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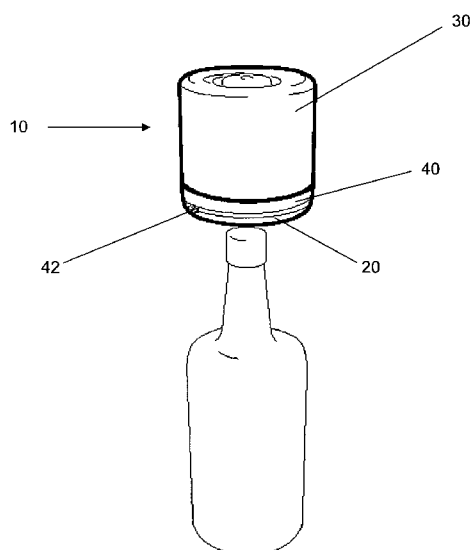
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(54) Title: CONTAINER FOR MOUNTING ON THE NECK OF A BOTTLE

Figure 3



(57) Abstract: A container (10) for mounting on the neck of a bottle or other vessel having an annular abutment surface thereon, the container (10) including a wall (30) formed of two or more wall sections and an opening formed in the wall for receiving the neck of the vessel. The two wall sections are joined together by a frangible seal (40) which allows the customer to open the container (10) in a controlled manner, thereby reducing the risk of damage to the contents of the container (10).

CONTAINER FOR MOUNTING ON THE NECK OF A BOTTLE

Background of the Invention

[0001] The present invention relates to a container, in particular, to a container for mounting on the neck of a bottle or other vessel having an annular abutment surface formed thereon.

5 [0002] As a promotional measure, it has become increasingly common to offer gifts as an incentive to purchasers of products of various kinds, including those supplied in bottles, for example, beverages and other liquid products. Where the main purchase is supplied in a bottle, difficulty arises in finding a suitable means of
10 mounting the container or package containing the gift on the bottle. If the gift is secured to the body of the bottle, the overall circumference of the item is increased, making it more difficult to fit an appropriate number of bottles on a shelf for display to purchasers. Whatever part of the bottle the gift is secured to, there is difficulty in securing it so that it
15 simply cannot be removed and taken away without having been paid for.

[0003] US patent 6102233 describes a container having a wall which defines a generally closed space; there being formed in the wall an opening for receiving the neck of a bottle. The container has a
20 resilient retaining structure having a generally central aperture which is aligned with the opening in the container wall and is of dimensions selected to be slightly smaller than those of the annular abutment surface on the neck of the bottle to which it is to be fitted. The structure is such that, when the neck of a bottle is inserted into the container
25 through the opening in the wall thereof, an end portion of the neck of the bottle can be forced through the aperture of the retaining structure due to its resilient nature so that a lip of the structure around the aperture engages with the abutment surface. This engagement opposes movement of the neck of the bottle back out of the container.

The neck of the bottle serves to close the container so as to prevent removal of its contents of the container.

[0004] Since the neck of the bottle closes the container, the gift, or other content cannot easily be removed. Furthermore, the retaining means prevents removal of the container from the neck of the bottle so the container of US Patent 6102233 provides one means for securely fastening a gift to a bottle. However, with the container described in US Patent 6102233, to remove the gift from the container or the container from the bottle, the container must essentially be destroyed. Although this has the advantage of making theft of the gift difficult, it has the disadvantage that, in destroying the packaging container to reach the gift, so much force is needed that the gift may be damaged in removing it from the container.

15 Summary of the Invention

[0005] The invention provides a gift container of the kind referred to above comprising the improvement that said at least two sections joined together to form the wall defining a generally closed space are joined to one another by means of a frangible seal. The provision of a frangible seal allows the customer to open the gift container in a controlled manner, reducing the risk of damage to the contents of the container.

25 [0006] Preferably, the frangible seal extends around substantially the whole periphery of the wall of the container so that, when it is broken, the two sections of the wall can easily be separated from one another.

30 [0007] In a preferred embodiment, the frangible seal is in the form of a tear strip joined to the wall sections along opposed edges thereof by

webs of reduced thickness, the tear strip being formed integrally with said sections of the wall by molding.

[0008] The tear strip may further comprise an outwardly protruding loop, the opposed edges of which are separated from adjacent sections of the wall. In use, the customer can insert a blade into the loop to cut through the loop, leaving two projecting tabs which facilitate tearing of the web between the tear strip and the sections of the wall of the container to open it.

Brief Description of the Drawings

[0009] Figure 1 is an exploded perspective view of a two-part gift container according to the invention;

Figure 2 is a perspective view of the container of Figure 1;

Figure 3; shows the container of Figure 1 as it is mounted to the neck of a bottle;

Figure 4 shows the container *in situ* around the neck a bottle;

Figure 5 a is a detailed perspective view of a part of the container of Figure 1;

Figure 6 shows the container of Figure 1, part opened: and

Figure 7 shows the container of Figure 1 fully opened and with the outer part removed.

Detailed Description of Preferred Embodiment

[0010] The gift container 10 of the invention is shown in figure 1 and comprises two main parts, an inner mounting member 20 and an outer casing 30. Conveniently both may be made of moulded plastics material, for example, PET or PE, and may be made opaque, translucent or transparent according to choice.

[0011] The inner mounting member 20 has a generally annular base 22 with a retainer 24 in the form of a conical sleeve surrounding a central opening thereof. The material of the retainer 24 is chosen to be somewhat elastic and is so dimensioned that the neck of a bottle can be passed onto the central opening and through the conical sleeve of the retainer 24. The open end of the conical retainer sleeve 24 expands sufficiently to allow the bottle cap to pass through it but then contracts again around the neck of the bottle so that, as can be seen most clearly from Figure 7, the edge of the retainer sleeve lodges under the annular abutment conventionally formed on the necks of bottles to allow bottle caps to be secured against, for example, pressure exerted by aerated drinks contained in them.

[0012] Thus, as is known from, for example, US patent 6102233, the conical shape of the retainer 24 and its engagement with the underside of the annular abutment moulded onto the neck of the bottle prevents the neck of the bottle being withdrawn through the retainer sleeve once the edge of the sleeve has passed over the abutment and contracted down again.

[0013] The annular base 22 of the inner mounting member 20 is formed at its edge remote from the conical retainer 24 with an upturned peripheral flange 26 which, as shown in the drawings may form a relatively low wall around the annular base 22. The depth or height of the upturned flange 26 is, however, a matter of choice according to considerations of aesthetics, convenience of manufacture by moulding

and convenience of packing with the gift which is, ultimately, to be held in the container 10. Both the annular base 22 of the mounting member 20 and its upturned flange 26 form part of the wall of the gift container 10 which serves to surround the gift held within the container.

5

[0014] The outer casing 30 may be of any suitable shape or dimensions provided that:

- 10 • it is generally of a closed cup-like shape so that, when fixed to the inner mounting member 20 as will be described in detail below, it forms a largely closed internal chamber which can be accessed only by means of the central opening through the sleeve of the retainer 24
- 15 • the peripheral edge 32 of the outer casing is of similar shape and dimensions to the upturned flange 26 of the annular base 22 of the retaining member 24, so that the two can easily be joined as will be described. In practice, the shape of the outer casing 30 will be chosen so as to be aesthetically pleasing but also such that it does not extend laterally in such a way as to make stacking or transportation of bottles fitted with the gift containers 10 difficult. In
20 some circumstances, this may mean that the overall diameter or lateral dimension of the outer casing 30 will be no greater than the diameter of the bottle to which it is to be fitted.

[0015] The two parts of the gift container 10, the inner mounting member 20 and the outer casing 30, are joined together around the
25 periphery of the gift container 10 to form a generally closed container wall. They are, according to the invention, joined by means of a tear strip 40 or other similar frangible seal.

[0016] As shown in the drawings, in a preferred embodiment, the
30 gift container 10 includes a tear strip 40 of the kind often used to seal

food, drug and beverage containers, which extends around almost the whole of the circumference of the container. The tear strip 40 is formed of plastics material by moulding and is in the form of a relatively narrow strip which is joined to both the circumferential edge of the upturned
5 flange 26 of the inner mounting member 20 and the adjacent edge of the outer casing 30 by a thin web which can be broken by pulling or tearing. As shown in the drawing, the tear strip 40 is moulded to form a protruding loop 42, which extends around a small arc of the circumference of the gift container 10. The protruding loop can be cut
10 through by a purchaser with a pair of scissors, leaving a tab, or pair of taps, which can be grasped to pull the strip 40 away from the wall of the container, tearing through the frangible webs which join the tear strip 40 to the two parts of the gift container 10 and, thus, allowing them to be separated.

15 [0017] It will be understood that other forms of known frangible seal may be used on the exterior of the gift container 10, to permit controlled opening of the gift container 10 and to reduce the risk of damage to the contents of the container. For example, a perforated join between the
20 two parts of the container may be provided, or the two parts may be fixed together by means of one or more loops of material threaded through the two parts of the container 10 and welded to form a permanent seal, to be cut through using scissors or some other sharp tool.

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WHAT I CLAIM IS:

1. A container for mounting on the neck of a bottle or other vessel having an annular abutment surface formed thereon, the container comprising:
 - 5 a wall which defines a generally closed space, said wall being formed of two or more wall sections secured together;
an opening formed in said wall for receiving the neck of the bottle or other vessel; and
a resilient retaining structure housed in said closed space and being
 - 10 connected to said wall, said retaining structure having an aperture which is aligned with said opening formed in the container wall and has dimensions slightly smaller than those of the annular abutment surface on the neck of the bottle, said retaining structure being such that when the neck of a bottle or other vessel is inserted into the
 - 15 container through said opening in said wall thereof, an end portion of said neck can be forced through said aperture of said retaining structure due to the resilient nature thereof, a lip of said retaining structure around said aperture therein engaging with the abutment surface to oppose movement of the neck of the bottle out of the
 - 20 container and the neck of the bottle serving to close the opening in the container so as to prevent removal of the contents of the container through said opening;
said at least two sections joined together to form the wall defining a generally closed space being joined to one another by means of a
 - 25 frangible seal.
2. The container of claim 1 wherein said frangible seal extends around substantially the whole periphery of the wall of the container so that, when it is broken, the two sections of the wall can be separated
- 30 from one another.

3. The container of claim 1 wherein said frangible seal is in the form of a tear strip joined to the wall sections along opposed edges thereof by webs of reduced thickness.
- 5 4. The container of claim 3 wherein said tear strip is formed integrally with said sections of the wall by molding.
- 10 5. The container of claim 3 wherein said tear strip comprises an outwardly protruding loop, the opposed edges of which are separated from adjacent sections of the wall so as to permit insertion of a blade into the loop to permit cutting through the loop and, hence, to facilitate tearing of the web between the tear strip and the sections of the wall of the container.

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AMENDED CLAIMS

[Received by the International Bureau on 30 December 2009 (30.12.09)]

1. A container for mounting on the neck of a bottle or other vessel having an annular abutment surface formed thereon and for containing a gift, the container comprising:
 - 5 a wall which defines a generally closed space, said wall being formed of two or more wall sections secured together;
an opening formed in said wall for receiving the neck of the bottle or other vessel; and
a resilient retaining structure housed in said closed space and being
 - 10 connected to said wall, said retaining structure having an aperture which is aligned with said opening formed in the container wall and has dimensions slightly smaller than those of the annular abutment surface on the neck of the bottle, said retaining structure being such that when the neck of a bottle or other vessel is inserted into the
 - 15 container through said opening in said wall thereof, an end portion of said neck can be forced through said aperture of said retaining structure due to the resilient nature thereof, a lip of said retaining structure around said aperture therein engaging with the abutment surface to oppose movement of the neck of the bottle out of the
 - 20 container and the neck of the bottle serving to close the opening in the container so as to prevent removal of the contents of the container through said opening;
said at least two sections joined together to form the wall defining a generally closed space being joined to one another by means of a
 - 25 frangible seal which can be broken to permit opening of the container.
2. The container of claim 1 wherein said frangible seal extends around substantially the whole periphery of the wall of the container so that,
30 when it is broken, the two sections of the wall can be separated

from one another.

5 3. The container of claim 1 wherein said frangible seal is in the form of a tear strip joined to the wall sections along opposed edges thereof by webs of reduced thickness.

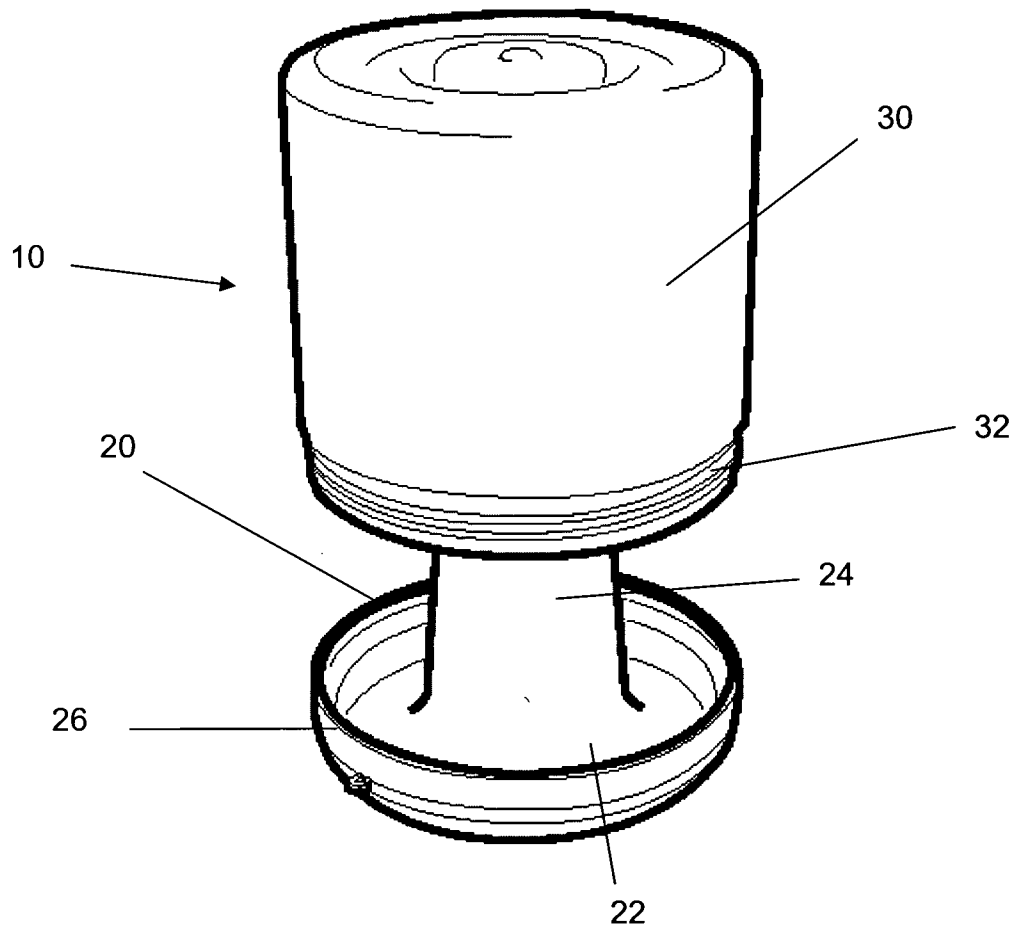
4. The container of claim 3 wherein said tear strip is formed integrally with said sections of the wall by molding.

10 5. The container of claim 3 wherein said tear strip comprises an outwardly protruding loop, the opposed edges of which are separated from adjacent sections of the wall so as to permit insertion of a blade into the loop to permit cutting through the loop and, hence, to facilitate tearing of the web between the tear strip
15 and the sections of the wall of the container.

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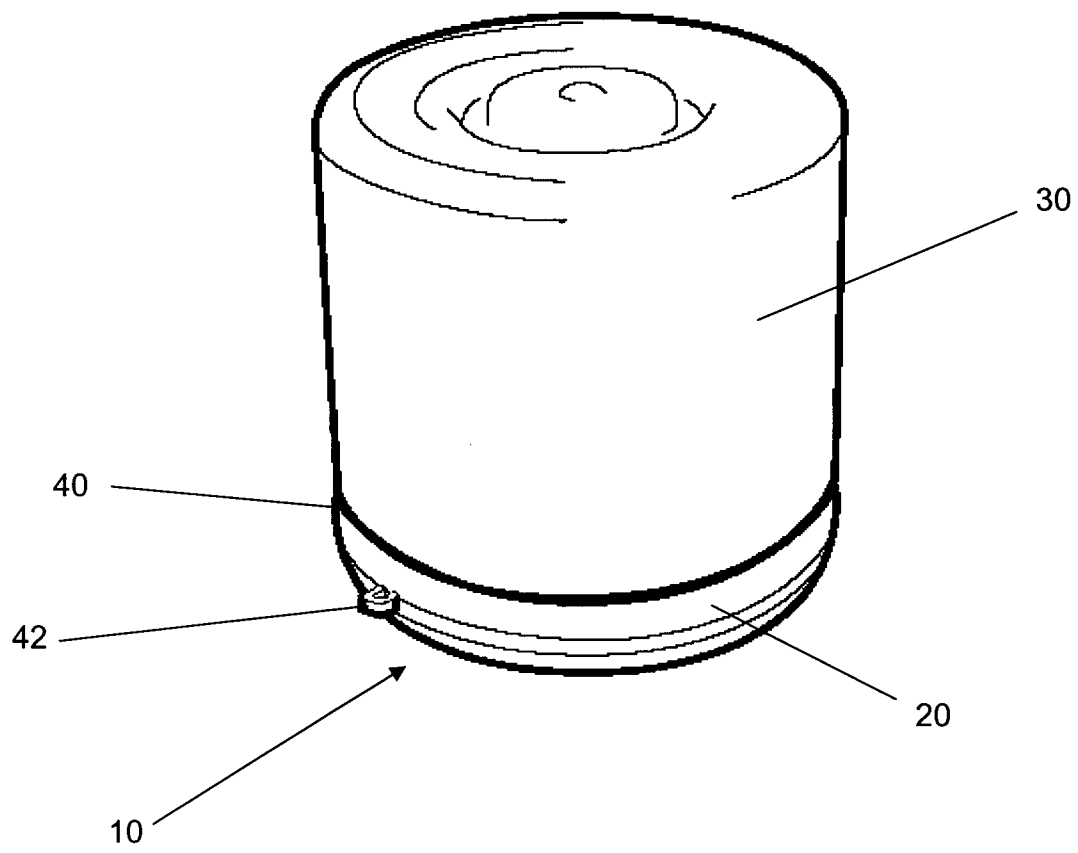
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Figure 1



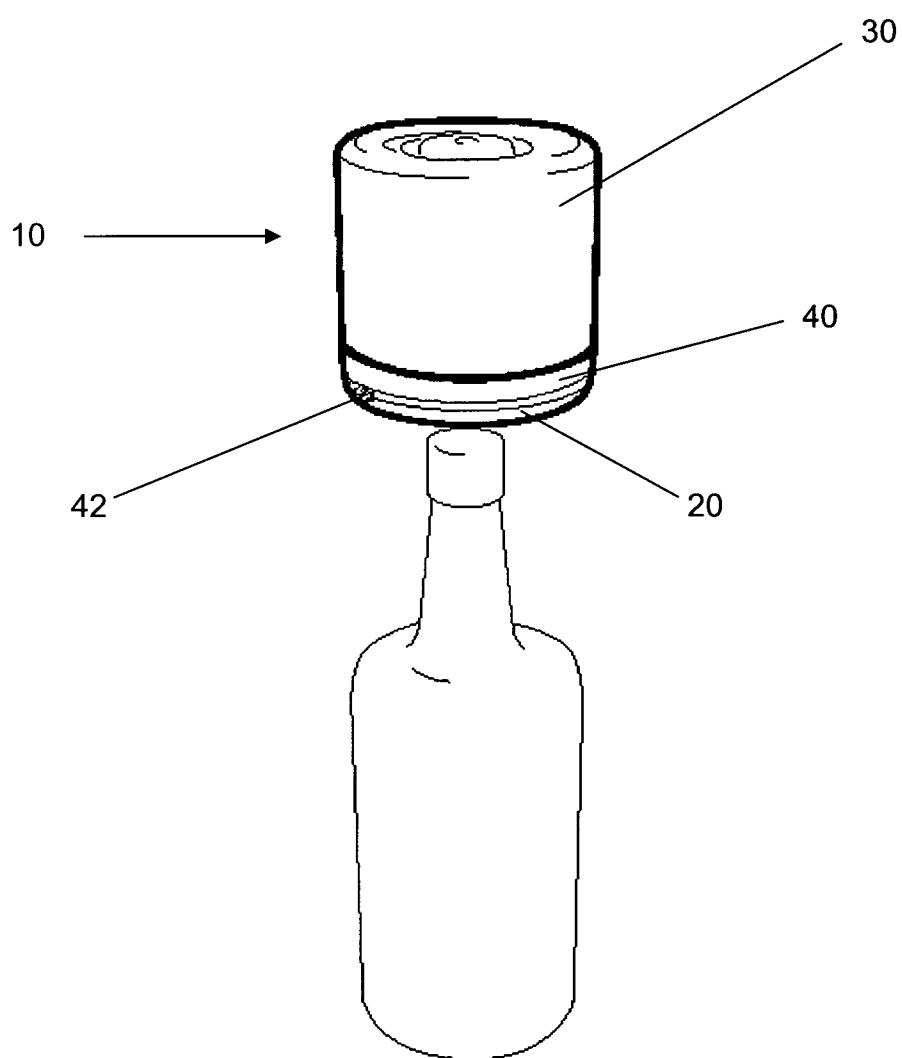
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Figure 2



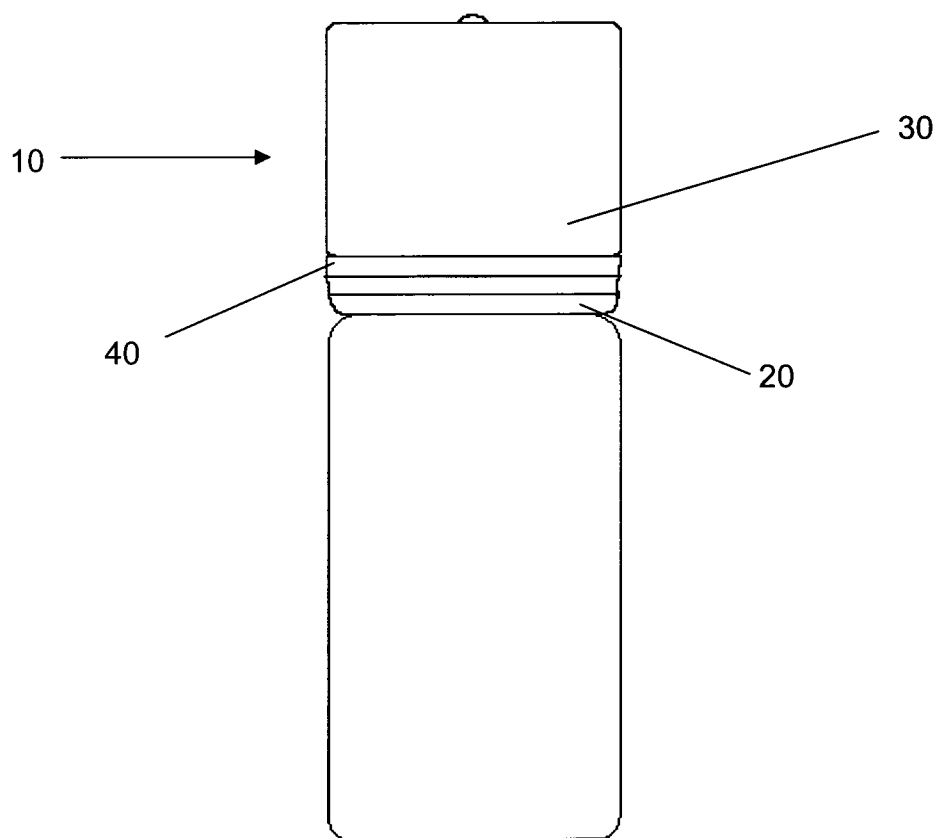
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Figure 3



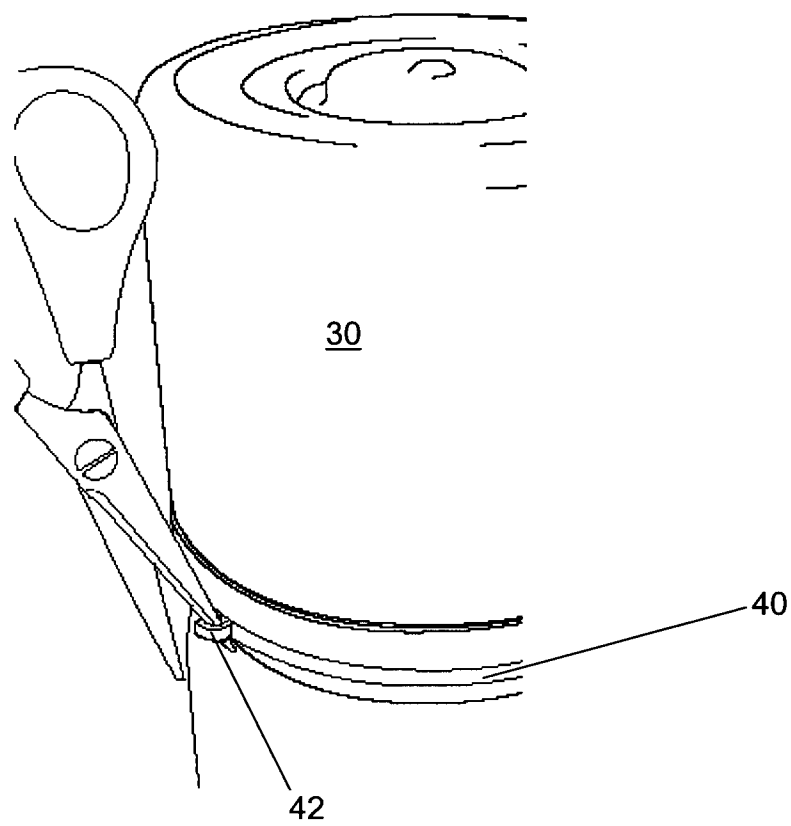
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Figure 4



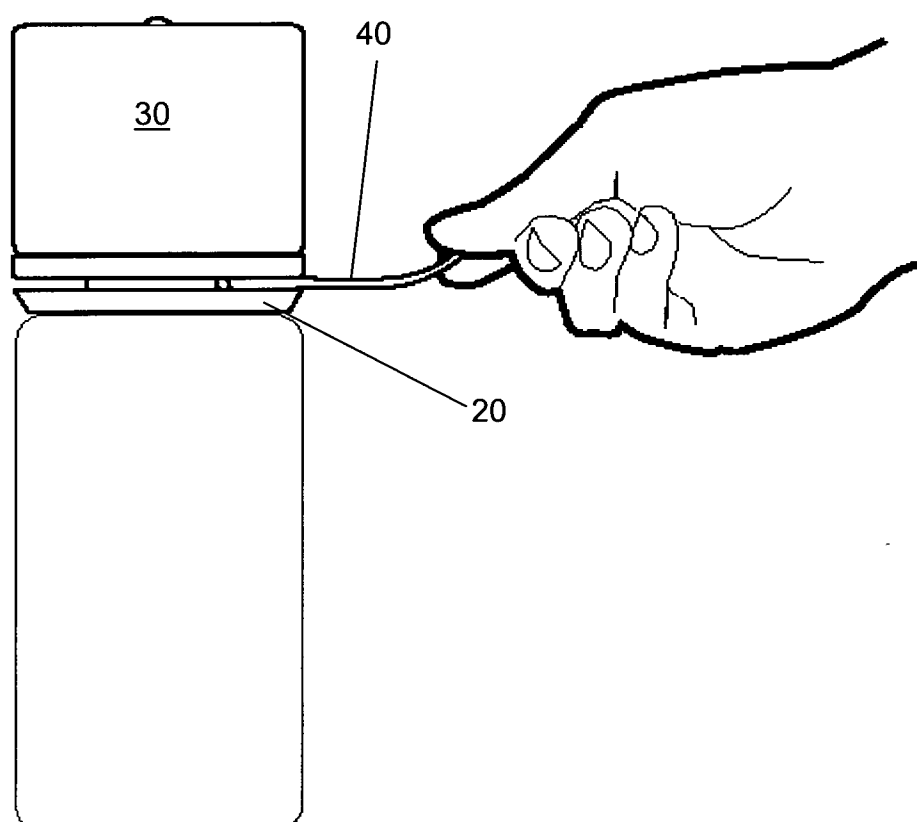
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Figure 5



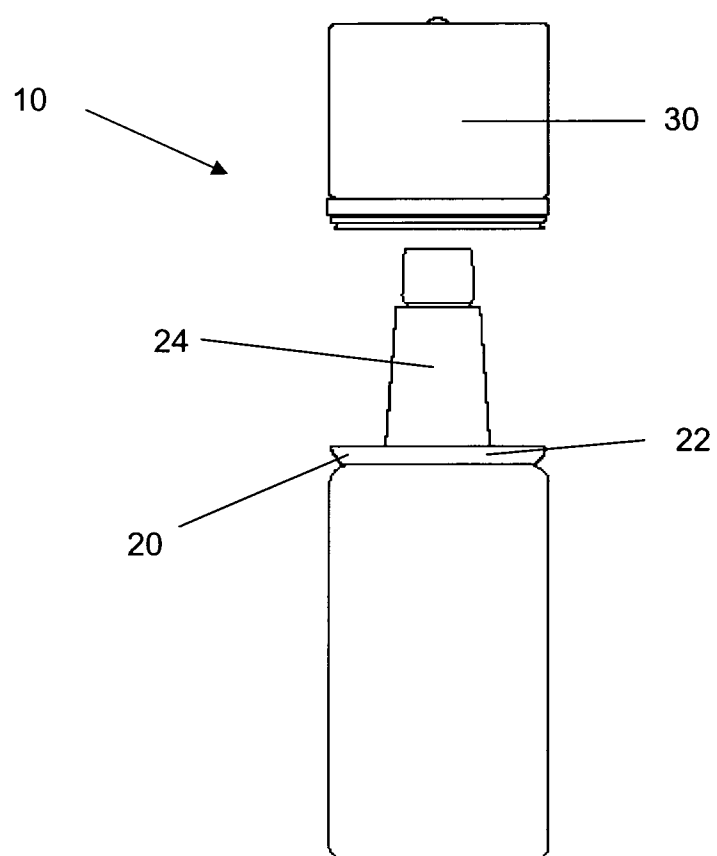
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Figure 6



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Figure 7



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No
PCT/IB2009/006318

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

INV. B65D21/02

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
B65D

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
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Y	US 6 102 233 A (WAUGH JAMES [GB]) 15 August 2000 (2000-08-15) cited in the application column 2, lines 3-59; figures 1-3 -----	1,2
Y	WO 2004/069673 A (CROWN PACKAGING TECHNOLOGY INC [US]; CROWN PACKAGING UK PLC [GB]; SKEL) 19 August 2004 (2004-08-19) page 9, lines 1,2; figure 3 -----	1,2
A	WO 00/65919 A (BECKMAN MARK JAMES [US]) 9 November 2000 (2000-11-09) page 9, lines 15-18; figure 7 -----	1,2



Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.



See patent family annex.

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International application No

PCT/IB2009/006318

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