



Smithsonian  
National Museum of Natural History



## The Allure of Pearls

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generously supported by  
Paspaley Pearls Pty. Ltd.

IRIDESSE Pearls



CHRISTOPHER WALLING PEARL  
SIZE: 84 X 40 mm  
WEIGHT: 750 grains (187.5 carats)  
LENDER: Paspaley Pearls Pty. Ltd.



PEARL OF KUWAIT  
SIZE: 41.275 X 19.05 mm  
WEIGHT: 257.41 grains (64.35 carats)  
LENDER: Symbolic & Chase

## Christopher Walling Pearl

Abalone produces some of the most distinctive pearls. Usually non-symmetrical in shape, abalone shells often end up in artistic designs. In most cases they can be recognized by their brilliant iridescent colors and high luster. Unlike the structure of traditional pearls, the abalone and the conch have an alveolar structure. These structures appear to be radiating from the center giving rise to unusual surface sheens or patterns.

The structure, combined with a green color that is common to most abalones, along with blue, yellow, and sometimes red, makes them both attractive and characteristically unique. In recent years the *Haliotis* mollusk has been pursued by marine biologists to cultivate pearls that mimic the appearance of natural abalone pearls. This abalone exhibits the classical qualities that are produced from the *Haliotis* in both its large shape and size along with the exceptional array of iridescent colors it shows.