LANGFORDS
Antique & Contemporary Silver

Silver-plated & oak tantalus

Maker Not Recorded

Sold

Langfords
London Silver Vaults • Vaults 8 & 10 • 53-64 Chancery Lane • London • WC2A 1QS
+44 20 7242 6646 • silver@langfords.com • www.langfords.com

REF: 4372

Height: 325 mm (12.8")

Width: 422 mm (16.61")

Depth: 65 mm (2.56")

Description

Very good, late-Victorian, oak tantalus frame with neo-gothic, silver-plated mounts. This classic, antique tantalus has a fully working traditional lock and key and it is fitted with three large cut-crystal bottles and stoppers, each of which is in exceptionally good order and shows little or no sign of wear.

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.

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