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Have you heard? Glamorous girls are all wearing pearls

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Glamorous women and beautiful pearls have had illustrious dalliances since ancient times.

For example, did you know that Cleopatra dissolved an enormous pearl in a cocktail and then drank it? All to win a bet with her lover Mark Antony that she could consume the wealth of an entire nation in one meal. Talk about theatrical diva-ness!

Angelic Audrey Hepburn spoke about how she loved their warmth against her skin. Elizabeth Taylor, Coco Chanel, Kate Middleton, Ava Garner, Princess Diana and Jackie Kennedy have all been wooed with pearl jewellery too.

Not just because of that luminous beauty that pearls possess, but the way they can subtly enhance all kinds of individual style.

Pearls are starring on Fashion runways again



That elegance and versatility is part of the reason why pearls have come back into Fashion with aplomb since this year's Northern Hemisphere spring and summer shows. And I, for one, am very excited.

But what do you know about pearl jewellery?

Unlike diamonds, it's not so easy to find out about different types of pearls and what they can be worn with. Or worn to, for that matter.

So, allow me to impart some pearls of wisdom your way.

Three kinds of pearls

South Sea Pearls – a labour of love

The rarest and most revered of all pearls bloom to life off the North West Australian coast. Divers scour the waters looking for these treasures and, once they find them, it takes Momma Oyster two years to produce just one pearl. Every second week the oyster is gently cleaned and turned to make sure the pearl will be smooth.



A shapely beauty

South Sea Pearls come in several shapes including near round, baroque, button, drop and circle. This makes them ideal for a beautiful pendant, necklace or pair of earrings.

They radiate like no other

The rich quality of their nacre (the substance that gives them their colour) is extraordinary. And the eye-catching play of colours isn't something that can be replicated (or forged!). I'm delighted to say Mother Nature has the monopoly on this gem.

South Sea Pearl varieties

White South Sea Pearls – From north of Broome, come in gorgeous arrays of ivory, white, grey, silver and blue.

Yellow South Sea Pearls – From beautiful Indonesia and come in summery shades of green, gold, yellow, cream and bubbly champagne gold.

Black South Sea Pearl (aka Tahitian Black Pearl) – no guessing where from, this distinctive beauty comes in hues of aubergine, sea green, lime, blue, grey and royal blue.

Freshwater pearls – costume jewellery



These cultured pearls are grown inside mussels (up to 100 baby pearls per Momma Mussel!), almost exclusively in China. And while they are generally used for lower-value jewellery, the quality and size really has improved in the last few years.

Colourful creations

Their natural colours include yellow, orange and purple. Then they're bleached, dyed and polished to give them added lustre, colour and smoothness.

Unusual shapes

They come in sizes from 3-15mm and non-classic shapes, which makes them an interesting option for a unique and unusual take on a necklace.

Akoya Pearls – Japanese for divine

It actually means 'saltwater', but maybe it should be divine when such a gorgeous word and pearl have been brought together! As nature would have it, the waters off Japan offer the perfect conditions to create dazzling pearls of brilliant lustre and rich colour.

The petite pearl

At just 2-10mm in size, they are the smallest produced pearl in the world. However, they certainly know

At just 3-10mm in size they are the smallest-produced pearl in the world. However, they certainly know how to make an entrance and look stunning on necklaces, earrings and bracelets.

The perfect introduction to pearls

If you're a first-time buyer of any age, these are wonderful introduction to the world of pearl jewellery. And their natural shades make them very diverse. For example, they can be a sophisticated white or cream string of pearls. Or fun and youthful pink or silver pink in a bracelet.

I'm delighted to see pearls once again receive the praise and attention they deserve. They are a wonderful gem that can compliment all kinds of moments in life, and with so many outfits.

And while, these days, you don't have to be a Hollywood goddess or Empress of the ancient world to own pearls, they may just make you feel like one.

If you'd like to try some on for yourself, come and visit us at the studio or head for our online store at www.nataliebarney.com/shop.

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