



June – Find your “Beauty of the Day”

By Marcia Harmon, Cottage Jewel

'Tis the season we remind every young bride to add “something old, something new, something borrowed and something blue” to her wedding day ensemble. Or maybe she'll follow the English tradition of placing a six pence in her shoe for good fortune. And, oh my goodness, don't forget the joys of accumulating a “trousseau,” which like a dowry, may include the personal possessions of a bride from her finest clothing and accessories to household linens and wares.

In the Victorian era a Bride's Basket was the gift of choice. This ornate quadruple plate silver footed pedestal held a handmade colored glass bowl and a collection of fruit or candies. Today you could host a tea cup shower or offer a vintage hankie to the mother of the bride if you want to keep an old tradition alive. In the 1940's many well-to-do school girls registered for their preferred silverware pattern and then wore a small spoon pin to advertise their selection. These fun souvenirs are the size of a salt spoon and are certainly a conversation piece today.

Since vintage bling is the current vogue, I have more bride's asking for 1940's-1950's rhinestone tassel necklaces, chandelier earrings and sun burst pins as a hair or dress accent. Of course our passion for pearls has not gone away, but how and where we wear them has evolved.



Once upon a time a young girl would receive a single cultured pearl as a gift each year and eventually knot a single strand of lustrous pearls to wear on her wedding day. Today the classic pearl choker has been replaced by layers and layers of beads and pearls or a multi-strand dog collar for a more formal affair. Most of the vintage pearls that you find at the bottom of grandma's jewel box are not genuine, but rather a glass bead core with a heavy enamel finish of crushed pearl luster. The other treasure that you might find at the bottom of your grandmother's trousseau is a long string of single assorted buttons, called a “charm string.” In the mid to late 19th century it was a fad for young girls to collect single buttons either found, traded, or gifted to them and place them on a long string each with a love story or memory. When she reached 999 buttons, the owner would tuck the charm string into her trousseau and see her future husband. But woe betide her if more buttons were inadvertently added, that would be the fateful sign of spinsterhood.

Another must in your trousseau is an original hand-carved cameo. A cameo has come to be known as any pretty face in profile, but a true cameo is hand-carved in a natural material with striations or banding of color to highlight the details of the picture. The classic “Beauty of the Day” is a profile of a woman with the features most desirable in each distinctive era. By the 1910's the Beauty cameos had more delicate features like a cute button nose, versus the strong Greco-roman features of the older cameos. A personal favorite is “Psyche” who is depicted with a butterfly wing in her hair or on her shoulder. She is the bride of Cupid and is representative of “the soul”. The assortment of shell colors, figural subject matter and ways to wear a cameo is endless. Follow your heart in choosing a cameo to suit your personal style. Each miniature work of art has a timeless story and will hold it's value through the ages as long as you consider these four C's of cameo investing: Color (type of material), Cut (carving quality), Character (subject matter) and Condition. Remember Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, just enjoy the process of filling your trousseau!

A Meaningful Month

June

Birthstone: Pearl

Flower: Rose,

“the flower of love”

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