LANGFORDS
Antique & Contemporary Silver

Pair silver owl menu or place card holders

Sampson Mordan & Co

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: 5164

Height: 28 mm (1.1")

Weight: 49 g

Description

Pair of charming silver menu holders, or place card holders, with applied and finely detailed owl face masks and piercing glass eyes.

As a fine and traditional addition to fine dining, it was the Victorians who first introduced menu holders to our dining tables. Silver menu holders and place card holders were first created to hold a card displaying the menu and, rather than putting a place card holder and name in front of each diner as we often do today, silver menu holders were spread and passed around the dining table. For that reason, we most frequently find sets of four silver menu holders, or pairs. Larger sets of six and eight can be found, while ten or a dozen silver menu or place card holders are fairly rare.

In the 19th century, silver menu holders often featured family crests plus more whimsical, nature-related themes, and after 1901 the practice flourished among well-to-do Edwardians. King Edward VII was a gourmand and liked to introduce a wide variety of unusual and exotic foods to his guests, many of which needed explanation. Marry this with his enthusiasm for shooting parties and the country pursuits of hunting and fishing, and we can see why so many antique silver menu and place card holders feature foxes, fish, game birds or other motifs on the same theme.

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