

Process, Technique, Materials

Simply Living Jewelry® – Carmel and Michael

Process and Technique

Studio

Jewelry Information

Sterling Silver

What causes tarnish?

CUTS OF GEMSTONES:

Cabochon

Faceted

Pearl Facts Information and Description

Common Sources of Pearls

Fine Handcrafted Jewelry - Rare & Unique Minerals, Gemstones,
and Fossils in High Quality Sterling Silver.

Process and Technique

Using Mother Earth's creativity and our silversmithing and lapidary skills, we reveal beauty held captive, encrusted for millenniums.

Picturesque-provoking designs forged into a one-of-a-kind timeless keepsake are perfected using our passion for the beauty of fossils, gems and minerals.

We select and slice raw material; stones, minerals, fossils, meteorite pieces, and pottery shards. The slices are then examined for eye appealing natural patterns. A freeform outline is drawn and then cut. These freeform shapes are then brought to the desired finish. We create a collection of these finished elements. The finished gem stones are displayed in our design studio. Using these created elements Carmel chooses a primary stone and enhances or accents it with other finished stones and pearls. A fine sterling silver setting is then forged by Michael in his studio using heat, hammers, rollers, etc.

Studio

Our studios consists of a design room studio and fully equipped lapidary / precious metal smithing work shop studio.

Jewelry Information

Here you will find additional information and term explanation

Our jewelry is of high quality and created by hand, of high quality materials. It will last for many years if treated with reasonable care.

Sterling Silver

With its appealing, cool and crisp luster, sterling silver jewelry combines the endurance of a precious metal with an uncanny ability to adapt to fashion's demands.

Sterling silver will always be an element of style. It is an indispensable metal. Sterling Silver is a Precious Metal, just as Gold and Platinum are precious metals.

Sterling Silver is the most reflective metal. Silver is the whitest and has the greatest luster of all the metals. This means sterling silver can be polished to "give back" as much light as reaches it (99%). When silver is against the skin, you benefit from this white reflection by brightening your complexion. Sterling Silver compliments all complexion colors and skin tones - it brightens your skin's appearance.

Silver alloys readily with copper to manufacture sterling silver jewelry. By USA standards, Sterling Silver must be alloyed with copper. Sterling Silver alloyed in the USA must be a minimum of 92.5% pure silver and a maximum of 7.5% copper. Copper is added for strength and durability because fine silver is so soft. Many countries and even some craftspeople in the USA will alloy their silver with other nickel. In Italy it is common that sterling silver is alloyed with nickel. Much of the silver from Mexico is also alloyed with nickel. Many people have allergies to nickel and must avoid silver alloyed with nickel.

Sterling Silver jewelry is usually marked by a .925 or 92.5 symbol. For Sterling Silver alloyed in the USA, this indicates true sterling silver comprised of 92.5% silver and 7.5% copper. Compare this to the 14k mark on gold which consists of only 58% gold - the remaining components are silver and copper.

Silver is rarely found in nature in its pure form but as a component of other ores. Most silver today is retrieved by refining other metals such as lead and copper.

As silver is exposed to air, it tarnishes and loses its luster. This is a natural process of the sulfides in the air oxidizing the metal. At first, tarnish has a golden hue and then black. Humidity and air pollution affect the amount of sulfides in the air. The problem of silver tarnishing was unheard of before The Industrial Revolution polluted the air.

What causes tarnish?

Since the Industrial Revolution, tarnishing of sterling silver is a natural process. This is a result of the oxidation of the metal. Our precious metals are under constant attack by atmospheric pollutants during the manufacturing process, time in storage, transit, use and display. Of particular concern for sterling silver jewelry is hydrogen sulfide (H₂S) and sulfur dioxide (SO₂). Air pollution, petroleum products, fossil fuel combustion and natural sulfate breakdown are the culprits of corrosion, tarnishing and discoloration of metals. Ironically, the more you wear your silver, the less it tarnishes.

If silver is stored air-tight (Zip lock bags, Tupperware style containers) this reaction is greatly reduced. Silver should be protected from objects which are rich in sulfur such as: dried hard woods like oak, many paper and corrugated products made from the pulp of these woods. Oxidized / tarnished silver can be restored to its original color by a variety of methods, see care, storage, cleaning.

CUTS OF GEMSTONES:

Cabochon

A cabochon gemstone has a convex or domed top and flat base. Cutting and polishing a cabochon requires skill as well as the appropriate equipment and abrasives. We cut and polish many of the cabochons we use in our work. The name cabochon is derived from a french word relating to a bald man's head.

Faceted

Generally, a faceted gemstone's cut results in multiple flat surfaces with sharp edges or corners where one facet leaves off and the next facet begins. This type of cut helps a translucent stone captivate light.

A faceted gemstone consists of three main parts, the crown, girdle, and pavilion. The crown is made up of a table (large facet at the top of the stone), upper main facets (8, kite shaped), star facets (8, triangular), and upper girdle facets (16, triangular). The girdle (also known as the setting edge) is the section between the top and bottom of the stone and defines the perimeter, thus the overall shape of the gem. The pavilion has lower girdle facets (16, triangular), lower main facets (8, kite shaped), and the culet (small facet where the pavilion facets meet at a point). The eight lower main facets actually create an octagon shape to the culet.

There are two basic faceted cuts, the brilliant and step. The emerald cut and round brilliant are the basis from which most other cuts are based. A mixed cut would consist of, for example, a brilliant cut crown and step cut pavilion. Although new cuts are introduced fairly often, in 1988 DeBeers introduced new cuts specifically designed for misshapen or colored diamonds, called the sunflower, dahlia, marigold, zinnia, and fire rose

Brilliant cut gems have crown and pavilion facets, kite or triangular shaped, that radiate out from the center. The outline may be round, pear, oval, marquise, and more.

Step cut gems have rows of facets that resemble a stairway. The outline, or perimeter, which is shown by the girdle, may be rectangular, square, triangular, kite shaped, among others. Long rectangular step-cut gems are known as baguettes, often used as side stones in a setting, while rectangular shaped and cut-corner or faceted corners is known as the emerald cut, often used with emeralds.

Pearl Facts Information and Description

An organic gem, pearls are formed inside mollusks such as oysters and mussels. They are formed when an irritant such as a tiny stone or bit of sand gets inside the mollusk's shell. A lustrous substance, called nacre, is secreted around the object to protect the soft internal surface of the mollusk. As layer upon layer of nacre coats the irritant, a pearl is formed. Light that is reflected from these overlapping layers produces a characteristic iridescent luster. This process of building a solid pearl can take up to 10 years.

Natural pearls are formed without human intervention. Cultured pearls are made when a foreign substance is intentionally inserted into a living mollusk. This method was first used in 1893. Baroque pearls are not round and have irregular shapes., Biwa pearls are irregular shaped pearl which forms in the freshwater of Lake Biwa, Japan. Mabe and Blister pearls grow attached to the inside of the shell. Black pearls are gray to black pearls. Freshwater pearls form in fresh water mollusks and have fewer and thicker layers of nacre than saltwater pearls.

Common Sources of Pearls

Natural pearls have been harvested from the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Manaar Indian Ocean and the Red Sea for thousands of years. The coasts of Polynesia and Australia produce mainly cultured pearls. Both freshwater and saltwater

pearls are cultivated in Japan and China. Freshwater pearls occur in the rivers of Scotland, Ireland, France, Austria, Germany, and the USA Mississippi.

Long known as the "Queen of Gems," pearls possess a history and allure far beyond what today's wearer may recognize. Throughout much of recorded history, a natural pearl necklace comprised of matched spheres was a treasure of almost incomparable value. Before the creation of cultured pearls in the early 1900s, natural pearls were so rare and expensive that they were reserved almost exclusively for the noble and very rich.

No one will ever know who the earliest people to collect and wear pearls were. However, since ancient times, the pearl has been a symbol of unblemished perfection. It is the oldest known gem, and for centuries it was considered the most valuable.

The wide and fascinating variety of shapes, colors and sizes of freshwater pearls gives jewelry designers the ideal opportunity to put their creative designing skills to the maximum use. The skilled artisans imaginatively blend a variety of combinations with other stones into exquisitely crafted creations.

Pearl is the official birthstone for the month of June as adopted by the American National Association of Jewelers in 1912. It is also the birthstone for the Sun Signs of Gemini and Cancer.

Mohs Scale of Hardness: 2 to 4.