

How To Tell A Good Pearl

NEW YORK. (AP)—Most women, says a leading importer of Japanese cultured pearls, don't know how to choose a high quality pearl necklace from a poor one.

Men, he quickly adds, are even worse.

But it's a simple matter, says Sidney A. Weiss, president of the Imperial Pearl Syndicate, largest importers of pearls into this country, and furthermore the purchase need not be an expensive one.

Weiss says excellent quality pearls can be purchased for as little as \$20, although he believes shopping in the \$50 to \$100 bracket will give the most satisfaction. He strongly suggests, however, that the best place to start is a reputable jeweler or department store.

"The purchaser should remember," he says, "that a good quality pearl necklace—and it need not necessarily be an expensive one—can be worn and will be fashionable for many many years. Substandard merchandise, even if the jewels are large, will not last, will not have the proper luster, color and quality and certainly will not make the wearer happy."

Weiss recently returned from Japan, where he spoke with Japanese businessmen and government officials to seek ways to keep inferior pearls from reaching the American market. He says:

"Because of an acute shortage of fine quality and large Japanese cultured pearls, it seems inevitable that their selling price will rise as much as 50 to 75 per cent in America."

"This will be caused," he adds, by the fact that "many Japanese growers have been harvesting their beds as quickly as possible, instead of letting the pearls develop. This has resulted in a bumper crop of cheap, inferior merchandise that doesn't even deserve the name of cultured pearl."

"When buying pearls," Weiss says, "the first and by far most important thing a buyer should look for is luster. Without this quality, no pearl is worth a penny, no matter how large or round it may be. Years after its purchase," he says, "a pearl necklace should still retain its glow and capture the beauty of the owner's skin."

After luster, Weiss says that roundness is most important. Then the buyer should check for matching—a perfect evenness from the larger stones to the smallest. The fourth point is imperfection and the fifth is color.