

بصمة الخليج

THE GULF MARK

WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR

Our response to Proposal v1: the direction we'd like you to take, in pictures.



Prepared for Shepherd Studio · 15 October 2026



BLACK AND GOLD, UNMISTAKABLY GULF, AND READABLE IN SECONDS

KEEP

The name. بصمة الخليج / The Gulf Mark, with the Arabic above the English.

The contour lines, as gold foil on the card and fine engraving on the bar, always behind the main design.

The format. A 1 oz minted bar, sealed in a capsule on an assay card.

CHANGE

Black and gold only. The blue palette is rejected.

The six-star constellation is dropped. Our focus group didn't understand it.

Design for the average shopper, not the collector. The Gulf connection must be obvious at a glance.

ADD

Symbols people already know: the six GCC flags, the Gulf pearl and oyster, and the map of the Gulf.

Three directions to explore, shown through mockups and reference images we've put together.

They're here to inspire. The final design is yours.

THE STAR CONCEPT DIDN'T LAND WITH REAL PEOPLE

We showed the proposal informally to friends and family. The star concept wasn't clear to them: without someone explaining it, the six stars didn't read as the six Gulf states.

Informal focus group with friends and family

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE DESIGN

On a shop counter there's no one to explain the story. The idea has to be **seen**, not decoded.

Lead with a symbol people **already recognise**: the flags, the pearl, or the map of the Gulf.

Stars can stay as small navigation details, never as the main idea.

The story in your proposal is still useful for marketing copy. It just can't carry the product on its own.

THE AVERAGE SHOPPER SHOULD GET IT IN THREE SECONDS

Proposal v1 principle

~~Symbolism over representation~~



Revised principle

Recognition first, symbolism second

Picture someone walking into the shop and seeing the bar in the display case, about a metre away. Within three seconds, and in this order, they should understand:

1

This is a Gulf bar

Carried by the flags, the pearl or the map. Nothing else should be louder.

2

Its name

بصمة الخليج / The Gulf Mark, clear in both Arabic and English.

3

Weight and purity

"1 OZ · 999.9 FINE GOLD", readable without picking it up.

4

It's from MSS

Present on the pack, secondary to the series name.

BLACK AND GOLD, NOT BLUE



Proposal v1: rejected
Gulf blue card. Doesn't belong in our range.



Our current 1 oz bar
Black card, gold linework. The Gulf Mark should sit in this family.



The direction
Matte black card, gold foil contours, warm gold bar.

Card: deep matte black.

Linework: gold hot-foil, not yellow ink.

Gold: warm and rich, never orange.

No blue, teal or turquoise anywhere.

THREE DIRECTIONS TO EXPLORE

We put together these mockups to show the kind of thing we're after. They aren't final designs. Take what works, combine them, or go further: the final design comes from you.



Direction 1 · GCC Flags

The six GCC flags in enamel, forming one medallion around a pearl.



Direction 2 · Pearl Heritage

A sculpted Gulf pearl oyster holding one large pearl.



Direction 3 · Gulf Navigation

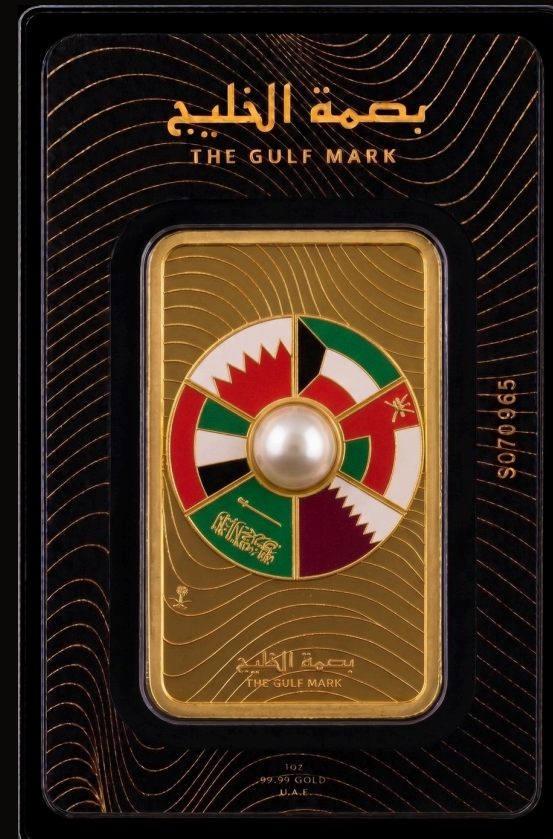
A faceted gold compass rose over a relief map of the Arabian Gulf.

REFERENCES - FLAGS AND UNITY



The GCC emblem: six flags, one ring

Instantly says "GCC". Reference only, not for use on the product.



Enamel ring, white pearl

A real white pearl or a gold pearl: both work.



Flags flowing from the pearl

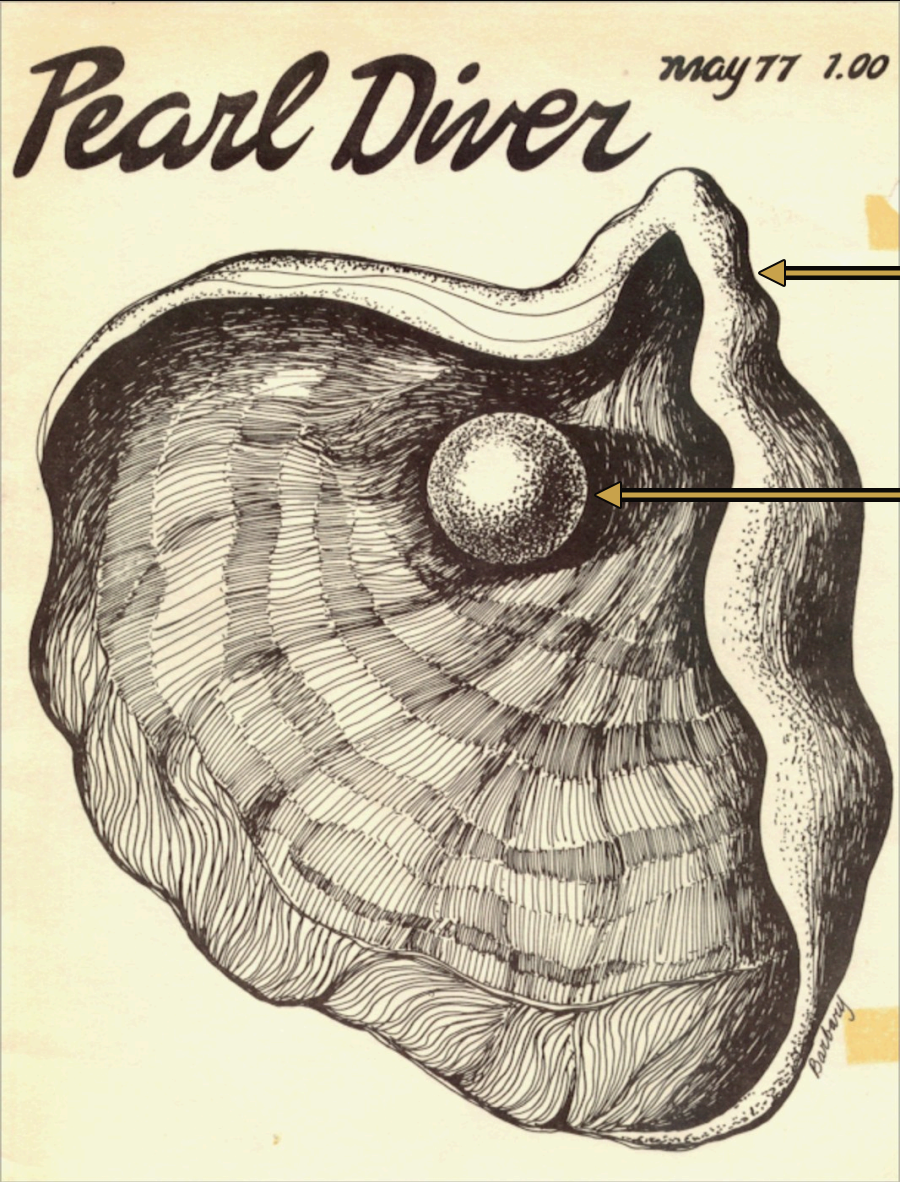
Movement feels like celebration.



Six-flag medallion

Clean, symmetrical, every flag equal.

REFERENCES - THE PEARL AND THE OYSTER



Organic, uneven shell

One pearl, sitting inside

Pearl Diver, May 1977

This is the oyster we mean.



Organic oyster

Gold pearl at the centre.



Clean relief

Readable text, crisp finish.



Flags around the rim

A nice touch, on the Gulf oyster shape.

Shape from the 1977 cover. Clarity and finish from the cleaner mockup. A Gulf pearl oyster, not a scallop.

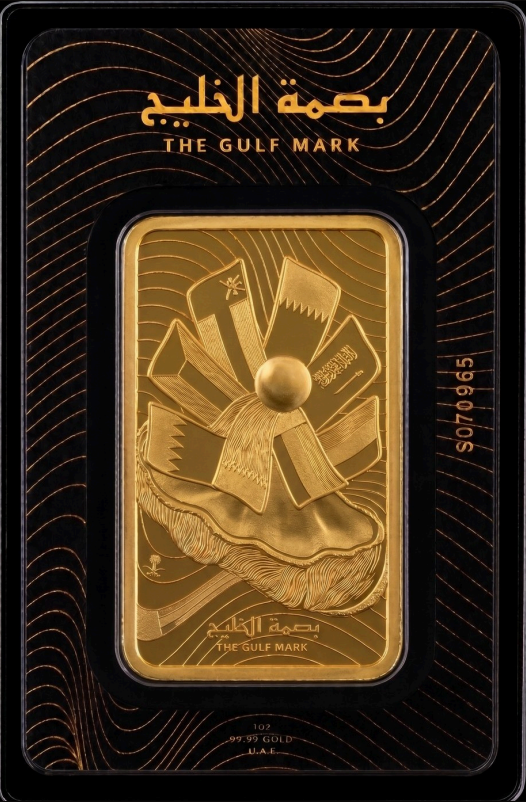
REFERENCES · COMBINING IDEAS



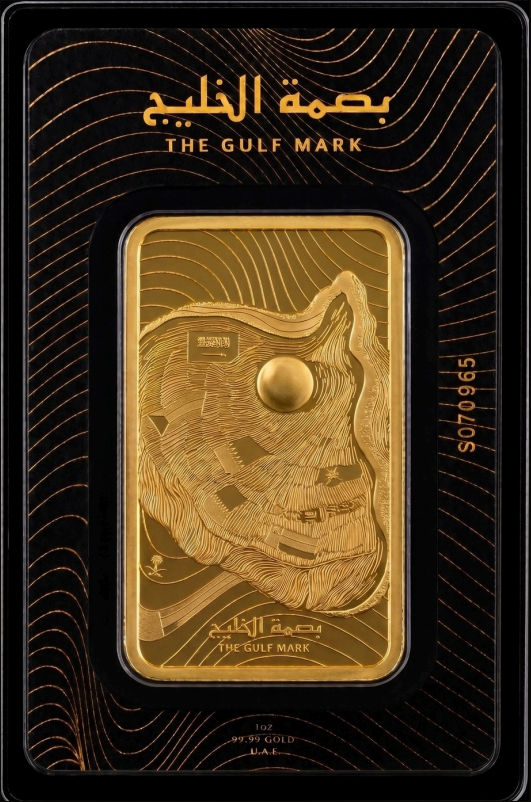
Compass stars: a nod to navigation

Six flags in a row on the card

Pearl, flags and stars on one bar



All gold
No enamel needed.



Flags hidden in the shell
Subtle. Rewards a closer look.



Compass and Gulf map
Navigation, told through the map.

Mix freely: the pearl, the flags and navigation can share one bar. The final call is yours.

DIRECTION 1 - GCC FLAGS



Another take on the same idea. See also the white pearl on page 7.

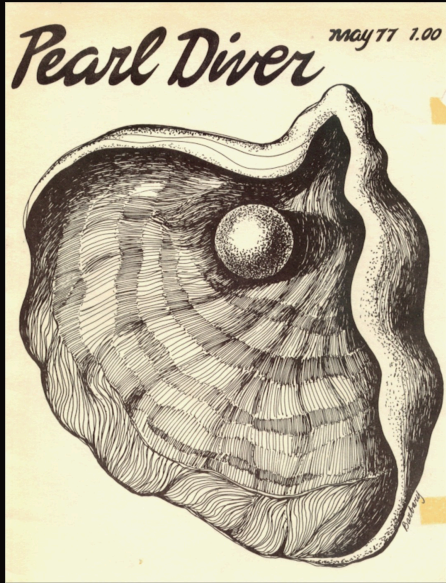
AVOID

Extra or inaccurate flags, national emblems or crests as decoration, a souvenir look.

WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE

- 1 Six GCC flags as one medallion**
Upper-middle of the bar, 65–75% of its width. Recessed enamel in each segment, with thin raised gold separators.
- 2 A pearl at the centre**
Gold or a real white pearl. The flags radiate from it, and it never hides a flag.
- 3 Fine contour engraving behind**
Ocean currents and dunes cut into the gold, always quieter than the flags.
- 4 Brand at the bottom of the bar**
Arabic above English, with "999.9 FINE GOLD" along one edge.
- 5 Accurate flags, and mint sign-off for enamel**
Official artwork, correct orientation, equal size. The Saudi Shahada must be exact. Confirm enamel on a 999.9 bar with the mint. MSS will confirm flag-use clearance.

DIRECTION 2 - PEARL HERITAGE



Shape: Pearl Diver, 1977



Finish: clean relief, readable text

WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE

- 1 A sculpted Gulf pearl oyster as the hero**
Organic and asymmetric, with a thick lip and natural growth lines, like the 1977 cover. Not a symmetrical scallop.
- 2 One large pearl at the centre**
Polished gold, the same gold as the bar, or a natural white pearl with soft lustre.
- 3 Calm ocean-current lines behind**
Minimal, so the shell dominates. The outline may loosely echo the Gulf coastline.
- 4 Crisp, readable branding**
As clear as our cleaner mockup, with the same black-and-gold card.

AVOID

Boats, divers, ropes and anchors; a symmetrical scallop; too much decoration.

DIRECTION 3 - GULF NAVIGATION



Detail: the bar face, with the relief map, stars and a tiny dhow.

AVOID

Country names or borders on the map, an inaccurate coastline, cartoon elements.

WHAT WE'D LIKE TO SEE

- 1 A faceted gold compass rose**
Eight points, four long and four short, with alternating polished and satin facets and a small domed hub.
- 2 A relief map of the Arabian Gulf**
Upper half of the bar. Land in dense contours, sea in long flowing lines, built from a real coastline.
- 3 A few small stars and a tiny dhow**
Restrained and secondary to the compass.
- 4 "999.9 FINE GOLD" along the edge**
With the brand engraved at the bottom of the bar.