Antique Fishing, Salmon Spear

Sold

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REF: 31897

Height: 24 cm (9.4")

Width: 14 cm (5.5")

Depth: 3 cm (1.2")

Description

Vintage Salmon Leister Head, Fishing Spear.
A fine example of a late 19th-century fishing spear, this hand-forged salmon spear head, known as a leister, embodies the ingenuity and craftsmanship of a bygone age. Forged from wrought iron and fitted with six pronged tines, its design is both robust and highly effective. Originally mounted on a long wooden shaft, it would have been an essential tool in the hands of an experienced fisherman.
The quality of the blacksmith's work is evident throughout, from the hand-forged construction and visible hammer marks to the rich, weathered patina that has developed over time. Together, these features lend the piece considerable character and authenticity.
Salmon spears, or leisters, consisted of long poles fitted with iron heads bearing multiple barbed tines, not unlike the trident associated with the mythical King Neptune. They varied considerably from region to region, with the size of the spear and number of tines determined by the species and size of fish found in local waters.

The use of leisters has been prohibited since the 16th century, making surviving examples increasingly desirable to collectors today. Typically crafted by local blacksmiths, these spears demanded considerable skill to use effectively. Success relied not only on strength and speed, but also on precise timing and accuracy. Fishermen had to compensate for the refraction of light through water and strike the fish through, or just behind, the head to avoid damaging the flesh.

Today, a leister such as this stands as both a fascinating relic of traditional fishing practices and a superb example of rural craftsmanship, rich in history and visual appeal.

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