# Chinese Export Cabinet on Stand

Chinese Export Furniture

Sold




REF: 82782



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Height: 123.14 cm (48.5")

Width: 48.88 cm (19.2")

Depth: 43.16 cm (17")

Description

A huang huali Chinese Export Cabinet on English Stand.

The cabinet doors have raised and fielded panels decorated with ivory stringing and an ivory and ebony star to the centre. The doors enclose four graduated drawers with good, brass skeletal campaign handles. They are decorated with stringing in a paler wood and are lined in camphor. The cabinet has an applied reeded moulding to both the top and bottom edges and replaced brass carrying handles.

When this cabinet was first purchased it was meant to be used as a table-top cabinet, easily moved with the carrying handles. At some point, not long after its original purchase, Richard Alsager had the stand made for the cabinet in England. At the same time the original carrying handles were removed and neatly patched out with a diamond shape. The stand is made of Botany Bay oak (also known as beef wood) with veneers to the legs. It has a splayed foot and a faux drawer with turned ivory knob handles. The legs are decorated with stringing and their cross stretchers have been made with screw in metal brackets for added strength.
Aside from the interesting history of its owner, a man involved in the early China Trade, this is a very good cabinet. It has a simple elegance and practicality for the storage of documents etc. It may well be that Alsager bought it for use in his cabin before he later had the stand made for it in England. Circa 1820.

Richard Alsager was born in 1781 and worked his way up as an officer on board East India Company merchant ships. After one complete voyage to India, you could be sworn in as a Fourth Mate; after two voyages you could make Third Officer; with each consecutive voyage allowing a further rise in rank. So, it would take a minimum of four voyages before you could be offered the command of a ship. He was Fourth Mate on the Sir Edward Hughes under Captain Urmston in 1802 out to Bombay. As an aside, the ship brought Lachlan Macquarie back to Britain on her return. In 1803, he was Third Mate on the Britannia under Capt. Jonathan Birch to St. Helena & India and remained with the ship for the next six years. In 1809 he rose to Second Mate on the Neptune under Capt. William Donaldson out to Bombay. In 1812 he re-joined Capt. Birch as First Mate on the Cabalva to Bombay & China. In 1815 he joined the Thomas Grenville as First Mate under Capt. William Patterson out to China. Two years later on the 29th of January 1817 he was sworn in as Commander of the Thomas Grenville and sailed her to West Bengal and back. Alsager made 15 voyages, one as a midshipman, nine as an officer and five in command. Of these, nine were to China with five as Commander of the HEIC ships Thomas Grenville and Waterloo between 1817 and 1826.

As part of his salary he was allowed 56 tons of freight both outward bound and home. He also made a point of buying the tonnage of his junior officers so that they would not be distracted from their duties. He was fair minded and paid a rate that meant he was unlikely to make a profit but thought it worthwhile to ensure the smooth running of his ship.

Alsager would take a variety of British items to sell in India and would then purchase mostly cotton to take on to China to sell. He would then bu...


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