

LANGFORDS

Antique & Contemporary Silver

Rare antique tri-form three-bottle silver-plated tantalus

Hukin & Heath

Sold



REF: 9472

Height: 300 mm (11.81")

Width: 210 mm (8.27")

Description

Rare Hukin & Heath design for a silver-plated triform three-decanter tantalus with a patented locking system. The ovoid hand-blown cut glass decanters are cut with a diamond lattice pattern, while a starburst is cut into the base of each bottle, plus a starburst on the top of each removable stopper. The set is in excellent working condition.

To release the locking mechanism that holds the silver-plated covers in place, the handle lifts to enable them to move to the side and the decanter stoppers or the decanters themselves can be removed.

The concept of lockable decanters where the contents could be viewed but not opened or poured unless the case was opened by a key and was named after the Greek mythological mortal, Tantalus. Legend has it that Tantalus stole ambrosia and nectar from the gods and was punished for his lack of self-control by being made to stand in a lake with low hanging fruit trees above him. Whenever he tried to grab the fruit the branches would lift beyond his reach and when he bent to drink the water the lake would recede from him. This punishment of temptation is where the word tantalise comes from and the tantalus is often believed to have been designed to prevent household staff from stealing or sampling the decanter's contents.