An important pair of George III Decanter Cages/Coasters made in London in 1807 by Benjamin Smith

Sold

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Description

The items we refer to are an exceptional pair of George III Silver Gilt Decanter Cages/Coasters which were made in London in 1807 by the Royal Silversmith Benjamin Smith. These are the finest wine coasters we have ever offered and are considered one of the finest designs available. As you will see from the images, the Coasters have a moulded, reeded, rim and the deep open work sides are beautifully pierced and chased with detailed trailing vines, with grapes hanging from the vines. Each has a marked silver base, and it was the finest examples which had silver bases, instead of wood. The centre of each base is beautifully engraved with the Royal Badge as used by King George III, this being the crowned lion passant Crest of England, standing on the Sovereign's Crown, this all surrounded by a Garter engraved with the Motto of the Order of the Garter "Honi Soit Qui Mal Y Pense - Shamed be who thinks evil of it". This is all surmounted by a second engraving of the Sovereign's Crown. The quality of design and production is exceptional, as would be expected from this silversmith. Both pieces are in excellent condition and the gauge and weight is outstanding. They are well marked on the sides and the bases and each base is stamped with the Latin signature of Rundell, Bridge and Rundell, this being "Rundell, Bridge & Rundell. Aurifices Regis et Principis Walliae Regentis Britannias". Rundell, Bridge and Rundell were the Royal Retailers. These pieces have great presence and our research has also discovered that the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York have a pair from this set in the museum collection, same date and maker and identical in all ways, including the central Heraldic engraving on the base. They were the gift of the important collector Irwin Untermyer, to the museum, in 1968 and they can be seen on the museum website.This design of Wine Coaster was popular with the Royal and Aristocratic families in Britain and a set of four were in the Collection of His Excellency Mahdi Al Tajir, one of the most famous collections of English Silver formed in the 20th century. They were made for HRH The Duke of Sussex, sixth son of King George III. These are shown on page 154 of "The Glory of the Goldsmith - The Al Tajir Collection", a copy is attached. Benjamin Smith either on his own, or in partnership with Digby Scott, is considered one of the finest silversmiths of the period in the immediate circle of Paul Storr. He was patronised by King George III and his son, the Prince of Wales, later George IV. One of his finest creations is the Jamaica Service in the Royal Collection. As well as the Royal houses, this design of coaster can also be shown in a pair formerly in the collection of the Earl of Lonsdale at Lowther Castle, who had one of the most extensive silver collections in England. The late Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowden, also had a pair which she used regularly at Kensington Palace.Height: 2.6 inches, 6.5 cm.Diameter at the rim: 5.5 inches, 13.75 cm.

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