

A LITTLE HISTORY... MIYUKI PEARLS

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LE SAVIEZ-VOUS ?

**L'histoire
des perles Miyuki**



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Miyuki is the global benchmark for seed beads. The Japanese brand's pearls are renowned for their consistency, brilliance and countless color variations. They are highly appreciated by amateur designers as well as jewelry and fashion professionals.

Pearls have been around for thousands of years, and have always fascinated both Eastern and Western peoples. They were made of wood, bone, horn, resin, wood, shell and glass. They were used as ornaments for sacred ceremonies and rituals, as well as currency exchanged for goods and services. It wasn't until the 19th century that glass beads were used to make jewelry, decorative objects and custom clothing. Their beauty, diversity and versatility were appreciated. But the problem with glass beads was their irregularity.



The story of Miyuki beads begins in Japan, in the mid-50s, in the town of Fukuyama in Hiroshima province. Seiichi Katsuoka, great-grandfather of the company's current president, was so fascinated by the color and brilliance of glass beads that he decided to start making them.

In 1949, Seiichi Katsuoka launched his own factory, supported by family and friends. But in the aftermath of the Second World War, materials for making glass beads were scarce, and the cooperative produced only a dozen transparent and opaque colors. Made from high-quality glass, rocailles beads were renowned for their uniformity and brilliance. Local artisans quickly adopted these beads for their jewelry and beadwork projects, as they offered unparalleled precision and beauty.

In the early '50s, Hiroshi Katsuoka, son of the founder and grandfather of the company's current president, took over the reins of the company. At the time, the silverline (silver-plated) technique was used in Europe and the United States, but did not exist in Japan. Eager to learn how to produce this brilliance, Hiroshi Katsuoka devoted his time to researching, studying in specialized books and visiting the laboratories of glass manufacturers. By dint of perseverance, he found a silverline method, which today is unique to Miyuki. The fame of Miyuki pearls quickly spread to the world of fashion and jewelry.

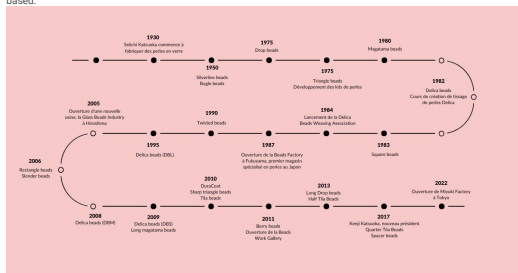
Over the years, Miyuki has continued to innovate. The company has developed new production techniques to improve the quality and consistency of its pearls. It also expanded its product range to include a variety of incomparable sizes, shapes and colors.

In 1974, Masayoshi Katsuoka, father of the firm's current president, created the Miyuki brand. He also invented Miyuki Delica, beads created exclusively for loom or needle weaving. They quickly became popular for their cylindrical shape and perfect uniformity.

Bead-weaving techniques such as peyote, brick stitch and square stitch became particularly popular, as they enabled intricate, detailed patterns to be created with Miyuki beads.

As of 2017, Kenji Katsuoka is the firm's new president.

And if you're wondering what Miyuki means, it's simply the name of the town where the company's offices are based.



How are Miyuki beads made?

Do you know how your favorite little seed beads are made?

- 1 - First, the raw materials (silicon oxide, sodium carbonate and calcium carbonate) are mixed with the colorants. Then they are placed in a furnace at 1400°C to melt the glass.
- 2 - The molten glass is then placed in a slightly cooler crucible. Craftsmen blow the glass through a hole in the bottom of the crucible, using a compressed-air device. The holes in the crucibles are shaped, creating differently shaped beads.
- 3 - The long glass tubes are cut into small pieces using a special cutting machine.
- 4 - The cut pieces are then mixed with carbon powder and heated to 700°C to transform the glass pieces into round beads.
- 5 - The beads are then rinsed to remove the carbon powder. They are then polished. Washed beads are not clear. Transparency is achieved by smoothing the surface.
- 6 - Different pearl varieties are created using different effects: silverline, dyeing, glazing, rainbow and luster coating, etc.
- 7 - The pearls are again washed and dried.
- 8 - Finally, the finished products are packaged and ready for export to various countries.

Miyuki pearls are available in a wide variety of sizes, shapes and colors. Find out more about the durability of Miyuki colors, as well as the shapes and sizes available, in our technical data sheet.



Miyuki Japanese pearls have restored pearl weaving to its former glory. They are a guarantee of brilliance, durability and unequalled regularity. They are ideal for creating bracelets, but also for all your seed bead jewelry.

If you're still hesitating to start creating with Miyuki seed beads, it's time to take the plunge. We're here to support you with [do-it-yourself jewelry](#) tutorials (bracelets, necklaces, rings, earrings), as well as technical sheets that will teach you the best way to [finish a woven bracelet](#) or [which thread to use for Miyuki bead weaving](#).

Result