LANGFORDS
Antique & Contemporary Silver

Oak & silver-plated tantalus

Maker Not Recorded

Sold

Langfords
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REF: 6456

Height: 290 mm (11.42")

Width: 365 mm (14.37")

Depth: 140 mm (5.51")

Description

This classic Victorian decanter frame has three cut glass bottles. The wooden frame has smart silver-plated mounts and a locking mechanism to keep the drink safe. To open, turn the key to the right to unlock, push down on the lever beneath the lock to allow the swing top to roll over left or right, allowing the decanters to be taken out.

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.

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