Patented antique silver-plated perfume bottle tantalus

Betjemann Brothers

£1,450



REF: 9853

Langfords
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Height: 190 mm (7.48")

Width: 235 mm (9.25")

Depth: 107 mm (4.21")

Description

Charming antique lockable three-bottle tantalus frame, fitted with three crisply cut glass perfume bottles and their original stoppers fitted with silver-plated collars. The silver-plated tantalus frame is beautifully decorated with hand engraved patterns and an applied decorative rope mount., while the perfume bottles are set into a velvet pad with individual partitions.

The lock is engraved The Tantalus and Betjemann's patent with patent numbers and was originally retailed by Edward & Sons, Glasgow & London. The Betjemann tantalus locking system was invented by George Betjemann, grandfather of the noted English poet and broadcaster, Sir John Betjeman, in 1881.

The concept of lockable decanters, mostly applied to spirit decanters, where the contents could be viewed but not opened or poured unless the case was opened by a key, 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.

Opening instructions:
To unlock, push the key in quite firmly - there's a strong spring - and turn it 360° in one direction to unlock it . Then pull down the whole lock to release the top swinging cover. And the opposite to lock it; swing the cover into place and turn the key 360° in the opposite direction to lock it.