



PAIR OF 19TH CENTURY FRENCH BLACK FOREST CARVED OAK MONKS WITH GOBLETS

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Full of personality and whimsical charm, this pair of antique carved oak monks captures the humor and craftsmanship associated with Black Forest decorative art. Crafted in France circa 1890, each jovial friar is depicted raising a small goblet in one hand while holding a drinking vessel in the other, as though offering a cheerful toast.

Hand-carved from solid oak, the two figures feature plump, smiling faces with round spectacles, prominent noses, and distinctive monastic hairstyles. Both monks wear traditional hooded robes with wide collars, flowing sleeves, and rope belts from which oversized keys are suspended. Their rounded bellies and exaggerated facial expressions lend the sculptures a playful, almost caricature-like quality. Each figure stands on an integral circular base, with sandals peeking beneath the long robes.

The carving is particularly expressive, with visible chisel marks creating texture throughout the garments, while carefully incised details define the faces, spectacles, hands, and accessories. The backs are equally well executed, displaying large pointed hoods and deeply carved folds in the robes. The two monks were conceived as pendants, with nearly identical poses and subtle individual variations that emphasize their hand-carved character.

The figures have been stripped of an earlier finish, revealing the warm, natural color and grain of the oak. The lighter wood surface contrasts with darker tones remaining in the carved recesses, accentuating the sculptural details and giving the pieces an appealing rustic patina.

During the late 19th century, Black Forest-style carvings became popular for their combination of traditional woodworking techniques, expressive figures, and humorous subjects. Monks enjoying wine or ale were especially favored decorative motifs, often associated with hospitality, conviviality, and the pleasures of good food and drink.

The antique sculptures are in excellent condition commensurate with age and use, with natural variations in the wood. Ideal for display in a wine cellar, home bar, library, or study, this amusing pair would also complement a French country or rustic European interior.

Dimensions: 8.5" W x 5.75" D x 20.5" H each