

LANGFORDS

Antique & Contemporary Silver

Pair large antique perfume bottles with tortoiseshell & silver caps

E S Barnsley & Co

£775



REF: 7291

Height: 135 mm (5.31")

Description

A pair of antique perfume bottles, the ball-shaped glass bodies cut with vertical flutes, and fitted with silver collars and hinged covers. The covers are inset with tortoiseshell panels, decorated with inlaid bellflower swags and scrolls surrounding a central, circular shield within which is a stylised burst of stamen. Each bottle is fitted with a glass stopper

The technique used on these silver covers is called piqué, where gold or silver is inlaid into another material, in this case silver on tortoiseshell. Despite being expensive, the use of tortoiseshell in the decorative arts was very popular in 18th and 19th century Europe. Not only did it have a beautiful mottled appearance and was durable, but it was also lightweight and could be easily fashioned into other shapes; jewellery boxes and tea caddies were prime examples.

Tortoiseshell is quite malleable when heated, so when very fine gold, or in this case silver, was fashioned into delicate designs and then pressed into the warmed tortoiseshell, the silver then cooled and the shell contracted to hold the silver in place.