

AGTA Tucson Pearl Report 2012

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The AGTA Tucson show opened with cordiality and warm greetings. The first two days were well attended. Booths were very busy and the excitement was there. After the initial glow, the scene dimmed.

Our economic problems are difficult, to say the least. Fewer buyers have made the trip to China, only to find higher wholesale prices. Over production of lower quality pearls presented the problem of how to get rid of the surplus. A 70% reduction in price was an attractive offering for these lower quality pearls. This is the backbone of the Chinese industry. The examples of selected CFWCPs show the latest market goods.



Metallic Multicolor Pastels
15x17mm, bead-in fireball
Courtesy of Sea Hunt Pearls

Chinese Freshwater Cultured Pearls

Chinese FWCPs, the shining star of the show, are de rigueur. The Chinese FWCPs are extremely large, baroque, high luster, "metallic multi-color" and a "real knockout". The latest pearls from China are absolutely beautiful. The soufflés from two years ago are better than ever, non-bead, and receive high marks. The very large baroques can gauge from 16x20 mm or more, are in-bead, and are also phenomenally lustrous.



16x20mm, Non bead
"Soufflé" CFWCPs
Courtesy of Sea Hunt Pearls



14x15.5mm CFWCPs, Baroque multi-strands,
bead-in
Courtesy Sea Hunt Pearls



15x17mm
Double Bow Keshi-like, CFWCPs
Courtesy of Sea Hunt



14x15mm
White Coin CFWCPs
Courtesy of Sea Hunt

Chinese Freshwater Cultured Pearls				
MM	Shape	Color	Price	Notes
5x6mm	Keshi-like Baroque	White	\$25	Bead nucleated
6x7mm	Keshi-like Baroque	White	\$30	Bead nucleated
7.5x8mm	Round	Mixed Pastel (Yellow, Gold, Pink, Orange, Light Purple)	\$80	Bead nucleated
7.5x8mm	Round	Light Purple	\$250	Bead nucleated
11x13mm	Kasumi- Like	Mixed Metallic, bead-in	\$250	Bead nucleated
12x13mm	Kasumi-like	Mixed Metallic, bead-in	\$500	Bead nucleated
12x14mm	Kasumi -like	Multi-colored	\$1,500	Bead nucleated
13x16mm	Kasumi-like	Mixed Metallic, bead-in	\$600	Bead nucleated
13x16mm	Souffle- baroque	Multi-colored Non-bead	\$300	mixed luster beads

Chinese Freshwater Cultured Pearls, con't.				
MM	Shape	Color	Price	Notes
13x20mm	Baroque	Shades of Purple	\$400	Double beads
14x15mm	Coin	White	\$120	Non-bead
14x15.5mm	Baroque	Multi-colored (White, Golden, Light Purple, Apricot, Pink, Yellow)	\$1,500	
15x17mm	Soufflé-Baroque	Mixed Pastel	\$1,500	Non-bead
16x18mm	Soufflé-baroque	Multi-colored	\$600	Non-bead
16.5x17mm	Coin	Multi-Pastel	\$800	Non-bead
17x22mm	Soufflé-Baroque	White	\$1,800	Non-bead
18x24mm	Baroque	Cream and Light Purple	\$1,500	Bead-in
21x25x32mm	Baroque	Pink, Peach	\$3,600	Non-Bead
25x32-22x28mm	Baroque	White	\$3,600	Bead-in



21-25x25-32mm
CFWCPs, Baroque Pink Peach
Courtesy of King's Ransom



16x18mm
CFWCPs, Souffle Mixed Pastels
Courtesy of Sea Hunt



Chinese Freshwater Cultured Pearls Kasumi-like

The freshwater Japanese Kasumigaura cultured pearls, baroque, bead in, are very difficult to distinguish from Chinese freshwater cultured “Kasumi-like” baroque pearls. Japanese Kasumigaura production is very small, highly desirable, and very expensive. Chinese freshwater cultured “Kasumi-like” pearls are available in greater quantities and at a fraction of the cost. Many jewelers are unaware of the price difference between the two. Consequently, buyers must be careful because the less expensive Chinese and the very expensive Japanese pearls look exactly the same. Guessing by the naked eye which strand was cultured in China or Japan would be fool hardy.

Baroque Chinese Freshwater Cultured Pearls Kasumi-like



13x16mm, bead-in
CFWCPs, Kasumi like
Courtesy of Sea Hunt



12x13mm, bead-in
CFWCPs, Kasumi like
Courtesy of Sea Hunt

Japanese Kasumigaura Cultured Pearls and CFWCPs "Kasumi-like" (2011 pricing)				
MM	Shape	Color	Price	Notes
10x11mm	Baroque	Lavender, pink, rose me overtone	\$230	Kasumi-like
10x12mm	Baroque	Multi-metallic	\$8,000	Japanese Kasumigaura
10x12mm	Baroque	White pastels	\$1,400	Kasumi-like
12x11.5mm	Baroque	Whitish	\$450	Kasumi-like
13X16mm	Baroque	Multi metallic pastels	\$600	Kasumi-like
14.7X13.3mm	Baroque	Light multicolor	\$3,750	Japanese Kasumigaura

Akoya Cultured Pearls - Saltwater



9x8.5mm, bead-in
Japanese Akoya Cultured Pearls
Courtesy of Pacific Pearls



7.5-8mm, bead-in
Akoya Cultured Pearls Round
Courtesy of Imperial Deltah, Inc.

Since the 1920's when Kokichi Mikimoto began their cultivation, they have dominated the pearl market as a branded Japanese akoya cultured pearl. Today, production of Japanese akoya cultured pearls remains low due to market conditions, and our US economy.

In nature, perfection is rarely achieved. In the akoya, desirable qualities are high luster, size, and round shape. When it comes to color, the most highly prized is white or off-white with a pinkish hue. Over the last several years, the market has also shown great interest in gold color akoya cultured pearls.

The following tables represent 2011 information, as these pearls have not been shown this year. The dealers mentioned that while they are still selling, the demand at the show was not high enough. Pricing appears to be the same as last year.

Akoya Saltwater Cultured Pearls Round, White, Bead-in		
MM	Price	Notes
8x8.5mm	\$1,000	Round (White-Pinkish) No demand for commercial grade Akoya salt water
4 to 4.5 mm	\$1,089	AAA Quality
4 to 4.5 mm	\$622	AA Quality
4 to 4.5 mm	\$438	A Quality
4.5 to 5 mm	\$1,142	AAA Quality
4.5 to 5 mm	\$723	AA Quality
4.5 to 5 mm	\$456	A Quality
5 to 5.5 mm	\$1,141	AAA Quality
5 to 5.5 mm	\$723	AA Quality

Akoya Saltwater Cultured Pearls Round, White, Bead-in, Con't.		
MM	Price	Notes
5 to 5.5 mm	\$622	A+ Quality
5 to 5.5 mm	\$473	A Quality
5.5 to 6 mm	\$1,247	AAA Quality
5.5 to 6 mm	\$990	AA Quality
5.5 to 6 mm	\$688	A+ Quality
5.5 to 6 mm	\$526	A Quality
6 to 6.5 mm	\$1,734	AAA Quality
6 to 6.5 mm	\$1,217	AA Quality
6 to 6.5 mm	\$981	A+ Quality
6 to 6.5 mm	\$723	A Quality
6.5 to 7 mm	\$1,946	AAA Quality
6.5 to 7 mm	\$1,318	AA Quality
6.5 to 7 mm	\$1,020	A+ Quality
6.5 to 7 mm	\$819	A Quality
7 to 7.5 mm	\$2,345	AAA Quality
7 to 7.5 mm	\$1,616	AA Quality
7 to 7.5 mm	\$1,323	A+ Quality
7 to 7.5 mm	\$1,126	A Quality
7.5 to 8 mm	\$2,762	AAA Quality
7.5 to 8 mm	\$1,948	AA Quality
7.5 to 8 mm	\$1,222	A Quality
8 to 8.5 mm	\$3,914	AAA Quality
8 to 8.5 mm	\$2,920	AA Quality
8 to 8.5 mm	\$2,211	A Quality

South Sea Cultured Pearls

South Sea cultured pearls are cultured in Australia, Indonesia, and the Philippines, which is known for the intensity of its golden pearls.

Intense golden South Sea cultured pearl strands at the high end are very expensive. From what I have seen at the AGTA Show, there are a range of colors to accommodate buyer's diverse preferences. One of the largest problems we are confronted with is distinguishing between dyed and natural colored golden pearls. It is very difficult to know if one is buying a

natural South Sea golden cultured pearl necklace. Many dealers are well aware of this and stipulate on the bill of sale as to whether the pearls have been dyed.

White South Sea Cultured Pearls are exceedingly expensive in very large sizes. The most expensive and beautiful pearls can gauge up to 20mm and can be as small as 8-9mm. These small sizes are sometimes called “baby bells” and they have a beautiful white luster. There are also commercial qualities with a middle range of white, silver white, grey, yellow and greenish pearls.



14.2-12mm, bead-in
South Sea cultured pearls – white and golden
Courtesy of Mastoloni & Sons

12x14mm, bead-in
Mixed Golden South Sea cultured pearls, semi-
baroque
Courtesy of Eliko Pearl



10-13mm, bead-in
Natural Golden South Sea cultured pearls
Courtesy of Imperial Deltah



South Sea Cultured Pearls			
9x10mm	Round	Medium Golden	\$4,200
9.3x12.5mm	Round	Strong to Medium Golden	\$5,500
10x11.8mm	Off Round-Round	White	\$7,800
10.2x12.8mm	Semi-Baroque	White	\$2,500
11x10mm	Round	White	\$9,800
11x11.9mm	Off Round	Light to Medium Golden	\$3,800
11x11.9mm	Round	White	\$17,000
11.48x10.1mm	Round	White	\$4,200
11.9x9.3mm	Round	Strong Golden	\$9,800
12x10mm	Round	Medium Golden	\$9,100
12x13.6mm	Slight Off Round	White, Pink, Blue	\$5,800
13.3x12mm	Round	White	\$25,000
13.8x10.1mm	Round	Medium Golden	\$12,500
14.2x12mm	Round	Golden, White	\$12,500
14.4x17.9mm	Baroque	White, Yellow	\$12,000
14.5x13.1mm	Round	Strong Golden	\$31,500
14.6x18.2mm	Baroque	White, Slight Yellow	\$800
14.9x13.1mm	Round	White	\$14,000
18.4x15.25mm	Baroque	Silver-White	\$12,600
19.2x14.5mm	Baroque	Mixed Colors Golden, White, Peach, Pink, Light Golden	\$8,400

Tahitian South Sea Cultured Pearls

Tahitian South Sea farmers are experiencing the same difficulties as the Chinese. Labor costs have increased and the ability to deliver high quality Tahitian cultured pearls in large sizes has diminished. Colors are not as vibrant as in previous years and mm sizes are lower. There were many circled baroque Tahitian cultured pearls selling for \$850 per strand with mixed dark grey to light grey color. Strands gauge from 8x11mm to 15x17.5mm. Tahitian cultured pearl drop and semi baroque strands were available at reasonable prices – around \$400 – \$450.



14.4x12mm, bead-in, multi-color
Tahitian South Sea cultured pearls
Semi-baroque
Courtesy of Mastoloni



17.9x13.3mm, bead-in,
Tahitian South Sea cultured pearls, semi-baroque
Courtesy of Tara & Sons



10.17 - 8mm, bead-in, Round
Tahitian South Sea cultured pearls
Courtesy of Tara & Sons

Tahitian South Sea Cultured Pearls				
8x9mm	Round	Mint Green	\$2,000	
8x10mm	Round-Off Round	Multi-Color (Dark Green with Mint, Aubergine, Mixed Grays, Blue-Green)	\$1,500	
9x10mm	Round	Green Overtone	\$2,600	
9x10.7mm	Round	Peacock Color	\$2,900	
9x11mm	Semi-Baroque	Silver-Grey	\$4,500	
9.9x8mm	Round	Mint Green-bluish	\$3,780	
10x12.1mm	Semi-Baroque	White, Golden, Bluish, Lemon, Greenish, Yellow, Light Gray	\$2,700	
10x14.3	Round	Bronze	\$2,300	
10x17mm	Mixed Shapes	Mixed Grays, Black	\$2,200	Circles
10x17mm	Mixed Shapes, Semi-Baroque	Whites, Goldens	\$4,300	
10.17x8	Round	Greenish-Yellow	\$3,780	
10.1x11.4mm	Round	Multi-Color (Light Mint, Light Yellow, Brownish, Pink, Green)	\$4,050	
11.7x11mm	Round	Yellowish-Green, Bronze, Aubergine, Green, Pink	\$4,200	

Tahitian South Sea Cultured Pearls, Con't				
11.7x11mm	Round	Multi-Colors (Yellowish-Green, Aubergine, Pink)	\$6,000	
11.8x10mm	Semi-Baroque	Multi-Color (Pink, White, Light Golden, Green)	\$1,500	
11.9x10	Round	Dark Gray, Aubergine	\$9,450	
12x10mm	Semi-Baroque	White	\$3,500	
12x13.6mm	Mixed Shapes	Multi-Color (White, Aubergine, Gray)	\$7,900	
13.8x10.4	Off Round-Round	White, Golden, Green	\$6,000	
14.4x12mm	Off Round, Semi-Baroque	Dark Greenish, Yellow	\$4,250	

The information contained in this report reflects wholesale pricing of low, medium, and high end pearls exhibited at the AGTA 2012 Show.

The information contained in this report is intended to provide a cross section of what is available in the current pearl market at the wholesale level. The tables, listings, sizes, and prices are not intended for grading purposes. All pictures were taken by Vanessa Eaton and Lois H. Berger.

My sincere thanks to the members of our pearl group: Sarah Canizzaro, Fuji Voll, Gary Roskin, Cigdem Lule, Al Freedman, Faye Doyle, Elizabeth Strack, Stuart Robertson, Heidi Harders, Renee Newman, Dan Telleen and Cheryl Kremkaw.

My special thanks to the dealers who were so helpful: American Pearl Company; Eliko Pearl Co. Inc; King's Ransom; Sea Hunt Pearls; Pacific Pearls; Tara & Sons, Inc; King Plutarco, Inc.; Frank Mastoloni & Sons, Inc.; Imperial Deltah, Inc.; and A & Z Pearls, Inc.