



WISDOM OF THE PEARLS

Pearls have been prized throughout history, desired as a symbol of power and prestige, coveted by the powerful and treasured by royalty. As early as the 16th Century, natural South Sea pearls were being traded in India and as far away as Europe. Larger, whiter and more lustrous than any other pearl, they were valued above all others.

Today, as natural South Sea pearls are hardly ever found, it is the South Sea cultured pearl that is famed as the queen of pearls. Their rarity, size and the quality and richness of their nacre make these pearls the closest to the natural pearls of day gone by. It is the nacre that gives each pearl its distinctive qualities and unique beauty. When a woman enters the room wearing a strand of gem quality South Sea cultured pearls the first thing that will be noticed is their extraordinary lustre.

For many years before we dreamed of culturing South Sea pearls, my family traded in mother of pearl shell, along with the natural pearls that the Pinctada maxima oysters occasionally yielded. It was the beauty of these natural pearls that inspired the quest for the perfect cultured pearl begun by my father. Today, my father would be proud if a natural pearl and a cultured South Sea pearl were compared, as it would be impossible to differentiate the qualities of their natural nacre. That is what makes the South Sea cultured pearl so special.

Nicholas Paspaley, SSPC Chairman



THE PERFECT OCCASION TO GIVE SOUTH SEA PEARLS

South Sea cultured pearls certainly seem set to grab the headlines this year. Already known for their unique size and rarity; these cultured pearls are truly comparable with the natural pearls of old and a gem to be treasured for a lifetime and generations after. Now with films such as *Girl with a Pearl Earring* appearing amongst those nominated for awards this year and South Sea cultured pearls being worn by top actresses both on the big and the small screen; white South Sea cultured pearls are set to steal the show.

With more and more jewellery designers discovering the beauty of these gems and using them in their designs, this year is a perfect time to give these extraordinary pearls as a gift. In this issue of our newsletter, we feature a small selection of designs that make choosing even easier. A gift of pearls will always retain its meaning and appeal, pearls can be given as tokens of true love, as a symbol of devotion, a gift to celebrate a marriage, an anniversary, the birth of a child or simply to say "you are special".

The SSPC is lucky to have as honorary members companies such as Assael International, Tiffany and Company, Stuller Inc, Tasaki and Utopia. In the news section we look at some of the events that some of these members have sponsored.

For the South Sea Pearl Consortium 2004 will be an exciting year as the consortium works with a selection of top jewellery designers to produce some of the most unique and stunning jewellery for an upcoming exhibition. But more about that in our next issue.....

Suzi Jarrell, Communications Director



INSIDE

**PEARL TRENDS
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PALETTE IS IN



HEARTS AND



CROSSES

As we approach another season what will the jewellery trends be for this year? Last year "big and bold" was the name of the game from chandelier earrings to big cocktail rings.

At first look, bold statement jewellery remains much in evidence with large rings and pendants still making a show. Flowers appear in all sizes from small delicate shapes to large blooms, similar in size to a corsage and definitely not for shrinking violets. Hearts and the ever popular crosses still seem to be the order of the day for 2004.

However, nothing is more elegant than a woman in pearls and it would seem that younger women are finding pearls appealing as designers look at more original ways to present them in pendants, bracelets and rings. Linking South Sea cultured pearls with stones such as amber; amethyst or citrine brings a fresh modern look that is set to become a popular choice in 2004.

The South Sea baroque is big news in every sense of the word, with necklaces of white baroques interspersed with aquamarines and small textured globes of yellow gold. Large South Sea baroque pearl strands can be seen alone or overlaid with diamonds.

The ever popular lariat style necklace has evolved this year, expanding to feature three or four separate strands each finished

BAROQUES ARE BIG



© Tim Robinson

FLOWERS

with a large pearl. Some designers are showing different types of pearls together; white baroques with small seed pearls or small keshis with "knitted" gold for a delicate feel. With summer in mind, pearls are used to great effect as simple pendants on delicate chains or a more sophisticated version – several chains meshing together with three South Sea pearls dropping down in the centre to make a necklace both light in feel yet with a substantial presence.

South Sea cultured pearls are also feeling the effects of Flower power as they form the centrepiece of small flowers, half surrounded by small diamond set white gold petals. Like a daisy starting to lose its petals. "He loves me ... he loves me not...." But looking closer there are changes this year; designs seem to take a more feminine approach than last year.

Colours are pastel for the summer with paler coloured stones such as amethysts, aquamarines, pale blue and pink sapphires the most popular, but the richer tones and shades such as amber still remain in evidence. White and yellow gold continue side by side and diamonds are teamed with everything.

As top designers continue to show the way forward with their stunning feminine collections in fluid sculptural forms, South Sea cultured pearls are the perfect complement to the floaty dresses and delicate materials that signal the arrival of summer.





Nina Blackwell, press secretary to Hillary Clinton
© Tom Carpenter

NEWS

ADVANCE

Young Australians braved arctic conditions to attend the Australian Professionals in America (ADVANCE) black tie cocktail in New York sponsored by Paspaley Pearls. ADVANCE was established in 2002 under the guidance of the Australian Consul-General of New York, Ken Allen to enable young Australian professionals in New York to make connections with senior and established Australians already settled in New York. Its patrons include Lachlan Murdoch, Anthony Pratt and Peter Lowy with Timothy Maher the founding president.

Just to take the chill off the evening and make them feel right at home, the theme for the evening was Australia's great reefs-the Great Barrier Reef on Australia's east coast and the Ningaloo Reef off Western Australia. SSPC honorary member, Stuller, also made a warm gesture to the evening by donating a piece of Stuller and Paspaley pearl jewellery as a door prize.



Colonel Steve Jones, Elena Douglas, Lachlan Murdoch
ADVANCE, Australian Professionals in America
© Christopher Lynch

FLYING COLOURS

Qantas became a leader in the fashion and jewellery stakes when the airline joined forces with Australian jeweller Percy Marks and took over the domestic club lounges in Melbourne and Sydney, Australia last autumn.

Qantas "Flying Colours" promotion first started back in 2002 with the aim of showcasing some of the finest fashion and jewellery available in Australia to their frequent flyers. For the last promotion, run in conjunction with the Rugby World Cup, the South Sea Pearl Consortium was delighted to be a sponsor of the event. Percy Marks, one of Australia's oldest family jewellers created an exclusive collection of fine jewellery featuring diamonds and Australian South Sea cultured pearls.

To the delight of the 11,000 plus travellers who pass through these lounges, runway shows were held three times a day, at peak times on two consecutive Fridays, showing the latest fashion looks, teamed with elegant pearl jewellery. And for those Qantas passengers unlucky enough not to be passing through the Sydney or Melbourne lounges on these days, there was a tantalizing glimpse on the in-flight programmes during November. Qantas also featured a round up of all the fashion and jewellery in a special supplement within their magazine.



Flying Colours

NEW STYLE

South Sea cultured pearl are making the news with their new styles that are far removed from the classic look of pearls teamed with gold and diamonds. Pearl company Gellner started using pearls with plastic last year in fun fashion rings and has continued to expand this year with designs featuring pearls on ribbon, leather and rope.

German company Schoeffel, known for their innovative designs using white South Sea cultured pearls, have added several new designs to their collections. One of the most intriguing is the new "Free Style" bracelet and ring. Combining pearls with a silky material gives an almost masculine look to the jewellery appealing to the woman who likes sporty elegance that can be worn with an easy nonchalance.

Prince Dimitri has also produced designs with a younger client in mind as part of his new collection for Assael. He features South Sea cultured pearls combined with denim and incorporating wood, among other elements.

"The New Look of Pearls"
by Prince Dimitri for Assael



"Free Style"
by Schoeffel

New Designs by Gellner



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