

LANGFORDS

Antique & Contemporary Silver

Antique silver-plated tantalus

Walker & Hall

Sold



REF: 6762

Height: 330 mm (12.99")

Width: 380 mm (14.96")

Depth: 170 mm (6.69")

Description

Lovely late-Victorian, silver-plated lockable tantalus frame, fitted with Walker & Hall's unusual patented tilting opening mechanism identified and stamped on the frame with "The Only "Holdfast" Patent". By unlocking the tantalus, the bottles are tilted to one side enabling them to be removed for pouring. The top of the carrying handle is nicely hand engraved and each of the three hand-cut crystal decanters is fitted with a satisfyingly heavy crystal stopper.

The concept of lockable 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.