

DIAMONDS AND PEARLS
Audrey Hepburn in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*

Beloved of royalty (both real and Hollywood), pearls are back on the catwalk. Bibby Sowray has ways to string along

With *Blue Planet II* fuelling the nation's current obsession with all things under the sea, it seems apt that pearls are having yet another moment in the spotlight.

The iridescent gem has long been a symbol of sophistication, favoured by both Hollywood royalty and actual royalty; Audrey Hepburn (main picture), Jackie Kennedy and Diana, Princess of Wales all made the pearl necklace a part of their signature style. But they were late to the party; the earliest evidence of pearls being worn as adornment dates back to 520BC and a Persian princess who was laid to rest with her pearl jewellery – the fragments of which are now on display at the Louvre in Paris.

Gabrielle “Coco” Chanel made pearls synonymous with her fashion house by wearing multiple strands and famously stating “a woman needs ropes and ropes of pearls”. To this day they appear in every ready-to-wear and couture collection presented by creative director Karl Lagerfeld.

“Pearls are always appropriate,” Jackie Kennedy said – and that’s certainly true this season. On the AW17 catwalks, aptly-named British brand Mother of Pearl dotted them along the shoulder seams of oversized woollen outerwear, while Altuzarra edged a dramatic grey cape with them, as well as studding them up knee-high boots and along velvet Alice bands. Cult label Ellery used them as buttons on double-breasted blazers, neat pencil skirts and slit-hem trousers.

If you’re lucky enough to have any real pearl jewellery, now is the time to wear it with pride, and with anything – from a plain T-shirt and jeans to your smartest get-up. Even athleisure wear can benefit from pearly magic – at the Topshop Unique show, a zip-up sports top was accessorised with a pearl dangling from the zip, and worn with chunky pearl-and-gem earrings.

Freshen a real pearl necklace by having it professionally restrung – opt for a shorter length that skims your collar bones. Or if you’ve got a tired faux version, get crafty; deconstruct it and sew individual pearls on to shirts and sweaters, or thread through the laces of your favourite shoes.

EIGHT PIECES TO BUY NOW

STUDDED DENIM
Faux pearl appliqué jeans, £29.99, Zara (zara.com)



PRETTY PEARLS
14-karat gold pearl earring, £115, Loren Stewart (net-a-porter.com)



DUST OFF YOUR...

PEARLS



CLASSIC NECKLACE
Freshwater Cultured Pearl Necklace, £95, A B Davis (johnlewis.com)



BEADED BAG
Faux pearl beaded bag, £450, Shrimps (shrimps.co.uk)

PARTY PIECE
Faux pearl embellished velvet dress, £59, Warehouse (warehouse.co.uk)



HIDDEN GEMS
Leather belt with faux pearl studs, £98, Uterque (uterque.com)

DAINTY DETAIL
Faux pearl ring, £8, & Other Stories (stories.com)

STATEMENT SLIDES
Faux pearl embellished velvet slides, £525, Miu Miu (matchesfashion.com)



TRACKING THE TREND

PEARLY QUEEN
“Coco” Chanel was well known for her love of pearls, wearing strand upon strand daily, bringing the pearl necklace into the fashion mainstream. She was known to mix faux with cultured pearls, to the dismay of pearl purists.



HOLLYWOOD YEARS
Pearls were favoured by the silver screen sirens of Hollywood's golden age, among them Elizabeth Taylor, who owned the La Peregrina pearl, one of the most famous pearls in history. She commissioned Cartier to re-design the necklace (a gift from Richard Burton) setting it with more pearls, as well as diamonds and rubies.



TRENDING AGAIN
The pearl is enjoying a resurgence thanks to designers including Gucci, Miu Miu and Ellery using them to stud clothes and accessories for AW17. Fashion editor Natasha Goldenberg is pictured wearing a delicate pearl necklace at Paris Fashion Week in October.