

Tennessee River Freshwater Pearl Museum • Farm • Tour

Tours • Museum • Pearl Jewelry Showroom & Gift Shop Open Year Around

G·R·O·U·P T·O·U·R·S

Groups Require Reservations

Host Location:

Birdsong Resort • Marina • Campground
Exit 133 off I-40
Camden, (West) Tennessee

Variety of Tour Packages

Witness

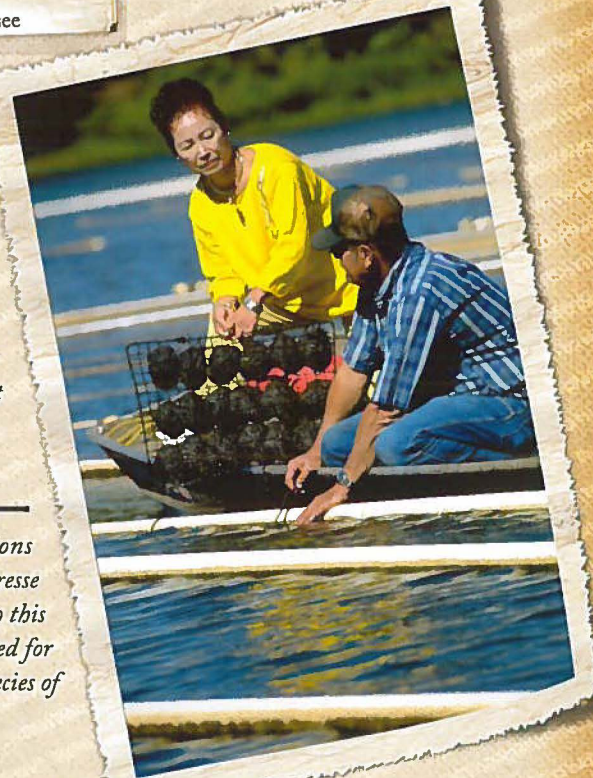
a remarkable iridescent product of nature as it emerges from the indigenous Washboard mussel. Tennessee's Official State Gem – the freshwater pearl – is rarely found naturally from these living animals, but grown at the only freshwater pearl-culturing farm operation in the North American continent. The organic gem stone-culturing operation is nestled in the pristine embayment of Birdsong Creek – just off the scenic Tennessee River's beautiful Kentucky Lake – in Camden, West Tennessee, 9 miles north of Interstate 40 at Exit 133/Birdsong Exit. The Tennessee River Freshwater Pearl Museum, Farm, Tour and Jewelry Showroom is located at Birdsong Resort and Marina.

Explore

one of eight pilot farm locations originally founded by John R. Latendresse (1925–2000) in 1979. All productivity measures eventually narrowed to this one location in Birdsong Creek. John and his wife Chessie, had attempted for many years to adapt the Japanese technique to our native waters and species of mussels. 1984 was the first year a productive harvest was turned.

Discover

North America's only freshwater pearl-culturing facility – the official historical site of pearl culturing for the State of Tennessee (enacted 2004), growing the official State of Tennessee gem (enacted 1979) – the freshwater pearl.

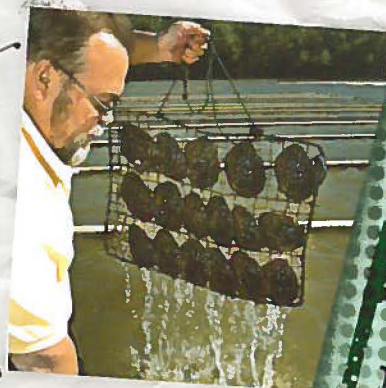


Experience!

The Tennessee River Freshwater Pearl Museum • Farm • Tour

Choose from a variety of tour packages including "walk-in's," tour bus "tweeners," our 3-5 hour guided "full" tour, a 1-2 hour "mini" tour, a range of school-age children's tours, even a bus driver's special "Drop n' Shop."

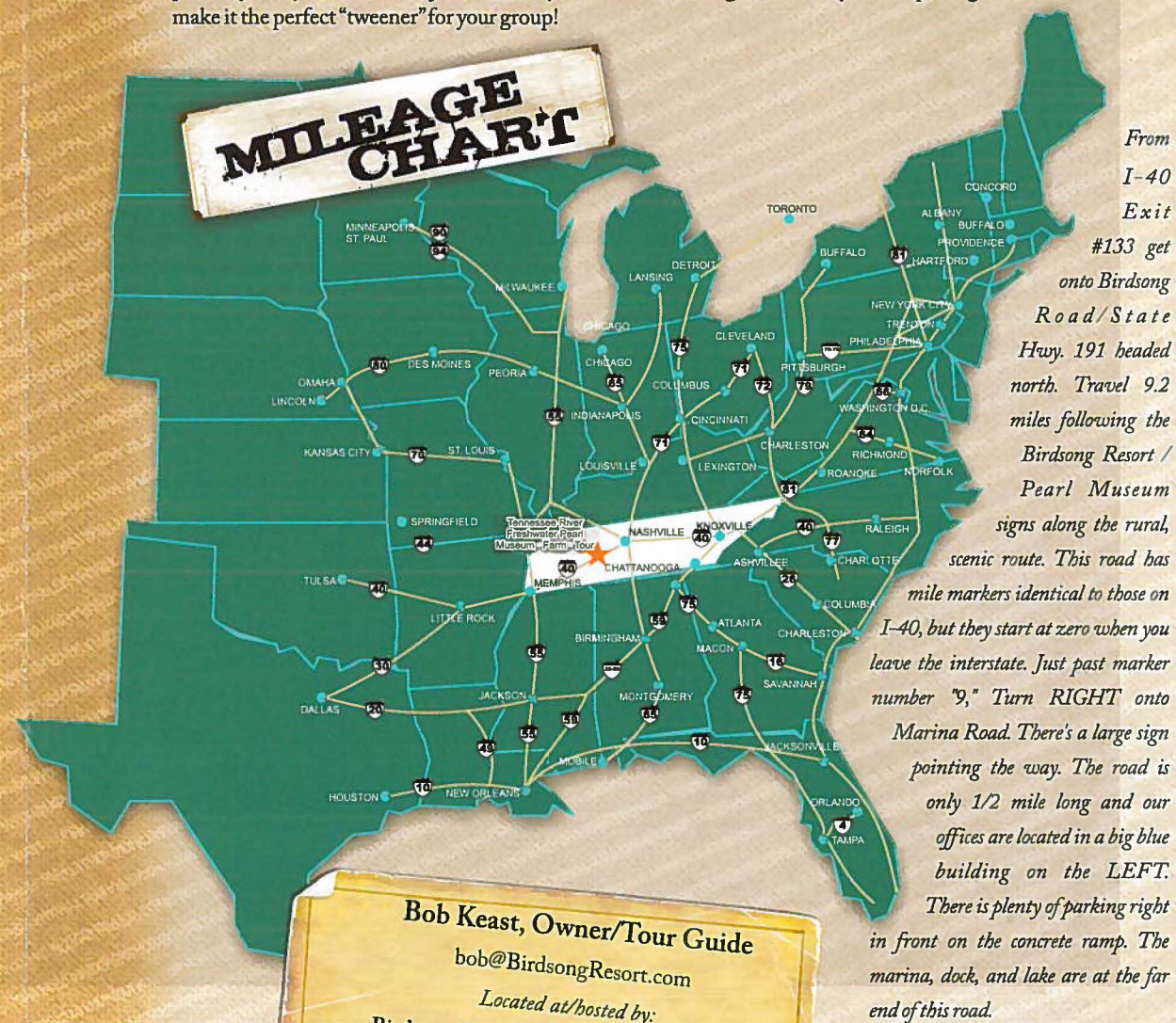
Guided tours require advance reservations and a group of fifteen or more to book dates. Individuals or small groups may join pre-existing bookings.



PEARLS
Tennessee River
Freshwater Pearl
Museum • Farm • Tour

Come and SEE Us!

Located in the Western Grand Division of Tennessee, just off I-40 at Exit 133. Positioned conveniently 1 hour west of Nashville and 2 hours east of Memphis, The Tennessee Freshwater Pearl Museum, Farm and Tour will fit perfectly into your "hub and spoke" itinerary. Flexible scheduling and a variety of tour packages make it the perfect "tweener" for your group!



Bob Keast, Owner/Tour Guide

bob@BirdsongResort.com

Located at/hosted by:

Birdsong Resort, Marina & Campground

255 Marina Road @ Exit 133 off I-40

Camden (on Kentucky Lake) West Tennessee 38320

Only 1 Hour West of Nashville • 2 Hours East of Memphis

731-584-7880 (Phone) • 731-584-3625 (Fax)



www.Birdsong.com



RESORT • MARINA

Lakeside RV & Tent

CAMPGROUND

Tour Packages

- Plenty of Bus Parking
- All Blacktop Facility
- Handicap Accessible

"Walk-in" visitors may enjoy the brief video presentation, visit the museum, farm, and shop from the freshwater pearl jewelry showroom open 7 days a week, year around. Motorcoaches please call ahead.

GUIDED TOUR PACKAGES

All tours require advance reservations and 15 or more persons to "book" a date. Singles and small groups may add on to other existing booked tours.

RECEPTION

All "booked" tours are greeted with popcorn, lemonade and coffee (optional).

"Full" Tour - "The Mother of Pearl"

\$55.00 per person
Duration: 3-5 hours
(Description at right)

"Mini" Tour

\$39.50 per person
Duration: 1-2 hours
"Full Tour" Itinerary with box lunch

"School-Age Children's" Tour

School-age children can come and learn about the process of culturing pearls. With several packages to choose from, there is sure to be an experience they will learn from.

\$5.00 per person 1 hour orientation and video presentation in the museum.

\$12.50 per person 1 hour orientation and video presentation in the museum, also includes a box-style lunch.

\$25.00 per person 1 hour orientation and video presentation in the museum. Children will see a native washboard mussel being "shucked" to reveal a pearl. 8"x10" group photo will be included as a souvenir.

*Teacher Packets available on request.

"Tour Bus Tweener" Tour

\$17.50 per person
Duration: 1 hour
Guided presentation with synopsis of history and the pearl-culturing process, enjoy the museum, enjoy a short video presentation, visit the farm, and shop from the pearl jewelry showroom.

"Senior Pearls" Tour

\$10.00 per person
Duration: 1 hour
Guided presentation with synopsis of history and the pearl-culturing process, enjoy the museum, enjoy a short video presentation, visit the farm, and shop from the pearl jewelry showroom. Participants receive an 8"x10" photo souvenir!
*Ask the staff about adding a lunch to your tour!

"Drop N' Shop" Tour

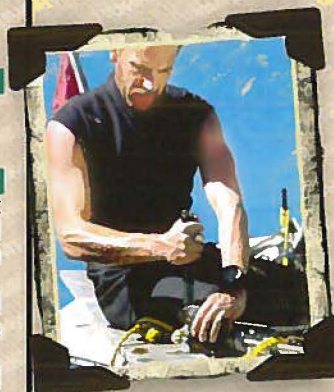
Bus Driver's Special
No charge per person, call ahead 731-584-7880
Duration: At Your Leisure
Bus drivers take advantage of a sanitary dump station to empty holding tank while tourists participate in a brief walk-in presentation. Self-guided visit to the farm, enjoy the museum, and shop from the pearl jewelry showroom. Call ahead from Memphis or Nashville.

The "Full" Tour

\$55.00 per person
Duration: 3-5 hours

Orientation - addresses the history of freshwater pearls of the world; the history of the only freshwater pearl-culturing operation in the North American continent's founder - John Latendresse (1925-2000); an overview of the pearl-culturing process explains incidents participants will see throughout the tour.

Visit with a local diver - a local diver emerges from beneath the water in full wet suit hoisting his "catch of the day" onto the docks. Participants see the



Meet the farm manager - from a lakeside covered pavilion, participants watch as the farm manager retrieves a nucleated basket of mussels via his work boat. Returning the basket for closer inspection, tourists witness the "shucking" of a mussel to reveal the State of Tennessee's Official Gem: the freshwater pearl. Learn in detail about technicians, the nucleation process, quality grading and more.



The pearl, taken from mussels in the fresh water rivers of the state, is the official state gem, according to Public Chapter 192, enacted during the 91st General Assembly (1979).

Southern-Style Catered BBQ Luncheon - Enjoy the catered luncheon at the lake-view community center with a "Southern-style" catered luncheon. Featured on the standard menu are: barbecue ribs, pulled pork barbecue, grilled chicken, potato salad, baked beans, slaw, corn fritters, dessert and drink. (Other menu selections available upon request).

Souvenir Shopping - Shop from our extensive freshwater

Pearl jewelry showroom with items from all over the world. Choose one of our freshwater pearls, or enjoy the variety of color and other shapes available from other countries. The Tennessee River - Mississippi Basin area hosts a unique species of mussel that over 90% of the pearl growers of the world want. This species features an unusually thick shell that allows for the three-dimensional shaping of implants to culture pearls. Tennessee exports millions of dollars in mussel shells to foreign countries annually.



Even the renowned black Tahitian pearl - begins with a Tennessee River mussel shell. So whether the pearls were grown in our farm - or not - rest assured that it most likely

During the years between 1882 and 1914, beautiful pearls were taken from many of the state's streams from the Pigeon and Holston in the east to the Forked Deer and Obion in the west. The Caney Fork in Middle Tennessee was noted for its pearl-bearing mussels, and "pearling" was a favorite sport for young people on Sunday afternoons at the turn of the century.

Tennessee River pearls are of all colors and they are "natural" as the mussel made them, all pearl all the way through. They have been found in various shapes: spherical, pear-shaped and baroque, or irregular.

TOURS

Member:

ABA - American Bus Association · TMCA - Tennessee Motor Coach Association
Jackson-Madison County Chamber of Commerce / Convention & Visitors Bureau
Memphis Convention & Visitors Bureau · Paris - Henry County Chamber of Commerce



began... with a Tennessee River mussel shell.

Tennessee River Folk Life Museum (optional add on based on itinerary time allowance) - Trek to Nathan Bedford Forrest State Park's Tennessee Folk Life Museum - home of the historical Pilot Knob.

The museum houses an antique brail boat (used for musseling prior to the invention of the electric motor), artifacts from the pearl button factories that once lined the river banks, pearling and diving industry exhibits, and many Civil War items of interest.

"Full" Tour ADDED VALUE

- Tourists receive a "surprise" personalized 8"x10" group photo of the day's activities.
- Staff Photographers make photos throughout the day so that tourists may recap their visit on the website a couple of days later.

After World War I, dams were built on many of the rivers, and the mussels lost their swift and shallow shoals. Today, pearling exists as a byproduct of shell harvests which supply the cultivated pearl industry of Japan.

Tennessee River pearls are among the most beautiful and durable in the world. At Camden (Benton County), in West Tennessee, these freshwater pearls are collected and crafted into rings, necklaces, earrings, bracelets, and gem-quality jewelry. America's only freshwater pearl farm is located on Kentucky Lake in the Birdsong Creek embayment.

Museum

Items on display depict the freshwater pearls and mussel industry in general educational/ informational terms. Follow the story board on techniques of pearl culturing, exhibits from local contributors, and other items of interest related to our Tennessee heritage. A brief, entertaining video is also presented for walk-in visitors. Open year around, Monday through Saturday from 8am-5pm and on Sunday from 9am - 4pm.

Showroom

Choose from freshwater pearl bracelets, necklaces, earrings, pendants, rings, and more in an array of colors. Shop from a variety of international pearl designs or make your selection from our own



Gift Shop

An emporium of souvenir items from Birdsong Resort, Kentucky Lake, the Tennessee River Freshwater Pearl Farm and related gift items. Also choose from a collection of "Pick Tennessee Products."



Owner and
Tour Guide
Bob Keast
with Pearl
and Judy



Hosted by

Birdsong Resort, Marina and Lakeside RV Campground is a 58-acre recreational complex that has been operated by Bob Keast and family in the true sense of southern hospitality as a second-generation owner since 1961.

Located in the central part of the scenic Tennessee River's beautiful Kentucky Lake - one of the largest man-made lakes in America. Over 2,300 miles of shoreline flow through the heart of Western Tennessee. Ninety percent of Kentucky Lake is in the Great State of Tennessee. Quiet, yet conveniently located 9 miles north of I-40 at Exit 133, halfway between Jackson and Nashville, Tennessee. It is an ideal stop for an overnight, weekend or week stay.

Scattered lazily throughout the resort, you'll find twenty-five (25) rental accommodation units to choose from. Cottages and manufactured homes - each unique with its amenities and accommodations - ranging from efficiencies to group lodges.

All units are completely furnished like a home-away-from-home atmosphere. Each one is air conditioned, has television, VCR and/or DVD players, pots, pans, linens, a grill, and a picnic table. They feature a variety of screened-in porches and decks. Select units also feature fireplaces, Jacuzzi tubs, and satellite television. Pack your clothes and food - that's all you'll need.



RESORT • MARINA Lakeside RV & Tent CAMPGROUND

