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## Rare Set Of 18 Silver And Mother-of-pearl Dessert Knives - François-charles Gavet - Paris, 1789



3 510 EUR

Signature : François-Charles Gavet, coutelier du Roi en 1782

Period : 18th century

Condition : Très bon état

Material : Sterling silver

Length : 20

### Description

Exceptional set of eighteen Louis XVI-era dessert knives  
Blades, ferrules, and pommels in solid silver  
Handles in solid mother-of-pearl by François-Charles Gavet (1753-1840, King's cutler in 1782), successor to his father Jean Gavet (King's cutler in 1757), established at 138 Rue Saint-Honoré  
Late Louis XVI period  
Paris, 1789-----L ~20 cm (knives) 22.5 x 17.5 x 3 [L x W x H] (case)-----The knives are in very fine condition. The mother-of-pearl is superb, quite heavy, and free of cracks. Each handle is carved from a single piece of shell. The original case is made of wood covered with leather that was once gilded with a fine iron tool, featuring fleur-de-lis corners. The interior is lined with red cloth. It is in poor condition (peeling, broken hinges). Sets of 18th-century knives in their original cases are

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extremely rare. One might note lot 480 from the Hubert de Givenchy sale by Christie's on June 17, 2022, consisting of 47 Parisian knives with tortoiseshell handles and blades in vermeil and steel (the latter by Gavet), dated 1786 and 1788.-----HallmarksThe master, guild, and trade hallmarks were engraved on the backs of the blades:

- o Hallmark of master cutler François-Charles Gavet, certified cutler to the King in 1782 (crowned letter E) [Louvre III, no. 301, p. 91];
- o Hallmark for gold and silver works, Paris 1789-1792 (the letter A) [BP nos. 540-545]
- o Guild hallmark used from November 12, 1788, to September 5, 1789 (crowned letter P with the year 88) [BP no. 559]

The discharge hallmark, meanwhile, was engraved on the flat side of the blade:

- o Hallmark for gold and silver articles, Paris 1789-1792 (a small vine leaf, with the number 3) [BP No. 548]

The new hallmarks and discharge marks of this last Régie of the Ancien Régime are innovative in that they feature a numbering system from 1 to 6. It is unclear what these numbers refer to. Since the regisseur's lease lasted 6 years, it is possible that each hallmark was intended for a single year only (the hallmark numbered 1 for 1786-87, the hallmark numbered 2 for 1787-88, etc.) [BP p.160]. This hypothesis is corroborated, in our specific case, by the joint use of the guild hallmark for 1788-89 and the discharge mark numbered 3. It is also possible that these numbers correspond to those of the new dies invented by a goldsmith from Sézanne to prevent fraud [BP p.161].-----The Gavets, the King's cutlers

The first in the line, Jean Gavet, obtained his license as the King's cutler in 1757, during the reign of Louis XV. He ran a shop on Rue Croix-des-Petits-Champs in Paris and marked his products with a crowned E. François-Charles Gavet succeeded him and also obtained the title of King's cutler in 1782, during the reign of Louis XVI. The store was then located at 138 Rue Saint-Honoré and would remain there permanently. A production facility was maintained in Haute-Marne. Charles Gavet,

born in 1783, son of the previous owner and his successor, obtained the patent as King's cutler on May 14, 1814, and the title of supplier to the Duke of Berry on October 1 of the same year. Henry-François-Charles Gavet would be the last representative of the line. He sold the thriving business in 1834.

[marques-de-thiers.fr]-----ReferencesBP: Michèle Bimbenet-Privat et Gabriel de Fontaines, La datation de l'orfèvrerie parisienne sous l'Ancien Régime, Paris-Musées 1995Louvre III: Michèle Bimbenet-Privat, Florian Doux et Catherine Gougeon, Orfèvrerie de la Renaissance et des Temps Modernes, XVIe, XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles, La collection du Musée du Louvre, vol. 3, éditions Faton, Paris 2022