



# PEARLS FROM MEXICO: MARINE RARITIES FROM THE AMERICAS

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PERLAS DEL MAR  
DE CORTEZ

A historical map of Mexico and the Gulf of Mexico, showing various regions, cities, and geographical features. The map is titled "MEXICO" and "GOLFO DI MEXICO". It includes labels for "NOVO MEXICO", "FLORIDA", "Tropicus Canceri", "MARE DEL SVD", and "PACIFICVM". The map is oriented with North at the top and shows the Gulf of Mexico to the east of Mexico. The text "MARE DEL SVD" and "PACIFICVM" are written in large letters at the bottom of the map. The map is a detailed historical representation of the region, showing various cities, rivers, and geographical features. The text "MEXICO" is written in large letters across the top of the map. The text "GOLFO DI MEXICO" is written in large letters across the middle of the map. The text "Tropicus Canceri" is written in large letters across the bottom of the map. The text "MARE DEL SVD" and "PACIFICVM" are written in large letters at the bottom of the map. The map is a detailed historical representation of the region, showing various cities, rivers, and geographical features. The text "MEXICO" is written in large letters across the top of the map. The text "GOLFO DI MEXICO" is written in large letters across the middle of the map. The text "Tropicus Canceri" is written in large letters across the bottom of the map. The text "MARE DEL SVD" and "PACIFICVM" are written in large letters at the bottom of the map.

# INTRODUCTION

- Mexico was the World's Main Producer of dark colored Pearls for only 380 years.
- 480 years of continuous production.
- 1<sup>st</sup> True South Sea Pearls (Mares del Sur).



## THE PEARL FISHERIES IN THE GULF OF CALIFORNIA

- Slave Labor: Yaqui Indians were the best divers.
- The pearl beds were incredibly abundant.
- Pearl Oyster Farm in La Paz from 1896 to 1914.
- 1940: Federal Pearl Fishing Ban.

# THE *PINCTADA* PEARL OYSTERS

- 4 Native species in the American Continent's coasts:
  - *Pinctada mazatlanica*: from the Gulf of California to Costa Rica
  - *Pinctada imbricata*: from Florida (USA) to Brazil.

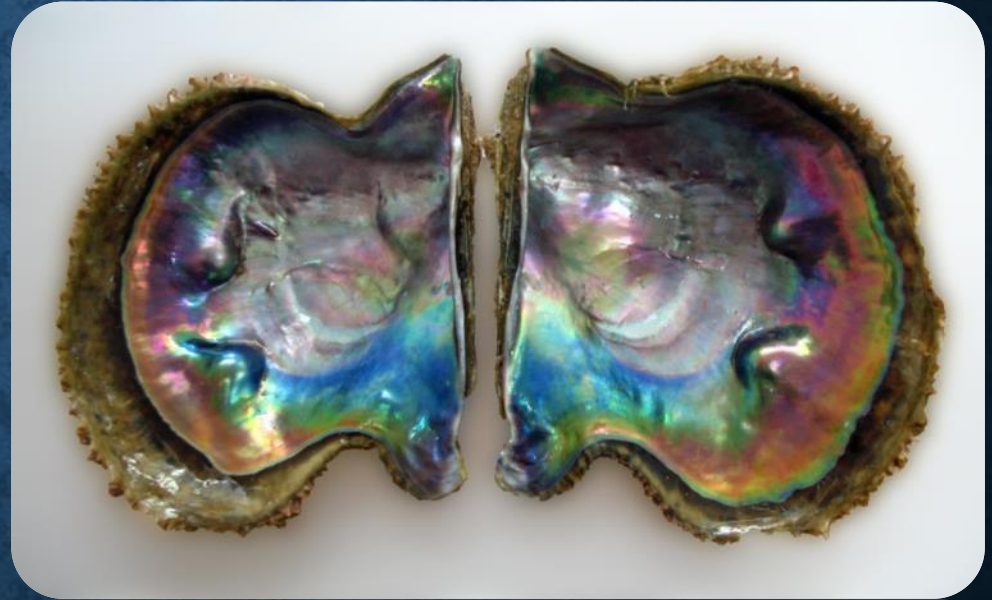


# FAMOUS PEARLS – P. MAZATLANICA



# THE *PTERIA* PEARL OYSTERS

- *Pteria sterna*: from Baja California (invasive in California, USA) to Peru.
- *Pteria colymbus*: from North Carolina (USA) to Brazil.
- Technically IMPOSSIBLE to use for Cultured Pearl production.



# FAMOUS PEARLS – P. STERNA



# PEARL OYSTERS IN NATURE



*Pinctada mazatlanica*

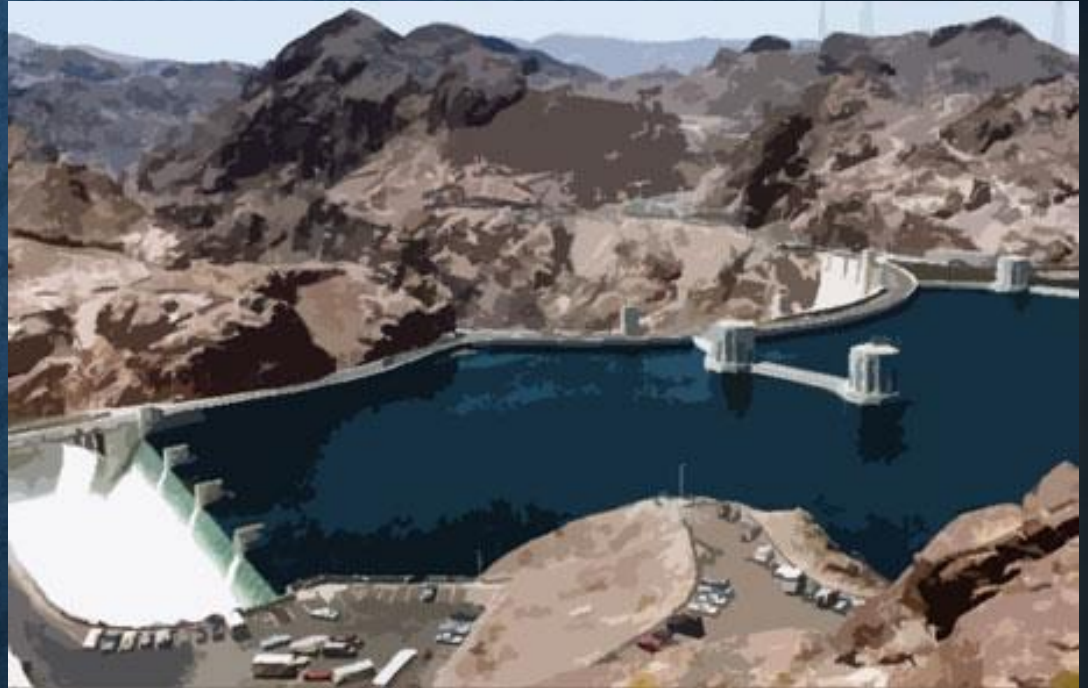


*Pteria sterna*



# CAUSES OF LOCAL EXTINCTION

- Many causes:
  - Overfishing
  - Natural environmental changes
  - Disease/Epidemic
  - **Hoover Dam – 1939** : great environmental change.



**Pearls disappeared  
in the 1940's**

# CORTEZ PEARLS

- Natural & Cultured Pearls are once again available in the Gulf of California.
- The only commercial saltwater pearl farm in the Americas.



# BACOCHIBAMPO BAY PEARL FARM



**Area: 400 Ha/4 Km<sup>2</sup>**

**We use only 2 Ha or 0.5%**

# PEARL FARMING IN MEXICO

- **Rainbow Lip Oyster** – *Pteria sterna* & Mexican Black Lip *Pinctada mazatlanica* (2017)
- 250,000 pearl oysters
- 25 employees
- Limited Yearly Production: 1.2 to 4.0 kilos and up to 5000 Mabe.
- Fair Trade Gems – Only pearl in this list.
- Sustainable Pearl Farming

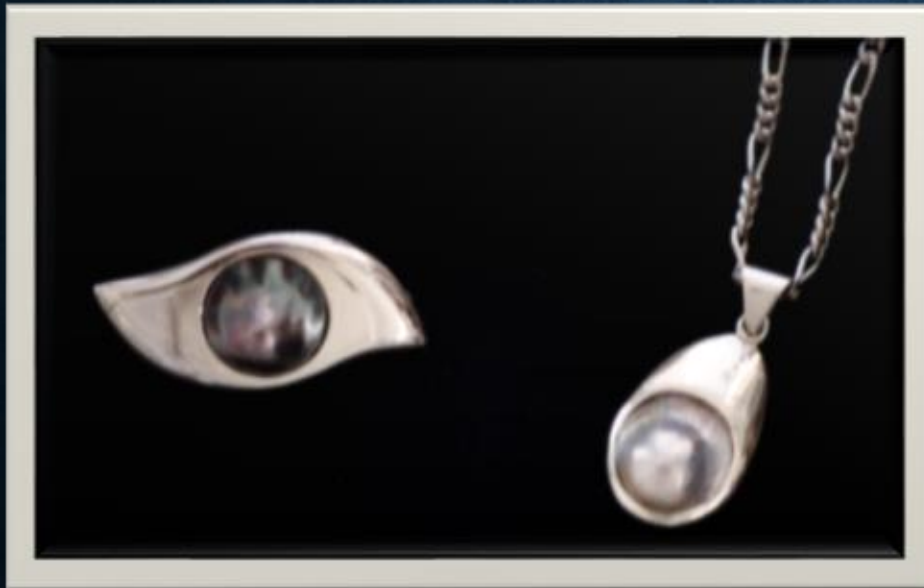


## **MEXICAN BLACK PEARLS**

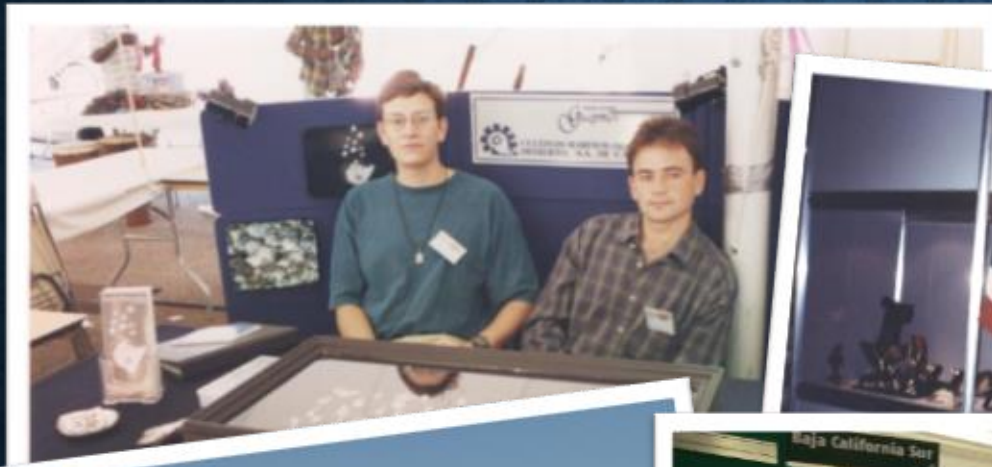
- New Production
- Environmental Change is Happening!
- Changes in Mexican Laws & Regulations Required

# INITIAL MARKETING STAGE

- Direct Sales at University Campus:  
from seafood to shells and simple  
Mabe jewelry: 1993 - 1995
- “Tupperware Era”: 1994-1996



# TRADE SHOW ERA: 1996-PRESENT



# TOURISTIC ERA: 1996-PRESENT





# RETAIL STORES IN MEXICO

- 1997: from small store to large Sales Exhibit
- 2000: Retail Store in Cabo San Lucas
- 2004: Retail Stores in Cozumel
- 2018: Coming Soon!





# WE HAD TO CLOSE SOME OUTLETS...

- Cabo San Lucas Store destroyed by Hurricane in 2001
- Cozumel Stores destroyed in 2005
- Guaymas Farm and Stored Damaged constantly from 2003 to 2016



# AGE OF DARKNESS

- 2007 – 2015
- Great Turmoil in Mexican & World Economy
- Swine Flu AH1N1
- Mexican Drug War
- Tourism: From 15,000 yearly visitors to less than 1,000 per year!
- Hurricanes



# THE “FAIR TRADE GEM” ERA: 2004-PRESENT

- 3 Pillars:
  - 1) The Environment: must not be destroyed but preserved or enhanced
  - 2) Community: good wages/salaries, good working conditions and above average perks.
  - 3) Integrity: Gems must not be “enhanced” or treated to appear better or more beautiful
  - “Romancing the Stone”- The story matters!

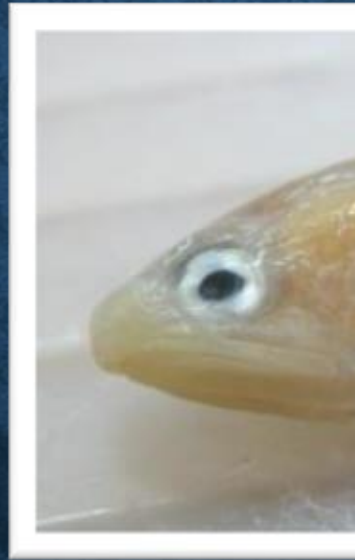
# SUSTAINABLE PEARL FARM INITIATIVE

- Supported by the Tiffany & Co. Foundation in 2014
- Out thousands of farms in the World only 4 have received this certification:
  - Paspaley Pearls of Australia
  - Jeweler of Philippines
  - Kamoka Pearls of Tahiti
  - ***Cortez Pearls of Mexico***



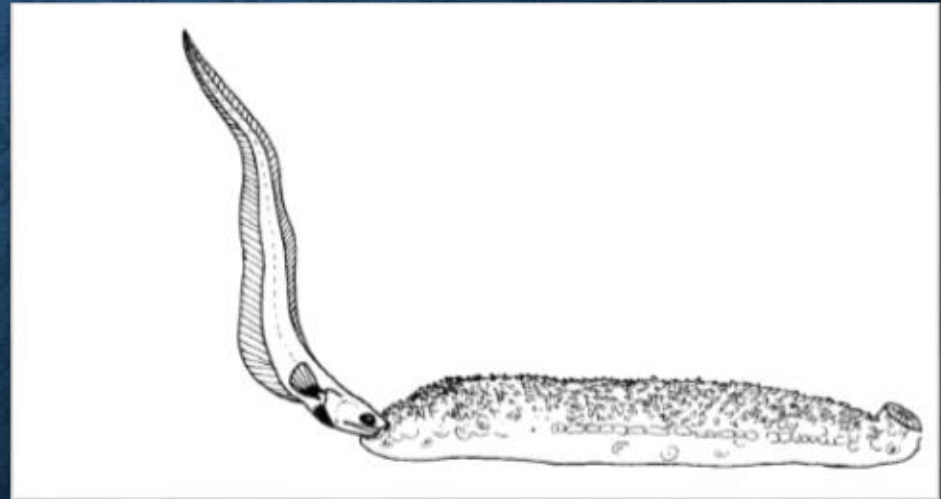
# AN INTERESTING ECO-STORY

- How are we changing the “world” for other animal species????
- Let us consider the “Pearl Fish” (*Carapus dubius*)
- It can be found living inside the shell of host pearl oysters.



- What happens when the pearl beds disappear???? Will the species die???
- It can *also* live inside another host...the “Sea Cucumber”

- *Where would YOU rather Live?*
- *What name would you rather be called?*



# ROMANCING THE STONE

- Convincing People that we do exist, that we do have a Pearl and a Unique Story to share has taken us 20+ years!
- Authenticity never Compromised.
- Our Goals have not Changed:
  - 1. to Bring back Mexico's Legendary Gem back into Modern History.
  - 2. Do our Share in Saving our World (Tikkum Olam)
  - 3. Share the Unique Traits of Cortez Pearls



*Trigem*  
designs



# UNIQUE TRAITS

- Cortez Pearls ARE NOT Processed: no bleaching, dyeing, polishing, etc. (requirement of FTG)
- Unique Spiraled prints
- Pink-Red fluorescence on UV
- Thick Nacre Coating (0.8-2.5 mm)
- Provenance: Only farm of its kind



# 2<sup>ND</sup> GROWTH ERA

- 2017-2025
- Plans to increase the number of farms in the Sea of Cortez
- Increase Cortez Pearl Production to 10 kilos by 2025
- Manufacture our own Jewelry
- Jewelry Design Contests
- Establish Commercial Associations



# YOUR SUPPORT IS VALUABLE

- Support from international buyers/vendors: Marc H'arit (Norway), Pearl-Paradise, Pure Pearls, Columbia Gemhouse (USA).
- 95% of Funding comes from our Pearl & Jewelry Sales in Mexico.
- Support Ethically produced Gemstones & Metals when possible.



# THANK YOU

