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THREE PIGEONS

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AN INDIAN WROUGHT-IRON KADHAI FIRE-PIT

Gujarat, 19th or 20th Century,

the large circular dished cooking-vessel, hand-made of plate and rivet construction, with later ring handles and pierced to the centre with a vent, raised on a later wrought-steel tripod base, smoked and encrusted to the exterior from decades of use as a Kadhai, now with a cooking grille with removable centre,

DIMENSIONS: 56cm (22") High, 94cm (37") Wide, 87cm (34³/₄") in Diameter

STOCK CODE: 45599



HISTORY

Our temperate climate of long Springs and Autumns makes for dark and chilly evenings: those in England now permitted to gather in the garden under “The Rule of Six” are going to need a firepit.

This hefty iron cooking dish is from Gujarat in the North-West of India. The giant Kerhai (or Kerai) has a style of Indian cuisine named after it. These large pans are often used dry for cooking flatbreads too. And these are old – hard to say exactly how old. Handmade, many moons ago, each has had a long life as the centrepiece of village festivals and weddings – they are used for communal cooking on a big scale. The exteriors bear layers of soot and encrustations from a life over the fire.

They are beautifully made – plates of iron, often salvaged materials, are bashed and riveted

and worked until the large Kerhai – essentially a heavy steep-sided wok – is formed. They are quite something: run your hand along the inner surface and it is smooth and virtually seamless. The exterior with rows of rivets is blackened after years of use.

Whilst the traditional use for the Kerhai is to cook a large curry over the fire, they lend themselves wonderfully for use as a firepit – with the fire now inside. With a stand to sit it on, and a removable grille for cooking on, they can double-up as a barbecue. A central vent has been drilled into the centre to aid the draw.

Beyond that we don't feel that you need instruction on how to light the fire in the bowl, invite some friends round at dusk, open some beers, a crisp Chablis perhaps, get some food on the grille, cook it, more beer, eat the food, remove the grille, get some logs on there and enjoy a wonderful evening round the fire catching up after a year of being apart.

The Kerhai also lends itself as a planter – and even, if you seal up the hole a reflection pool.

*As supplier we urge you to heed all safety advice as usually given with newly-made firepits. If using as a firepit, please consider carefully the context and access around your Kerhai for all people and animals as they have risks associated with them – both when the focus of a gathering and afterwards when still hot. Obviously we can have no control over the way these old salvaged iron Kadhai are used, how they are sited, the scale of the fire in them and the access to them when hot: we sell them on the basis of their decorative merits only and accept no liability for injury etc. howsoever caused.

*Environmentally speaking, firepits have the same concerns attached to them as open fires and barbecues. Please be aware of local constraints about the burning of wood particularly in cities – it may not be permitted – and obviously please be mindful of neighbours. The burning of wood, especially non-seasoned timber, releases particulates into the atmosphere that are of concern – again particularly in urban environments. As supplier we ask that you bear this in mind.