

Second Auction of J. Hunter Pearls Fiji

This past May, J. Hunter Pearls Fiji successfully hosted their second annual Fiji Pearls auction in Yokohama, Japan, with over 90% of their lots sold, attesting to the strong demand for J. Hunter's untraditionally colored Fiji Pearls.

According to Justin Hunter: "We have a unique and intriguing product that we stand behind."

With his business still in a growth stage, Hunter has chosen to limit the number of auction participants.

"Our approach is to develop strong working relationships with a core group of international buyers, as we believe that having these relationships with our buyers enables them to be more intimate and knowledgeable with our product.

"We believe that there must be mutual respect for what each group brings to this relationship, and we as producers will honor and support them and their distribution lines."

J. Hunter is stepping up



A premier J. Hunter strand at the auction, sold to a German dealer



Some of the gorgeous baroques coming out of recent J. Hunter Pearls Fiji harvests. Note the preponderance of earthy colors being derived. This coloration is "hot" for current fashions, and is being snapped up almost as fast as it comes on the market.

his growing areas by adding an additional farming site off the coast of Kioa Island, sixty kilometers from his Savsavu farm. This new farm, which includes a 240 hectare water lease, has huge potential to significantly expand production.

In keeping with his vision to protect the marine environment, Hunter finalized his Environmental Code of Practice this year.

The principle behind this document is to ensure company operations are conducted in a manner that minimizes negative environmental aspects, maximizes positive impacts and demonstrates the organization's commitment to being good stewards of the seas.

The document also highlights the lengths the company goes to in order to ensure being a contributor to the island communities.

Buyers of J. Hunter's Fiji pearls are pleased to have this document in hand as a point of sale for their customers, as it gives them more knowledge of where their product is from and how consciously it was produced.

The year 2008 has shown Hunter continuing to strive for excellence in both environmentally conscientious pearl farming and in the marketing of his pearls.

Auction highlights

The auction was held May 20th in Yokohama, and was hosted by J. Hunter Pearls Fiji and Aquatec International of Yokohama, Japan. Aquatec and J. Hunter Pearls have had a long working relationship.

Demand was brisk: over 90% of lots were sold. As was last

year, the highlight of the auction was the pearls themselves. Lot number one, a 18.9mm round, saw aggressive bidding.

J. Hunter introduced his new gem, Fiji baroques, to an enthusiastic audience. These pearls, keshi in appearance but huge and untraditional in color, were highly sought after and appreciated.

Truly unique this year were natural earthy tones. These were very popular, not one being left.

As before, a small group of buyers from different market locations around the world was invited to attend.

“We believe very strongly in building a strong relationship with each of our participants,” said Justin Hunter.

“The large variations in the color of our pearls present some unique problems for matching and strand making, which makes it important to limit the number of auction buyers.

“But these varied colors also bring many wonderful jewelry choices. Our goal is to sell at good prices, while supplying the lots our buyers need. Our action participants understand the dynamics of this relationship we are trying to create, and appreciate our commitment to fairness.

“We also believe very strongly that the relationships we are building with them now will help both them and us out in the long run.

“We provide quite a different auction experience here. We all come do our work, sell the pearls and then all have dinner and drinks, where we catch up talk about pearls, the market, and how wonderful the pearl business is.”

Recent developments

As stated, back home J. Hunter Pearls has established a second pearl farm. This new facility farm comprises a 250 hectare lease just off the island of Kioa in the Northern Group of Fiji. This farm will greatly increase production in the coming years.

Also, an Environmental Code of Practice (ECOP) has been inaugurated, and introduced at the 2008 auction. The concept behind the Environmental Code of Practice is to formalize the company’s commitment to itself, its community, and its customers.

“We believe in not only producing some of the best pearls in the world, but doing it in a sustainable and responsible manner both for and with the communities we are a part of,” said Mr. Hunter. ❖

