

SOVIET SPACE Podstakannik, by Kolchugino Factory, circa 1980s.

Stands 106mm tall to the top of the handle, 70mm across the body and 85mm wide at the bottom of the skirt. A tasteful grapes-themed ornamental design spreads out from the centerpiece cartouche showing sputniks and rockets shooting to the moon and stars from the gate of the Moscow Kremlin's Spasskaya Clock Tower, the peaceful nature of Soviet space exploration emphasized by the laurel branch at the bottom of the centerpiece vignette. The artwork is underscored by a row of vertical column-like slits in the metal allowing to enjoy the amber glow of tea through the glass holder.

It is noteworthy that each spacecraft in the centerpiece is quite identifiable: Sputnik 1, 2, and 3 are orbiting the Earth. Aimed at the moon are two ICBM's, most likely P-7 (R-7) which took the Sputniks to orbit. Below the globe we see a good likeness of the automatic interplanetary spacecraft LUNA-3, launched on 4 October 1959 to take the first ever photos of the dark side of the Moon.

The bottom rim features the maker's logo graphic of a wood grouse, the trademark of the Kolchugino Factory. The letters "МНЦ" stand for "Медь, Никель, Цинк" (copper, nickel, zinc). Depending on the ratio of the component metals, the alloy is called either Neusilber / German silver / nickel silver or Melchior. This mark also means that there is no lead in the alloy and it is safe for contact with food products. To the right of the maker mark is the 1980s price of 3 rubles 50 kopeks.

In excellent condition. The metal is exceptionally clean, practically patina-free, retaining almost all of its silvery luster which earned Neusilber and Melchior the name "nickel silver" and made it the best alloy for high-end art castings in Russia. There is nothing that can be called "wear", just barely noticeable very light scuffs and faint stains, probably from contact with water.

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!

Item# 41205

\$35.00

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