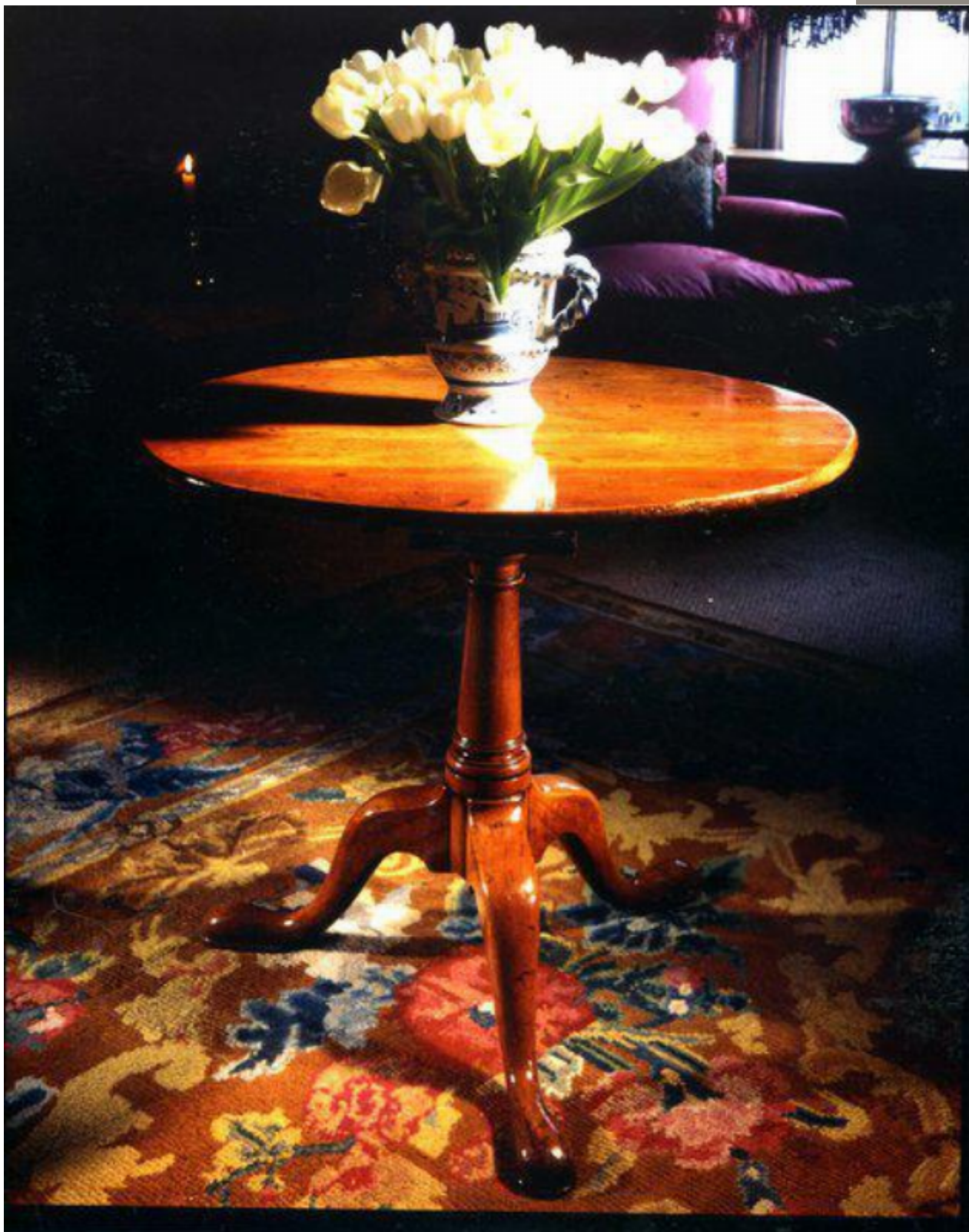


A rare, mid-18th century, apple, tripod table

Sold



Description

The circular tilt-top, with an old repair to a crack, above a bird-cage support. The baluster-turned stem over a tripod base with three elegant, cabriole legs ending in pad feet. Excellent configuration, original colour and patina. English, second quarter of the 18th century.

Height : 68.50 cm./27.00 in.,
Diameter : 78.00 cm./30.75 in.

Pieces of early furniture in applewood are rare, and this elegant table was made to hold and display the much prized tea and coffee equipage, and to stand against the wall when not in use. Very few early tea-tables survive, probably due to their heavy utilitarian use, although large quantities were made at the time. This piece is stylistically simple and has developed an excellent colour and patina over time.

Tea was introduced into this country from Holland and, at first, it was regarded as chiefly medicinal "for clearing the sight and expelling infection... tea being friendly to the stomach and head". In spite of the high prices and heavy duty imposed, tea gradually became a sought-after beverage, and was drunk in both public places and fashionable houses. A petition of the Joiners Company, dating from the end of the 17th century, against the importation of goods from the East Indies states that 6,582 tea-tables had been imported "within these four years", illustrating the popularity of tea drinking among people of means.

Towards the middle of the 18th century the many tea gardens in and near London, which had hitherto been popular resorts where people of quality assembled for tea drinking, came to be regarded as common and places of bad repute. It became customary to the fashionable world to invite their friends to drink tea in each others homes, and this fashion for tea drinking at home quickly spread to all classes.