GIA'S 7 PEARL VALUE FACTORS™

PEARL CLASSIFICATION: GIA'S APPROACH

Pearls are described in detail by classifying their size, shape, color luster, surface, matching and nacre quality; known together as GIA's 7 Pearl Value Factors.

Each value factor is important in determining a pearl's overall appearance, and when consistently applied together, the 7 Value Factors provide a common language to describe pearls and communicate their quality.

SETTING THE STANDARD

GIA developed the 7 Pearl Value Factors for the same reasons it developed the 4Cs of diamond quality: to establish a standard terminology for describing pearl quality using simple language everyone can intuitively understand.

GIA has developed comprehensive sets of master pearls, dedicated standard viewing environments, and precise protocols for pearl classification to ensure consistency throughout all its laboratories worldwide.

SHAPE

The term "semi-baroque" describes pearls that have identifiable shapes but are asymmetrical. "Baroque" describes pearls that are entirely irregular in shape.

Round   Near-Round   Oval   Button

Drop   Semi-Baroque   Baroque

SIZE

Pearl weight is measured in carats, and measurements are stated in millimeters to two decimal places.

Freshwater
4.00–16.00 mm

Akoya
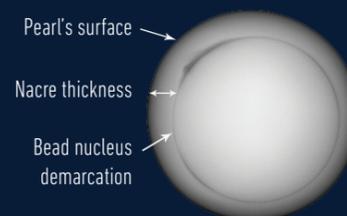2.00–11.00 mm

Tahitian
9.00–14.00 mm

South Sea
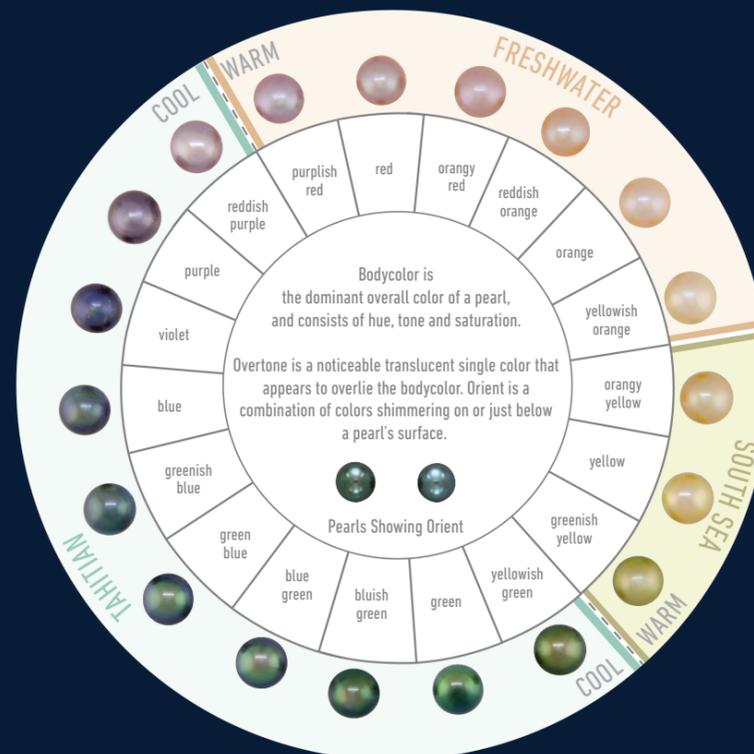8.00–20.00 mm

Typical Sizes

NACRE

Nacre is the substance that makes up a pearl, layer upon layer, giving pearls their unique appearance. Nacre quality is determined by its layering, and for bead cultured pearls, its thickness. Adequate nacre thickness is required for bead cultured pearls to be both durable and beautiful.

GIA pearl reports will clearly note if a pearl's nacre is too thin and/or damaged, thereby posing a potential threat to its durability. Additionally, nacre thickness measurements are available as optional descriptions on GIA pearl reports.

Pearl's surface
Nacre thickness
Bead nucleus demarcation

The bead nucleus is visible through each of these cultured pearls. This and their chalky appearance indicate thin nacre.

COLOR

COOL | WARM   FRESHWATER

purplish red   red   orangy red   reddish orange

reddish purple   orange

purple   yellowish orange

violet   orangy yellow

Bodycolor is the dominant overall color of a pearl, and consists of hue, tone and saturation.

Overtone is a noticeable translucent single color that appears to overlie the bodycolor. Orient is a combination of colors shimmering on or just below a pearl's surface.

blue   yellow

greenish blue   greenish yellow

Pearls Showing Orient   SOUTH SEA

green blue   yellowish green

blue green   bluish green   green   green

TAHITIAN   COOL | WARM

LUSTER

Luster is the light reflected from a pearl's surface and underlying nacre layers. It is evaluated by the intensity and sharpness of light reflection.

Excellent
Reflections are bright, sharp and distinct

Very Good
Reflections are bright and near-sharp

Good
Reflections are bright but not sharp

Fair
Reflections are weak, hazy and blurred

Poor
Reflections are dim and diffused

SURFACE

Surface is classified by taking into account the size, number, nature, location, visibility and type of surface characteristics, blemishes or irregularities that are confined to a pearl's surface.

Clean   **Lightly Spotted**   **Moderately Spotted**   **Heavily Spotted**

MATCHING

Matching describes the uniformity of pearls in a pair, strand or jewelry item. It takes into account the consistency of size, shape, color, luster, surface and nacre quality throughout the item.

GIA Matching Scale

Excellent	Pearls are uniform in appearance and drilled on-center
Very Good	Minor variations in uniformity
Good	Variations in uniformity
Fair	Noticeable variations in uniformity
Poor	Significant variations in uniformity
N/A	For single pearls and certain intentionally mismatched items.