

Pearl Academy  
by RAW PEARLS



Part 4:  
Value Factors

RAW PEARLS  
FINE PEARL JEWELLERY

# Size

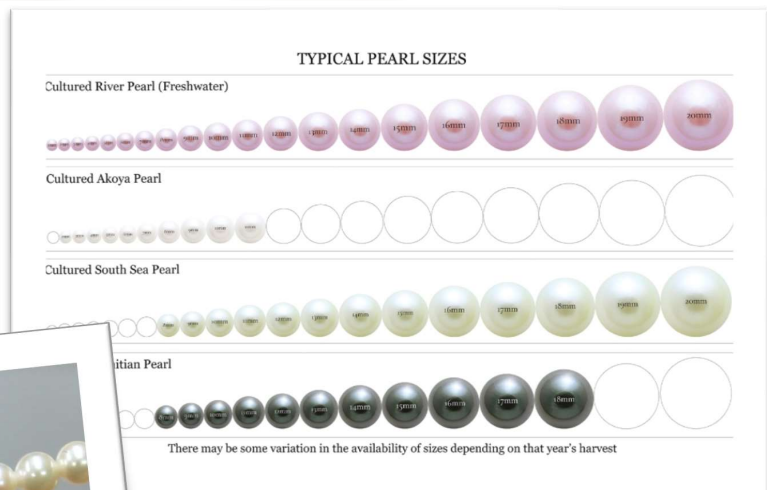
In this chapter we'll look at the factors that give value to pearls – we are often asked for example, what makes a 'good' or a 'bad' pearl.

Here we will be looking at a variety of factors:

- **Size**
- **Shape**
- **Colour**
- **Lustre**
- **Nacre Thickness**
- **Surface**
- **Matching**

The first factor we will look at is size.

- Pearls are measured in millimetres and a string will usually comprise pearls with a variation in size of up to 0.5mm.



For example, we supply strings at say 6-6.5mm, 6.5-7mm or 7-7.5mm.

***All other things being equal, it is likely the larger the pearl, the higher the value it will have.***

- Having said that, in years where there is greater production of one size, and lesser production of another, regardless of size it is possible that one might pay more for a smaller size that is less available on the market, than a larger size that is more available.

# Shape & Colour

The second factor we will look at is shape

- Shapes can include round, near round, button, drop, circled, baroque or semi-baroque.
- Baroque simply means that the pearls are offshape or irregular.



***All other things being equal, round pearls are the most valuable of the shapes.***

The third factor is colour

The colour comprises three aspects:

- Firstly, the body colour is the main or dominant overall colour of the pearl such as white, pink or grey for example. All pearls will have a body colour.



- Some pearls may also display overtone, the presence of an additional colour or colours on the pearl – for example, we often find that a white body colour with pinky overtone is popular.
- Some pearls may also display orient, a shimmer of iridescent rainbow colours on or below the pearl's surface.



***All other things being equal, natural colours will have higher value.***



# Lustre & Nacre Thickness

## The fourth factor is lustre

- This is the light reflected from the pearl's surface and can be evaluated by looking at the intensity and sharpness of the reflection.



Higher lustre (top) vs lower lustre (bottom)

***All other things being equal, the higher the lustre the higher the value will be.***

## The fifth factor is nacre thickness

- This factor is relevant where there is a bead nucleus within the pearl and assesses the thickness of the layers of nacre over that bead.
- The thicker the nacre, the better.
- Without good nacre thickness the pearl is unlikely to have good lustre.
- Worst case, where the nacre is very thin you may even be able to see the nucleus and the pearl may not last long.



Inside a pearl the nucleus & nacre layers are visible

***All other things being equal, the thicker the nacre the higher the value will be.***

# Surface Quality & Matching

## The sixth factor is surface quality

- This aspect looks at the markings on the skin or surface of the pearl.
- In general, the cleaner or less marked the pearl, the better.



- This is a sliding scale and pearls may be described as clean, lightly spotted, moderately spotted or heavily spotted.
- If the surface markings are very severe, they may affect the durability of the pearl. If they are few or minor in nature they may be able to be hidden by the drill hole or mounting.

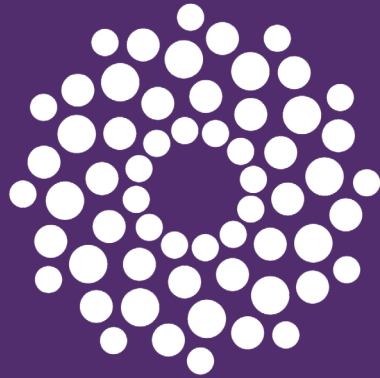
***All other things being equal, the cleaner the surface of the pearl, the higher the value will be.***

## The seventh factor is matching

- Sometimes we mix different colours and shapes together on purpose on one string.
- However, where the string or pair is designed to be uniform, the match across all of the factors should be good.



***All other things being equal, the better the match, the higher the value will be.***



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