

A set of 2 matching cornucopia-themed podstakanniki, in Melchior, by the Moscow Jewelers Workshop, 1950-1952.

Each podstakannik stands almost 10 cm tall to the top of the handle, 78 mm wide at the bottom rim. The artwork of the centerpiece features a plentitude of pears, apples, plums and cherries in high 3D relief against a background of tree leaves. The ornament running around the sides and back is a grape vine with large clusters of grapes. Even the handle is not left bare but is adorned with a leafy tree branch. Attention to detail is amazing: even the veins of the leaves are clearly defined.

The bottom has two stamps on the inside rim: "АМЮ/Мельх" and a number ("26" on one and "27" on the other). "АМЮ" is the Russian- language abbreviation for the "Moscow Jewelers Workshop"; this particular style of the maker mark was used by the workshop only during the 1950-52 period (later during the 50s, this factory code would be preceded by a single-digit number representing the year in the decade; e.g. "5АМЮ" would mean a Moscow Jewelers Workshop production of 1955). "Мельх" stands for Melchior, a "nickel silver" alloy traditionally used in Russia for the most expensive art castings. (It is primarily an alloy of nickel and copper, but its appearance is so convincingly silver that it is usually described by collectors as "nickel silver".) The numbers to the left of the logo appear on other glass holders of the early 1950s. They are probably quality control inspection stamps, but we don't really know their purpose for sure. A bit of a mystery on the bottom of a glass holder!

Excellent condition. On one of the pair, patina on some of the high-relief points has rubbed off. The patina seen in our photos adds character but can be easily removed by polishing or, better yet, by the old Russian folk recipe for cleaning Melchior. All you need to do is boil some eggs and then dunk the podstakannik in that water. Please note that it only works with Melchior and does not work with silver.

Please note: If you try to come up with a replacement glass liner, it should be made of tempered glass even though we urge you not to use this to drink from! We offer this strictly as a historic artifact (and dramatic stage prop for your dining room or study). We provide no warranty of its suitability for actually drinking hot beverages like tea or coffee. All we know is that it should look great sitting on a tray next to your antique family samovar.

Enjoy!

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**\$220.00**

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