Edwardian sterling silver gravy argyle

Walker & Hall

£1,200



REF: 2473

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Height: 200 mm (7.87")

Width: 220 mm (8.66")

Description

As a pot designed to keep gravy warm, this antique silver argyle (argyll) is a reproduction of a style made in the late 18th century during the reign of King George III. The oval vase-shaped body is beautifully hand engraved with a band of leaf and lattice decoration and a cartouche sits below framed by engraved classical drapes. This particular example works by having a central column cavity within the body that holds hot water.

It was John Campbell (1723-1806), the fifth Duke of Argyll, who hated the way that gravy arrived cold to his table from the kitchens of Inverary Castle, and who promoted a new piece of tableware designed to maintain the warmth of the gravy in its vessel. So, the argyle was born - a gravy warmer made in shapes similar to a covered coffee pot with a handle and spout. The gravy is kept warm by means of hot water contained in a compartment created by a double exterior wall, a compartment created by a false bottom or a central vertical cylindrical tube which holds a heated iron rod.

A secondary important feature was that the spout was placed at the bottom of the container which allowed the gravy to be drawn off from underneath the layer of fat that settled on the top.

Argyles were produced up until the Victorian period but since many of the early examples were converted into coffee or teapots, they have become quite rare.