

A museum quality, mid-17th century Spanish, walnut, bargueno or vargueno & cupboard both with original & identical, intricate inlay & metalwork ?

Sold



Description

The cabinet with a fall front, cleated at the sides for strength, retaining its original metalwork. The magnificent, centred lockplate, with key and working lock, is in the form of a stylized urn with projecting tulip and flowerheads. The metal plates at each side have the same tulip motif with animals either side and typically have bolts fixing the fall to the sides, and two, vertical rows of Santiago shells at the base of the cabinet disguise the fixings of the hinges inside. The metal angles at the edges of the cabinet strengthen its construction, and the sides have the original carrying handles with the tulip motif on the backplates.

The front and sides of both the cabinet, its interior, and the cupboard, are solid walnut, with fleur-de-lys and honeysuckle decoration inlaid in pale fruitwood stained red at the centre of the flowerheads.

The interior reveals a composition of different sized drawers and cupboards, retaining the original, iron, escutcheons and pierced brass, handles. The central cupboard has its original, tulip headed iron escutcheon, and a later added 18th century brass handle and lock.

All the cupboards reveal an inner cupboards with doors stained red and compartments showing the gilded backboards behind. The backboards are made from reclaimed timber and have thick, bright gilding on the inside. The drawers are lined in pine.

The cupboard (taquillon) has a large drawer above a door revealing the large compartment. It bears the same inlay as the top and similarly retains its original tulip, headed, iron escutcheons, working locks and flowerhead handles. The top is made from two planks of walnut faced with a solid moulded edge. The sides bear their original, tulip headed carrying handels. The original stile feet would have suffered from wear and loss and have been replaced some time ago.

The vargueno : Length 93 cm., 3 ft., ½ in., Height 56.50 cm., 22 ¼ in.,
Depth 36 cm., 14 in.

The cupboard : Length 103 cm., 3ft., 4 ½ in., Height 85 cm., 2ft., 9 ¾ in.,
Depth 57 cm., 22 ½ in.,

There are no doubts that both the vargueno and the cupboard were made by the same cabinet maker, using metalware from the same workshop.

Inlaid varguenos are the finest version of the model and it is exceptionally rare to find one still united with a cupboard both bearing the same decoration and retaining the original, metalwork. Aside from its aesthetic beauty this is an atmospheric piece; the burnished iron gleams against the warmth of the walnut and the pale boxwood, inlay creates a striking contrast.

Highly stylized floral designs have been used in art and heraldry since antiquity, and the fleur-de-lis is one of the most enduring of these devices. The three spikes resembling the petals of a flower (either an iris or a lily) rise from a central crossbar, and symbolise the three values of purity, faith and wisdom. Honeysuckle symbolizes a lover's embrace in its clinging, growing habits. The heady fragrance of the flowers was believed to induce dreams of love and passion.

Although the honeysuckle and fleur-de-lys ornament and also the tracery on the handles, were commonly used throughout the 16th and 17...