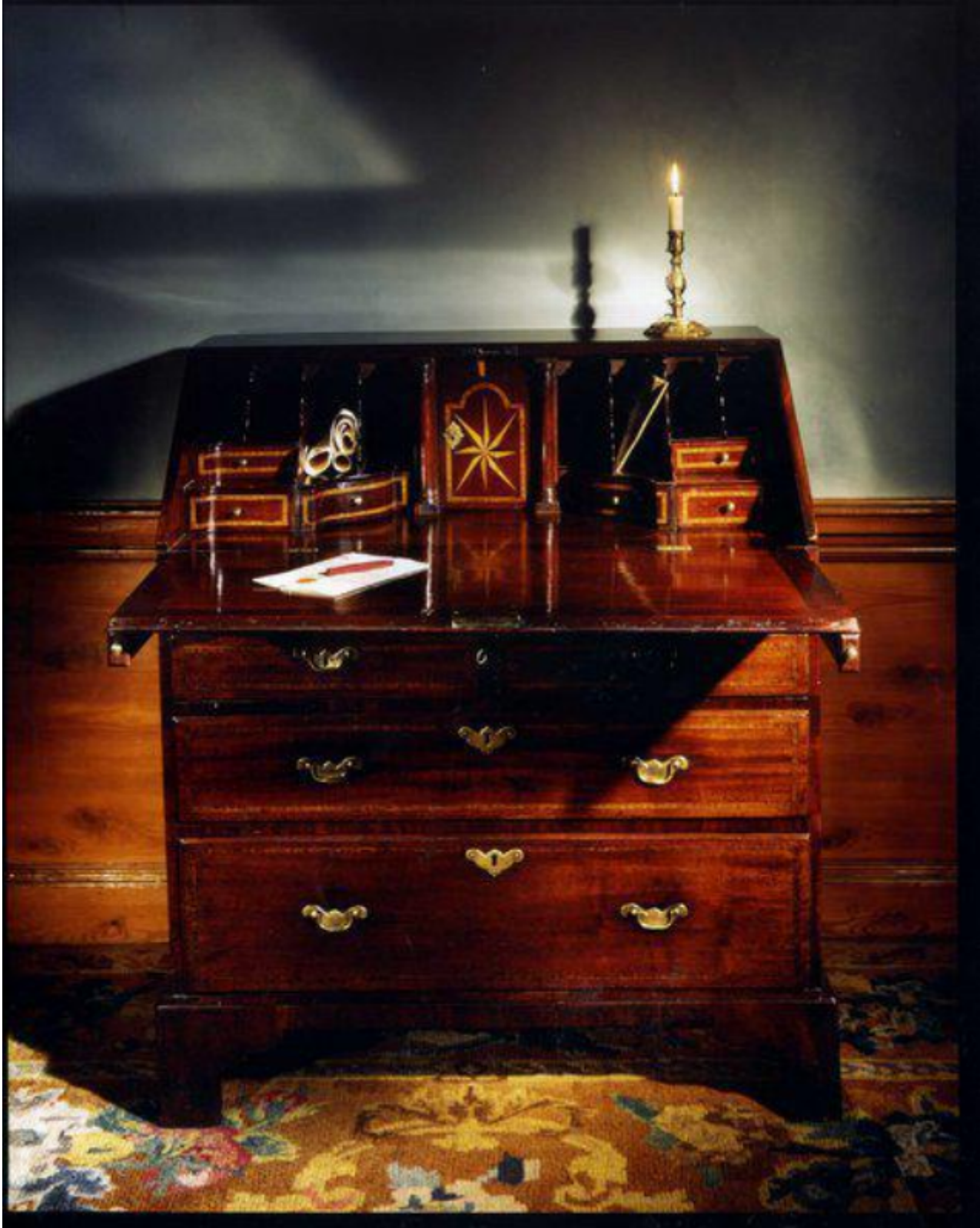


A fine, mid-18th century, mahogany bureau decorated with starburst inlays

Sold



REF: 10403

Height: 108 cm (42.5")

Width: 91 cm (35.8")

Depth: 53 cm (20.9")

Description

The top above a fall front decorated with a profuse starburst inlay and chequered border. The escutcheon and lock original, and hinges replaced. The interior fitted with a central cupboard with original escutcheon, lock and hinges decorated with a starburst and inlay. Flanked by pilasters and the pigeon holes revealing secret compartments. The shaped drawers decorated with chequered inlay and revealing secret compartments. The frieze with lopers and three short and two long drawers with some replaced handles and original locks and escutcheons. Standing on bracket feet. The carcass pine and mahogany, the drawers lined in mahogany. Excellent colour and patina. English, second quarter of the 18th century.

The cabinet maker has used fine, timbers with excellent configuration in the body and, unusually, the carcass of this piece. He has created a vivid effect through his use of starburst inlays combined with geometric borders. This together with the shaping of the internal drawers reflects the excellent quality of this piece which has developed a mature, colour and patina over time.

In his Cabinet Dictionary (1803) Sheraton states that in England the term bureau has, 'generally been applied to common desks with drawers under them'. This piece is of a form that evolved towards the end of the 17th century with a centre recessed to accommodate the knees of the writer flanked by small drawers on either side which, in time, were continued down to the floor. This design was quickly adopted in England where, it developed into a desk with a fall-front, with drawers and pigeon holes taking the place of the writing flap.

Towards the end of the 17th century the design then evolved further when the incorporation of lopers fitted on each side, enabled the flap to be supported, and the kneehole was replaced by two short and three long drawers creating increased storage space. The interiors were fitted with ingenuity and practicality, with drawers and open compartments, and secret receptacles hidden within.