

Designers find poetic inspiration in Tahiti



French Polynesia's picturesque landscape has fascinated and charmed visitors for centuries



From left: A Gauguin's Pearl Farm official delivers a presentation to TPAHK delegates; a staff of Tahiti's Quality Control Department inspects pearls for export; TPAHK delegates inspect some of the lots at the GIE Tahiti Pearl Auction. Photo credit: Images provided by TPAHK



From left: Richard Wan, grandson of Robert Wan, welcomes delegates to the Robert Wan Villa; this 22.5mm Tahitian pearl is one of the key attractions at the Robert Wan Pearl Museum in Papeete; from left: Candy Chan of Jewelry Express and HKJMA; Jane Chen; Heifara Trafton, advisor to the vice president of French Polynesia; Teva Rohfritsch, vice president of French Polynesia; TPAHK General Manager Ida Wong; Shen Dan; Candy Luo and Jasmine Chau

Promising designers from Hong Kong and China fell for the enchanting beauty of Tahiti during a study tour organised by the Tahitian Pearl Association of Hong Kong (TPAHK).

The members of the TPAHK delegation included Jane Chen, Tahitian Pearl Award winner of the SJDA Awards; Shen Dan, first runner-up and Tahitian Pearl Award winner of the 1st China (International) Pearl Jewelry Design Competition; and Candy Luo and Jasmine Chau, Open Group I and Open Group II Champions of the JMA International Jewelry Design Competition 2016, respectively.

"It was an inspiring tour and one where I experienced so many new things. Apart from exchanging ideas with other designers, I also came out of the tour with a better understanding of pearl cultivation, testing and identification," said Candy Luo, chief designer at Peter Lam Jewellery Ltd. "The more I

learn about Tahitian pearls, the more I love them."

Jasmine Chau, a designer at PIN (Hong Kong) Ltd, said the study tour was an "eye-opener." "The entire trip was focused on the Tahitian pearl," Chau said. "Not only did I learn how challenging pearl farming is and how rare fine-quality pearls are, I also now have a deeper appreciation for the distinctive beauty of each pearl."

Jane Chen, SJDA Design Awards winner, said she now has a newfound appreciation for baroque, circle and keshi Tahitian pearls following the tour. "Prior to the study tour, I only used round Tahitian pearls in my designs. The trip, however, opened my eyes to the many creative possibilities of various pearl shapes. I will definitely be using more irregular-shaped, one-of-a-kind Tahitian pearls in my collections."

Shen Dan, who shone in the 1st China (International) Pearl Jewelry Design Competition, said she was

surprised to learn that Tahitian pearls come in a wide variety of colours. "Each oyster produces one unique pearl. French Polynesia produces only 10 tonnes of these gems, and it's understandable why they command high prices."

Ida Wong, general manager of TPAHK and head of the delegation, said the study tour was part of the association's initiatives to expand the market for Tahitian pearl jewellery in Greater China.

"We are confident that the delegates have been inspired by the beauty of Tahiti and its pearls. We are expecting more thrilling designs to be created following this trip," Wong said.

Held from March 25 to April 1, the study tour included guided visits to the Robert Wan Pearl Museum, auctions, pearl farms and the Quality Control Department of the Marine Resources Authority of French Polynesia. [JNA](#)