

Table, Drawleaf, 18-Seat, 16th Century, Italian, Renaissance, Walnut,  
Iron

Sold



REF: 11295

Height: 83 cm (32.7")

Width: 188 cm (74")

Depth: 74 cm (29.1")

## Description

This massive 18-seat table has many features which are typical of drawleaf tables that were made in the last quarter of the 16th century. Early continental drawleaf tables rarely come onto the open market and the massive extended length, original top, leaves, base and iron fittings are exceptional features of this particular table. It is also unusual for drawleaf tables of this length to have four legs as they generally have six. However the four legs are a massive 14cm in diameter at their maximum so they are strong enough to support the top, more practical as there are no central legs to get in the way and the aesthetic is more pleasing. The drawleaf feature is very practical enabling the table to extend to almost double its closed length and creating versatility through multifunctional use as a large or small dining table or centre table or writing table. The drawleaf mechanism is simple and robust as, once the catches are released the leaves pullout / pull-out and push back. The walnut has a beautiful configuration, has mellowed over the years into a warm, honey colour and retains an exceptional lustrous patina. The table is in good, usable condition with typical wear and tear, blemishes, marks and natural shrinkage gaps between planks.

The top is made from two planks of walnut, with a later, small, walnut butterfly patch to prevent further shrinkage, joined with cleated ends. The top unusually retains four original iron escutcheons and catches on the leaves along each side which is an exceptionally rare decorative feature as they are not necessary for the drawleaf mechanism to work or for the leaves to remain in place once closed. The leaves are made from two pieces of walnut with cleated ends and there is graduating shrinkage on both which could be filleted. The lopers for the drawleaf mechanism are in good condition and two stoppers are missing on one side. The frieze is decorated with classical moulding characteristic of the period. The large 14cm diameter maximum, graduating, ring and baluster turned legs are decorated with three rows of delicate punch carving. The square stretchers have moulded decoration. Standing on bun feet, two are 19th century replacements. Exceptional original colour and patina.

Measures: Extended length 346 cm., 136¼ in., (11ft. 4¼ in.) closed length 188 cm., 74in., (6ft, 1in.) Height 83 cm., 32¾ in., width 74 cm., 29¼ in., Top thickness 2.5cm., maximum leg diameter 14cm

The most common model of dining table in the medieval and Renaissance periods was of trestle construction, consisting of large oak or elm boards resting on a series of central supports. As the long tops were very heavy it was too cumbersome to easily move them so the drawleaf model superceded the trestle. It introduced a simple device which enabled the table to be extended to nearly double its closed length. Although relatively few of these tables survive there are numerous references to them in 16th and early 17th century inventories in which their values demonstrate that they were regarded as valuable possessions. Stools were arranged under the tables when not in use, with their tops outwards, supported on the stretchers. The immovable nature of these tables led to them descending th...