

# Fashion TRENDS

## Coral And Shell Add Variety To Organic Gem Choices For Jewelry

(NAPSA)—Nature's gifts from the sea are breathtaking. Long-ago followers of Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, certainly thought so when they witnessed her glistening beauty rising from the waves, with lustrous pearls embracing her. If you crave a change of "sea-nergy" in your jewelry collection, there are plenty of charming options from the ocean and freshwater sources.

Women are drawn to the silky shimmer and allure of organic gems, such as the classic cultured pearl. According to experts at the Gemological Institute of America (GIA), the world's foremost authority in gemology, akoya, South Sea, and Tahitian cultured pearls are produced by oysters in saltwater, while freshwater cultured pearls are produced by mussels. Cultured pearls are available in a fascinating array of colors, sizes, and shapes, inviting many possibilities in jewelry.

GIA's gem experts note that coral and shell from the Mediterranean, Pacific, and other waters offer additional attractive choices in organic gems for jewelry. Long-prized for their natural beauty, coral and shell have emerged as trendy and desirable among the organic gems used in eye-catching jewelry. They are soft enough to carve into intriguing shapes. Coral adds a passionate range of colors, extending from white and cream to light pink, dark red, or orange, and sometimes blue or purple, and even black, dark brown, or brownish yellow. Some



Photo by Robert Weldon. Jewelry courtesy Behnam Jewelry Corp.

### Coral cabochons add a colorful organic appeal to sterling silver jewelry.

of the more popular shades are known by trade names such as ox blood (dark red) and angel's skin (light vivid pink).

Hip new coral jewelry looks include pendants of hand-carved coral roses suspended from strands of chunky coral nuggets, fringes of coral beads swaying playfully in gypsy earrings, and bright, oversized coral cabochons set in copper cuffs. Today's coral jewelry turns heads with its fresh and feminine outlook, and is as changeable and invigorating as a sea breeze.

The ocean's motion also brings many shell treasures, such as mother-of-pearl, conch, and abalone. These provide added diversity in various colors, from the customary white to brown, yellow,

orange, and pink, often in layered or patterned shades. Imaginative shell jewelry designs glisten with an eye-catching, yet elegant and natural look. For example, mother-of-pearl is traditionally formed into delicate cameos. Ocean-inspired creations are everywhere, featuring pendants carved into creamy blossoms, inlaid in contrasting geometric patterns, or revealed in their original curving shapes.

More casual than pearls, shell jewelry also makes a fun, flirty addition to the "bohemian peasant" look. Or, get funky with a blue abalone shell pendant swinging "on the half shell" from strands of oblong shell beads on silk or leather cord. You can also show off shells with the shimmer of a mermaid's necklace made from tiny shell disks that shift and shiver like wind chimes in a tropical gale.

Mother-of-Pearl's sea-foam whites are often touched with iridescent rainbow hues known as "orient," according to the gemological experts at GIA. Abalone shell provides particularly striking display of iridescence.

The changeable beauty of the tide is captured in coral and shell, among today's popular organic gems. So dive into the ocean's bounty and emerge like Aphrodite, vital and breathtaking, as nature made you.

For more information on organic gems, as well as diamonds and other gemstones, visit GIA at [www.gia.edu](http://www.gia.edu), or call 1-800-421-7250.