



From left: Members of the TPAHK study tour group review the lot listings at the auction; and the Rikitea Auction is known for its lots of Tahitian pearls in stunning colours. Information and images provided by the Tahitian Pearl Association Hong Kong

Strong auction **sales** hint at positive business prospects

The 18th Cooperate Tahiti Auction (Rikitea Auction) delivered a strong sales performance with 98.86 percent of the pearl lots sold. The lots, comprising 372,650 pieces of pearls, fetched nearly €4.15 million (about \$4.52 million) in revenues, 30 percent higher than pre-sale estimates, according to auction organiser, Dominique Devaux.

Tahitian Pearl Export Statistics (2016 vs 2010)

Year	Weight (Tonnes)	Value (XPF in M)	QTY	Price/Gram
2016	10.5	6,427	6,107,807	
2010	16	7,357	9,939,199	
% change	-35%	-13%	-39%	+34%

Source: Marine and Mining Resources, French Polynesia by TPAHK

The auction was held from March 26 to 27 in Tahiti. The sale saw a total of 379,914 Tahitian pearls in a wide variety of

colours, shapes and sizes offered for auction. The auction drew quality buyers from Japan, Hong Kong, French Polynesia, Vietnam, the US and Hawaii. Buyers from Asia accounted for 78.15 percent and 76.34 percent of the pearls sold in volume and value terms, respectively.

The major buyers from Hong Kong were Chan Ming Wing Pearl International Ltd, Eastern Pearl Co Ltd, Fook Yue Pearl Co Ltd, Luen Hing Pearls & Jewellery Ltd, and Man Sang Jewellery (Hong Kong) Ltd.

The auction attracted competitive bidding. "Fifty out of 60 buyers successfully placed bids," Devaux said. "We are glad to see



Members of the TPAHK study tour group with Dominique Devaux, organiser of the Rikitea Auction

Tahitian Pearl Export Statistics 2016

Country/Region	Weight (kg)	%	Qty (Million)	%	Value (XPF in Million)	%
Hong Kong	5,674	54.2%	3,206	52.5%	3,428	53%
Japan	4,206	40.1	2,540	41.6%	2,620	41%
US	194	1.8%	97	1.6%	91	1%
France	112	1.1%	83	1.4%	66	1%
China	77	0.7%	45	0.7%	52	1%
New Caledonia	65	0.6%	49	0.8%	62	1%
Guadeloupe	38	0.4%	20	0.3%	7	0%
New Zealand	32	0.3%	20	0.3%	36	1%
Vietnam	22	0.2%	15	0.2%	17	0%
Others	58	0.6%	32	0.5%	46	1%
TOTAL	10,479	100%	6,108	100%	6,427	100%

Source: Marine and Mining Resources, French Polynesia by TPAHK



Delegates inspect a pearl lot

the positive and slightly upward movement in the average price per piece in the last two years. Only 4,264 pieces of pearls were

unsold, accounting for 1.1 percent of the total pearls displayed."

Due to tight supply, top-grade round Tahitian pearls remain

highly sought after. Production volume declined substantially in the last year due to oyster shortages, with top-quality pearls, which are unique in terms of colour, shape, size and lustre, representing less than 2 percent of the total production of Tahitian pearls, according to industry members.

Although exports in volume terms fell by nearly 40 percent in 2016 compared with 2010 figures due to lower production output, the price per gram for Tahitian pearls recorded a 34 percent increase, indicating strong demand for these gems.

The next auctions in Tahiti will be held in July 2017. **JNA**



From left: Tahitian pearls at the Rikitea Auction; and circle pearls are attracting higher buyer interest