

LANGFORDS

Antique & Contemporary Silver

Set antique tortoiseshell menu holders

E S Barnsley & Co

Sold



REF: 2116

Height: 40 mm (1.57")

Diameter: 28 mm (1.1")

Description

Set of four antique circular silver menu or place card holders, each mounted on a hallmarked sterling silver disk and inset with tortoiseshell panels. The tortoiseshell is in perfect condition and has rich colour and sheen. All in their original fitted leather case.

The technique used on these menu holders 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 the 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.