECRET #6: Price Does Not Always Indicate Quality

Buying pearls based solely on price is the number one fatal mistake most consumers make. One store may offer an 8mm pearl strand for X dollars, while another store may offer an 8mm pearl strand for half the price. Great deal? Um... maybe not!

First, go back to the basics. Use the knowledge you've gained here to decide whether or not the strands are like quality. Only compare "apples to apples", and don't buy solely on price. Cheap pearls that crack or change color aren't worth your cash or your time.

SECRET #7: Many Repair Jewelers Do Not Know Correct Pearl Handling

Pearls are easily damaged by standard jewelry cleaning solutions, torches, and ultrasonic machines. If the bench jeweler is not familiar with the correct way to remove pearls, stringing, or gluing they can damage your precious investment. Ask how often they deal with pearls, and only entrust your future heirloom with someone who knows what they're doing.

How to Spot Pearl Imitations

Because pearl production is an expensive, labor-intensive endeavor with no guarantee of success for the farmer, top-quality pearls always command top prices. After all, they are hard to obtain!

Just as with anything of value, whether it's diamonds or designer handbags, cheaper imitations are always available for those who want them. When it comes to pearls, you need to know how to spot imitations and avoid the unscrupulous (or simply uninformed) proffering their goods among us.

Pearl Test #1: "The Rub"

As explained before, real pearls (both natural and cultured) are created by layers of nacre, one on top of the other. Although pearls have a luxurious smoothness to the touch, in reality these layers overlap unevenly and roughly.

If you have two pearls, rub one against the other very lightly, without damaging the pearls. If the pearls are real, **you should feel a slight gritty or sandy sensation**. What you're feeling are the layers of nacre rubbing against one another. Imitations made of glass, plastic, etc. will feel smooth and glassy when rubbed together - humans have still not figured out how to reproduce the oyster's expertise!

If you have only a single pearl, you can also feel this sandy sensation by rubbing the pearl lightly against the front of your tooth (just don't put the pearl between your teeth or bite it - you could damage it and be forced to take it home with you!)

Be aware, however, that performing this test in public might label you a newbie... it's better and safer to ask for a second pearl if in doubt.

Pearl Test #2: "Feeling Cool"

Real pearls will also be cool to the touch. At room temperature, the surface of a pearl will be cool against the back of your hand or your face. Plastic will feel warm to the touch at room temperature.

Pearl Test #3: "The Look"

True pearls nearly always show natural characteristics: a small dimple here, a slight variation in color or luster there. Be tolerant of minor blemishes; in many cases they add unique character. This is a big part of the appeal of pearls - they are a product of nature!

Imitations usually appear "perfect" in every way: bright reflections, spotless surface, identical color match. However, there is usually something about "the look" that seems unnatural, a lack of depth in those qualities. With a little practice, you can spot these easily.

Pearl Test #4: "Heavy, Man!"

True pearls also have a distinctive weight or "heft" to them. Recognizing this trait will come with practice. They simply have a "substantial" feel that you generally don't find with imitations. In fact, most pearl dealers instinctively use "weight" and "look" first when evaluating pearls.

How to Spot Fake Colors

Color treatments for pearls are fairly common. However, pearls which are natural in color are almost always more valuable than treated ones. One reason is that some treatments may actually fade or make the pearl less durable. Always ask whether the color is natural, especially before making a major purchase!

Each pearl species has a specific color range, as you discovered in the last installment of this series. Some colors not natural for particular species. For example, Akoya pearls come naturally in white, but not black. Black pearls smaller than 8mm are probably either color-treated Akoya or Freshwater pearls, since Tahitian pearls don't usually come much smaller than 8mm.

Also, if the colors you see appear to look "metallic" or otherwise seem "unnatural", suspect color treatment.

If the pearl has already been drilled, one trick is to examine the drill holes under magnification. Obvious color treatments may show ink residue or other differences in color.

Bear in mind that there are cases where color treatment is very hard to detect, especially in golden south sea pearls. In such cases, the only way to know more is to send the pearls to a testing laboratory to confirm the color. Sometimes, even labs cannot know for certain.

The thing to keep in mind is that a reputable pearl dealer should always stand behind their product and disclose any color treatments up-front. If in doubt, just ask.

Other Guidelines for Pearl Evaluation

Follow these basic guidelines when evaluating pearls:

1. View pearls against a white background to minimize color distortions. Pearls absorb and reflect the colors around them, including colors from your own clothing!
2. If possible, view pearls under natural (white) light.
3. Hold pearl strands at either end and roll them slowly to spot surface characteristics and evidence of uneven nacre (which appears as "blinking" or changes in color.)

Buying Pearls on the Internet

When viewing pearls on the Internet, it's always a challenge to know whether pictures shown accurately reflect the color listed in the description. **However, don't let this be a barrier to buying your pearls on the Web!** Ask for more information, if necessary.

Reputable companies which specialize in pearls understand how important color match is, and will usually go to great pains to ensure their pictures are as accurate as possible - and in any case, should stand behind their product. Word spreads quickly on the Internet - it's their reputation on the line!

When in doubt about an item, call the company and talk to someone. Based on what you've learned here, ask them questions. Listen and use your judgment and intuition. Make sure that you feel comfortable they're knowledgeable about pearls, and that the company has a solid written guarantee and a return policy. If they have a showroom in your area which is open to the public (as **ANANDIA PEARLS** does, for example), even better.

Care and Handling

Follow these guidelines to make sure your pearls last a lifetime!

1. To prevent scratches, pearls must be stored in a separate compartment from other jewelry such as gold, sapphires, diamonds, and harder gems.
2. Pearls love moisture. Clean them regularly, preferably after every use, with a clean, soft, damp cloth. Store them with a glass of water if kept for long periods.
3. **Never, ever, steam-clean pearls** or place them in an ultrasonic cleaner.
4. Never use ammonia-based cleaning solutions, even if they say they're safe for other jewelry. Only use solutions which explicitly say they are safe for pearls, or use a light solution of soap and slightly warm water.
5. Apply hairspray, scent, deodorant or any aerosols and cosmetics **BEFORE** putting on your pearls, making sure these chemicals are absorbed first.
6. Good quality pearls should be re-strung using silk cord knotted between pearls. Re-stringing should be done annually to every four years, depending on frequency of wear.
7. Wear your pearls as often as you can because body oils enhance them, but never wear them in a swimming pool, while bathing, doing housework or exercising.

Thank you ... until next time!

Well, there you have it! Although there is a lot more to learn about pearls, we hope this Guide serves as "Basic Training" as you discover more about pearls.

We at Anandia Pearls thank you for this chance to serve! If you ever have questions, please ask. Our mission is pearl education and to promote public awareness of this beautiful natural wonder.

Send Us Your Story

Pearls connect people. They connect mothers and daughters, husbands and wives, make friends into family. They help calm us, and allow us to feel good and connect with ourselves.

We invite you to participate in our Pearls of Wisdom newsletter by sending us YOUR story of how pearls have played a role in your life! Maybe your precious strand has been passed down from your grandmother, to your mother, to you. Or perhaps you and your own daughter share matching pearls.

Send us your story. If we feel our readers would enjoy it, we will happily include it in Pearls of Wisdom along with the latest in pearl fashion trends, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), and helpful client Q&A.

You can email your story, questions, or comments to pearls@anandia.com.

On behalf of myself and all of us at Anandia Pearls, we thank you! We wish you all the best and hope to hear from you soon.

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Your feedback is always welcome and appreciated! Write us at pearls@anandia.com.

Anandia Pearls respects our clients privacy and *does not* give out or sell our subscribers' names, addresses, phone numbers, or e-mail addresses.

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Please visit! We look forward to meeting you in person.