

We at AA Thornton all love Pearls and are in good company as they are very much in vogue. So with June's birthstone being pearl, what better excuse for you to celebrate one of nature's wonders and take advantage of our special pearl offer this month; a pair of pearl earrings worth £39 free when you spend over £75 on pearl jewellery .

Things to know about pearls

by Sally Thornton

1. When a foreign irritant becomes lodged inside a mollusc it protects itself by secreting layers of nacre over this intrusion, forming a pearl which gradually grows in size.
2. Natural Pearls occur randomly without any intervention. They are therefore very rare and hence expensive. Indeed many natural pearls are antiques, as traditional pearl beds have been over fished or damaged by pollution.



Freshwater Pearls Bracelet from Aphrodite collection £85

3. Perhaps the most famous natural pearl is La Peregrina or The Wanderer. Found in the Gulf of Panama in the early 1500s, it was given to Mary I and later passed into the hands of several queens of Spain. Taken by Napoleon's brother, sold to the Duke of Abercorn, lost but later found down a sofa in Windsor Castle and given by Richard Burton to Elizabeth Taylor as a valentine's present, this pearl is having an eventful life.



Silver Peacock Freshwater Pearl earrings £49

4. Cultured pearls are cultivated by the process of introducing the foreign item into the mollusc to instigate nacre formation process. It is these pearls that are generally now used in contemporary jewellery.



Freshwater Pearl Double drop Earrings £55

5. It is the normal practise to introduce a tiny bead to start the cultivation of salt water pearls, whilst in freshwater pearls a tiny piece of soft tissue is used. As a result freshwater cultured pearls are 100% nacre.

6. Freshwater cultured pearls are easier to grow making them generally more affordable than their saltwater cousins.
7. Lustre is considered the most important quality factor in pearls. Lustre refers both to a pearl's brilliance, by which we mean the way its surface reflects light, and its inner glow, the way it refracts light.

There are certain chemicals found in perfume, hairspray and other cosmetics that can damage the nacre. The best advice is to put on your make up, wait a couple of minutes then put your pearls on. Please don't wear your pearls when using any household cleaning products



16inch Tahitian Pearl necklace £1,775

10. Pearls are surprisingly absorbent and need to maintain a certain level of moisture in order to retain their bright colour and lustre. One of the best ways to do this is simply to wear them so they absorb natural oils from the skin.

11. Pearls can be cleaned with very mild soapy water or better still using a special pearl cleaning kit.

8. It is generally thought that Akoya pearls have the highest lustre of all cultured pearls. The Japanese waters in which Akoya pearls grow are considerably cooler, which cause Akoya pearls to develop their nacre coating more slowly, and with a more compact crystal structure. Even though Akoya pearls' nacre coating is generally thinner than that of most other saltwater varieties, their lustre shines the brightest.



Gold Plated Silver Ring with Freshwater Pearl £49

9. Saltwater cultured pearls can be found in the entire colour spectrum, from white to black, and virtually every colour in between. No colour is considered superior to another and it is entirely what you think looks best.



Multicolour Freshwater Pearl necklace £475

Throughout June receive a pair of pearl earrings worth £39 when you spend over £75 on pearl jewellery.



AA THORNTON

1/7 High Street, Kettering, NN168ST

Tel: 01536 513014 www.aathorntonjeweller.com

AA Thornton