

## Set of six hallmarked Moscow demitasse spoons circa 1855 featuring niello views of the Kremlin and Red Square in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Each spoon ranges from approximately 111 to 112mm in length, with a bowl that is from 23 to almost 25mm in width. Each weighs from approximately twenty to almost twenty-two grams. The interiors of the bowls are gold plated. The rest of each spoon's surface has taken on the light golden hue frequently seen on old silver that has not been polished in many years. The differences in length and/or width are typical of 19th century handmade silver objects; frankly, the differences are minuscule and impossible to notice without using a scale and a micrometer. Some of the views on the spoons are unchanged today (i.e. St. Basil's and the Spasskaya Tower) while others are of buildings or architectural vistas that no longer exist except in old engravings and photographs.

Each spoon shows at least all or part of three hallmarks: the silhouette of St. George (for Moscow), "84" to indicate the silver content, and the Cyrillic initials "BC" for Viktor Stavinkov. Two spoons have extra hallmarks: one has a mark that is illegible while the other seems to be the letters "W O". None of the spoons shows enough of the year date for us to be absolutely positive when the spoons were made. Stavinkov was active from 1855 to 1888. The partially visible tops of characters in the date stamp appear to be "18" and two completely flat topped digits, which could work out to be "1855", "1857", "1875" or "1877". Personally, we would like to think that he made these during his first year of operation in Moscow: "1855."

Excellent condition. The tip of one handle shows a minor scratch but otherwise each spoon is in almost the same condition that it was in when it first came from Stavinkov's Moscow workshop. The niello views of the Kremlin are complete and show no loss of pigment. (Niello, of course, is a black metallic alloy of sulfur, copper, silver, and usually lead, used as an inlay on engraved metal - in this case silver - to create a dark and clear design, pattern, or picture.) The incidental decoration - below and around the pictures on each spoon - is quite attractive and delightfully "impressionistic" - the geometric precision of Faberge's workshop was still two or three generations in the future from when these six spoons were made.

A truly impressive set. A good framer could create a hinged frame that would allow you to display them between uses! They would look particularly nice on a sideboard next to tea set or a samovar!

Item# 25287

**\$750.00**

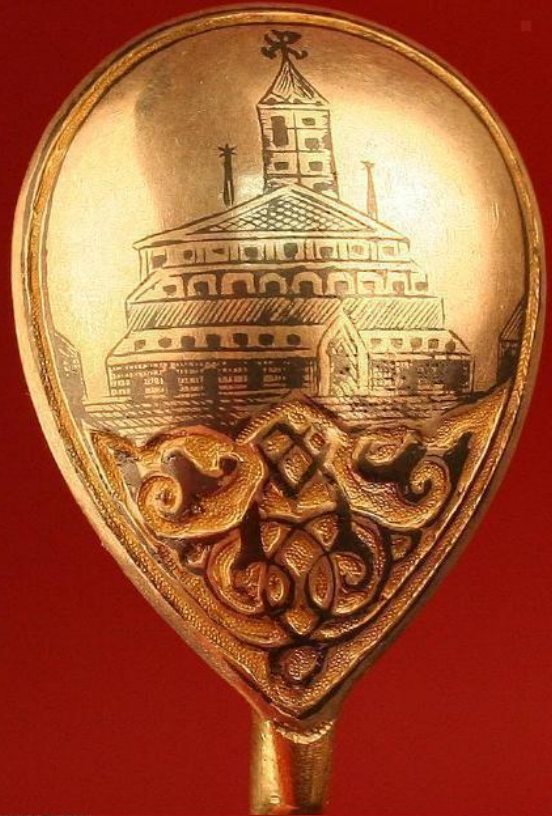




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