



Coloured *Pearls*

By Naomi Sarna

FLAT PEARL BROOCH
CHINESE FRESHWATER NATURAL
COLOR PEARL, DIAMONDS,
MULTICOLORED SAPPHIRES,
PLATINUM, 18K PEACH GOLD.
NAOMI SARNA
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FLAT PEARL BROOCH
PEACH PEARL PENDANT.
CHINESE FRESHWATER NATURAL COLOR
PEARL, 18K WHITE GOLD, MULTICOLORED
DIAMONDS AND SAPPHIRES.
NAOMI SARNA
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Iridescent drops shimmer in the light. Like molten metal one would imagine that they are fiery hot, but when held in the hand, or caressed across a neck, they are cool and sensuous. Coloured pearls. Beyond the reach of the rainbow.

While round white pearls command the international market in gross tonnage, a select group of connoisseurs seek the unique and compelling pearls of colour. Purple, vivid rose, gold and green, all with rich lusters that command attention whether worn singly in a drop or ring, or in Ombre strands falling about the neck and shoulders.

All pearls of the nacreous types, including pearls from fresh water and salt water clams and mussels, are composed of layers of calcium carbonate including aragonite and calcite. Something gets into the clam, usually a parasite, which irritates it. The irritating grain of sand story has been largely discounted. In defence, the clam secretes calcium carbonate to protect it from the irritation. Like bricks set side by side, layer upon layer builds up until the irritant is completely covered. These layers cause light to bounce around. Aragonite is slightly transparent and allows light to be refracted back, giving the pearl it's iridescent luster and colour, in the same way a prism breaks up the light that goes through it, making a rainbow.

The layers are called nacre and the thicker the nacre, the richer the iridescence of the pearl can be. The value of the pearl is also greater with thicker nacre which can be carved or faceted into specialized gems.

Conchiolin is a protein secreted by the clam or mussel and organically glues the blocks of the nacre together. Depending on the pigments present in the conchiolin, the pearl will take on various colours.

Pearl colours are often controlled by the colour of the lip of the mollusc. The lip is the outer edge of the clam or mussel and is called mother of pearl. It is considered a valuable gem material in its own right. Buttons, inlays in mosaic boxes or trompe-l'oeil marquetry and all types of jewellery can be made from mother-of pearl.



TAHITIAN NATURAL COLOR PEARLS,
DIAMONDS, SAPPHIRES, 18K BLACK GOLD
YOKO LONDON
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THE CONTESSA
CHINESE FRESHWATER NATURAL COLOR PEARL, MULTICOLORED DIAMONDS, MULTICOLORED SAPPHIRES, ON RUBY NECKLACE, 18K WHITE GOLD.
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TURBAN EARRINGS
CHINESE FRESHWATER NATURAL WHITE PEARLS, WHITE AND PINK DIAMONDS, MULTICOLORED SAPPHIRES, BLACK RHODIUM, 18K YELLOW GOLD.
NAOMI SARNA
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LONG PEARL EARRINGS
CHINESE FRESHWATER NATURAL WHITE PEARL, MULTICOLORED DIAMONDS AND SAPPHIRES, 18K WHITE GOLD.
NAOMI SARNA
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How can you tell a genuine pearl from a synthetic one? Rub it against your teeth. Yes. A true pearl, however inexpensive or rare, will feel gritty from the calcium carbonate and other mineral bricks when rubbed on the teeth. All fake pearls will feel smooth.

Incidentally, many people praise the components of powdered pearls because of the presence of the various minerals and the conchiolin proteins. Pearls have been crushed and powdered for makeup, or eaten for the minerals as an anti-acid, or dissolved in acids and drunk for extreme displays of wealth.

Cleopatra, in legend perhaps, challenged Marc Antony to an extravagance duel. To show the vast riches of Egypt, she dissolved a highly valuable pearl in wine and drank it. Marc Antony apparently acknowledged Egypt's superior wealth and did not drink the matching pearl.

We do not know the true colour of the pearl but could imagine it was a passionate purple.

Other legends of the source of pearl colours include the presence of pigmenting minerals in the water. One story tells that the reason Lake Biwa pearls had such fabulous colours was because the lake was so polluted. Another story about Lake Biwa pearls claims that the Biwa mussels were taken to Lake Kasumigaura and cultured there, thus creating the Lake Kasumigaura pearls which have extraordinary colours and luster. Lake Kasumigaura may or may not be still producing pearls at this time. This is the secrecy of pearl culture.

Much of the culture and farming involving coloured pearls is kept hidden, true secrets known only to the owners of the pearl farms around the world. A cultured pearl is purposely implanted or nucleated with either a piece of clam tissue, or tissue and a bead, or a cut is made in the clam tissue. The pearl responds to these treatments in the same way it would if a natural parasite invaded it; it secretes the calcium carbonate to sooth itself and eventually, in two, three or more years, makes the beauties we wear.

Mr. James Peach, Sr. of U.S Pearls is one of the worlds largest dealers of pearl and pearl products. He has been greatly involved in the development of Chinese Yangtze River pearls which now rival South Sea pearls in colour, quality and size. The technical development of these pearls has been a work in progress for years, employing an unusual method of implanting the mollusc with exceptional results. Mr. Peach anticipates these pearls will be the standard by which other coloured pearls with be judged.

Sometimes when the mollusc is cut, a second generation pearl will develop which is pure nacre with no nucleation of any type. These pearls are flat and round or oval, like coins. They come in a variety of soft apricot or pink colours and are so wonderfully pure and translucent the light can pass right through them. Although they might be called natural pearls because there is no nucleation, they are, in fact, the result of pearl culture.

Yoko London is one of the world's foremost coloured pearl jewellers. The pearls they present in their elegant jewels are notably round with perfect surfaces and a full range of rare colours. Their pearls may come from Australia or China and it may take years to find the exact pearls needed to create their highly desirable jewels. They maintain a close relationship with pearl farmers around the world, which affords them the opportunity to pick only pearls which match their exacting standards.

The majority of their pearls are set with 18 Karat white gold, or occasionally with rose or black gold embellished with white or black diamonds. This family owned business has established a reputation for exacting craftsmanship and exceptional design, thus creating a presentation that combines classic gems in a modern and contemporary look. Their High Jewellery Collection exemplifies the finest examples of pearl jewels in the world and they have been appropriately awarded for their high standards.



SOUTH SEA AND CHINESE FRESHWATER
NATURAL COLOR PEARLS, WHITE
DIAMONDS, 18K WHITE GOLD.
YOKO LONDON
YOKOLONDON.COM

Gregoire Morin and Jennifer-Rabe Morin met while working in Santa Barbara, CA where they continue to live. He is from Vancouver, BC and she from Spain. They use their combined imaginations to experiment, learn and focus their creative energy into the form and substance of exceptional pieces and objects d'art. Inspired by their curiosity for all things natural and beautiful, their work is meticulously refined, taking many hours, months or even years of thoughtful consideration.

Gregoire Morin especially enjoys combining beautifully hued pearls with

modern day technology. Their workshop is full of machines from antique ones to complex, computer driven technical marvels. One of his most recent successes included pink pearls with machined aluminium hoops, making the huge eye-catching earrings light and technically perfect

Their dazzling jewellery pieces are crafted from rare gemstones, unusual materials and precious metals. A unique brooch combines the visual lightness of a fluttering fire opal butterfly, bejewelled with sapphires that are reflected in the softly multi-coloured mother of pearl fl

flower upon which the butterfly rests; it trembles as if alive. Victorian jewels were often set with springs which animated them as the wearer walked; called en tremblant. the liveliness of those jewels is continued in Greg's and Jennifer's work in the technical prowess and natural beauty of this wearable work of art.

This dynamic duo have won more than thirty international design awards and have exhibited their treasures in galleries and museums. Their jewels and exquisite figurines are collected by discerning clients across the world who seek their joyful creations..



**JEWELLED
BUTTERFLY BROOCH**
BLACK MOTHER OF PEARL,
TURQUOISE, BRAZILIAN
OPAL, WHITE DIAMONDS,
MULTICOLORED SAPPHIRES, 18K GOLD.
GREGORE MORIN AND
JENNIFER RABE MORIN
GREGOREANDJENNIFER-RABE.COM

PURPLE PEARL RING
CHINESE FRESHWATER NATURAL
COLOR PEARL, MULTICOLORED
DIAMONDS, SAPPHIRES,
AMETHYSTS, 18K YELLOW GOLD
NAOMI SARNA
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Naomi Sarna, based in New York City has always had a fascination with coloured pearls. As a child she favoured coloured pearls and shells over all other gems. Her current obsession includes green pearls which she pairs with olive green diamonds and large baroque mauve pearls with mauve diamonds, all spiked with hot pink and deep purple sapphires. Her award winning Green Pearl Necklace combines Chinese Fresh Water pearls with American Sunstone which picks up the pinks and greens in the pearls; an especially happy combination of colours and textures.

Naomi especially favours baroque pearls which may be wrinkled or have undulating shapes and variations of colour swirling throughout the pearl. Many of Naomi's pearl pieces are set as though the pearl was still in the water, or caught by a wave. While her pieces are serious art, she enjoys the subtle humour in concepts and the names she uses for them.

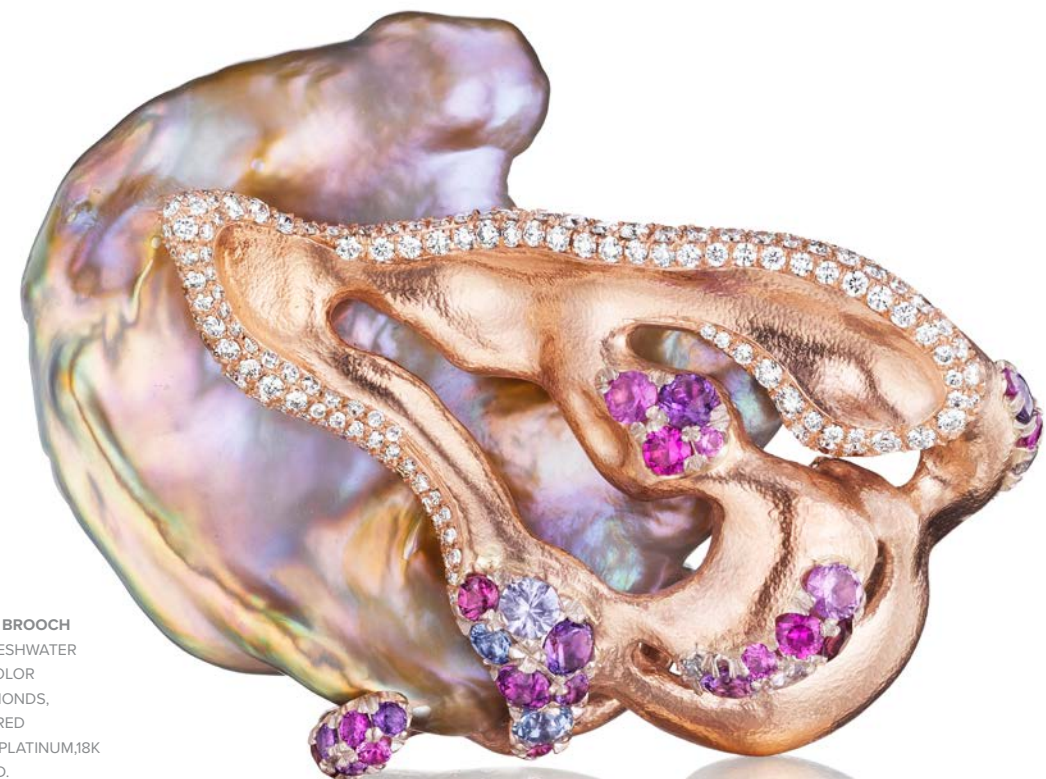
The Contessa, however, was inspired by the opulent folds of gowns and lace in Renaissance paintings, combining a lavish look with delicate scatterings of natural coloured diamonds and sapphires which repeat the colours of the pearls. Like most of Naomi's jewels, the Contessa Pearl is set in 18 Karat white gold, and finished with a textured surface she calls moire, like the fabric. This finish and the warm colour of natural, un-plated gold are harmonious with the satin surface of the pearls. A sensuous work of art to hold, wear and behold.

In a future article, natural and cultured black and white varieties, as well as non-nacreous conch pearls will be addressed.

PINK PEARL RING
CHINESE FRESHWATER
NATURAL COLOR
PEARL, PINK DIAMONDS,
18K WHITE GOLD
NAOMI SARNA
NAOMISARNA.COM



FLAT PEARL BROOCH
CHINESE FRESHWATER
NATURAL COLOR
PEARL, DIAMONDS,
MULTICOLORED
SAPPHIRES, PLATINUM, 18K
PEACH GOLD.
NAOMI SARNA
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SILVER PEARL RING
CHINESE FRESHWATER
NATURAL COLOR
PEARL, MULTICOLORED
DIAMONDS AND
SAPPHIRES. 18K
WHITE GOLD
NAOMI SARNA
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