MULITPLE-VESEL CONTAINER

Inventor: Kevin Johnson, Atlanta, GA (US)

Correspondence Address:
MYERS & KAPLAN, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW, L.L.C.
1899 POWERS FERRY ROAD
SUITE 310
ATLANTA, GA 30339 (US)

Abstract:
A container comprising an inner vessel disposed within an outer vessel, wherein the inner vessel embodies a three-dimensional design that can be viewed from the exterior of the outer vessel.
MULTIPLE-VEssel CONTAINER

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The present invention relates generally to containers, and more specifically to a bottle with multiple vessels, wherein each vessel is capable of storing fluids.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] A variety of beverage containers are available that display a design, such as an animal, team mascot, amusement park emblem or restaurant logo, wherein such beverage containers provide the user with a memento or souvenir that can be collected and reused. In addition to their usefulness and aesthetic value to the consumer, novelty cups and bottles are utilized by the owners of restaurants, sports events, amusement parks, and the like, as a form of advertising. Consumers purchase and keep such novelty cups and bottles for their appealing design, and are reminded of the sponsor every time that they use the cup or bottle.

[0003] Thus, clever and novel designs can increase the desirability of such souvenir bottles. Furthermore, beverage containers can be produced as part of a series of designs and thereby function as collectible items, encouraging consumers to purchase more containers to complete the set of designs. For example, a series of beverage containers displaying Santa Claus and reindeer designs could be sold as a set or individually as collectible items.

[0004] With respect to the contents of such containers, an increasing variety of beverages are becoming available to today's consumers. For instance, new flavors and assortments of beers, juices and soft drinks are continually being introduced into the marketplace. Given the wide variety of beverages available, it is increasingly unlikely that all members of a family or group will desire the same beverage, and given the on-the-go lifestyle of most families and couples today, the need for convenient portability is well recognized. Thus, it has become desirable to have a drink container that is capable of separately storing two or more beverages. Such a container could allow a user to select between multiple beverages in a single container. Unfortunately, however, conventional beverage containers are only capable of containing a single liquid.

[0005] Therefore, it is readily apparent that there is a need for a beverage container that not only displays an appealing design, but can individually store multiple beverages.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] Briefly described, in a preferred embodiment, the present invention overcomes the above-mentioned disadvantages and meets the recognized need for such a device by providing a container having an appealing design that coincidentally enables the separate storage and individual selection of more than one beverage.

[0007] According to its major aspects and broadly stated, the present invention in its preferred form is a device for storing multiple beverages, wherein a smaller container is retained within a larger container. More specifically, the present invention comprises an outer container and an inner container, wherein the outer container and inner container are each adapted to retain liquids therewithin. The inner container is discretely situated within the cavity of the outer container, wherein the dual-compartment or multiple vessel container of the present invention features a divided aperture, thereby permitting the contents to be individually placed in or taken out of each compartment or vessel of the container.

[0008] In the preferred form, the inner container embodies a three-dimensional design, wherein the outer container is formed from a transparent or translucent material enabling the display of the inner container. For example, without limitation, the three-dimensional design of the inner container could define the shape of an animal, team mascot, emblem, logo, block lettering, and/or any other licensed character, trademark or symbol, as desired.

[0009] Accordingly, a feature and advantage of the present invention is its ability to separately store and individually dispense multiple liquids, thereby allowing a user to select between a number of desired beverages within a single container.

[0010] Another feature and advantage of the present invention is the unique form of the inner container, wherein the design provides the user with a souvenir, memento or collectible.

[0011] Another feature and advantage of the present invention is that the transparent properties of the outer container permit the viewing of the design embodied by the inner container.

[0012] Another feature and advantage of the present invention is its ability to be reused.

[0013] Another feature and advantage of the present invention is its ability to retain either hot or cold liquids.

[0014] Another feature and advantage of the present invention is the positioning of the inner container within the outer container, wherein the outer container can thermally insulate the contents of the inner container.

[0015] Another feature and advantage of the present invention is the positioning of the inner container within the outer container, wherein the contents of either the inner container or the outer container can be frozen to cool the contents of the adjacent container.

[0016] These and other features and advantages of the present invention will become more apparent to one skilled in the art from the following description and claims when read in light of the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0017] The present invention will be better understood by reading the Detailed Description of the Preferred and Selected Alternate Embodiments with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which like reference numerals denote similar structure and refer to like elements throughout, and in which:

[0018] FIG. 1 is a front view of a preferred embodiment of the present invention displaying a bird design;

[0019] FIG. 2 is a front view of a preferred embodiment of the present invention showing an elephant design;

[0020] FIG. 3 is a front view of a preferred embodiment of the present invention with an example of sports team mascot image, logo and design thereon;
FIG. 4 is a front view of a preferred embodiment of the present invention with an example of sports team mascot image, logo and design thereon;

FIG. 5 is a top view of the top of the preferred embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 6 is a cross-sectional view of the design shown in FIG. 4;

FIG. 7 is a front perspective view of the design shown in FIG. 4;

FIG. 8 is a cross-sectional view of the design shown in FIG. 2; and

FIG. 9 is a front perspective view of the design shown in FIG. 2.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED AND SELECTED ALTERNATIVE EMBODIMENTS

In describing the preferred and selected alternate embodiments of the present invention, as illustrated in FIGS. 1-9, specific terminology is employed for the sake of clarity. The invention, however, is not intended to be limited to the specific terminology so selected, and it is to be understood that each specific element includes all technical equivalents that operate in a similar manner to accomplish similar functions.

Referring now to FIGS. 1-9, the present invention in a preferred embodiment is a container that for separately storing multiple liquids, wherein container generally possesses outer container, inner container, and top. Container is preferably formed from flexible plastic; however, it is recognized that container could be formed from other suitable materials, such as, for exemplary purposes only, glass, tin, or aluminum. Preferably, container is utilized to retain and dispense beverages for human consumption; however, it is contemplated that container could be utilized to retain contents that are not beverages, such as, for exemplary purposes only, condiments, oils, vinegar, salt, pepper, spices, gel, shaving cream, lotion, mouthwash, toothpaste, other personal care products, and/or any other suitable aqueous or viscous substances.

Referring now to FIG. 6, outer container is preferably a vessel capable of containing liquids, wherein outer container is preferably defined by bottom wall, peripheral wall, neck portion, handle, rim, and first cavity, and wherein bottom wall, peripheral wall, neck portion, and handle are preferably integrated formed together to collectively form outer container.

Outer container is preferably formed from translucent material to permit the display of inner container, as more fully described below. Preferably, bottom wall is substantially circular-shaped and peripheral wall is substantially cylindrical-shaped. It is recognized in an alternate embodiment that peripheral wall could also include ribs, grooves, or humps to facilitate gripping of container.

Preferably, neck portion and handle are provided to allow a user to hold container in a manner that does not obstruct the view of inner container, as more fully described below. Moreover, handle is preferably ring-shaped to allow a user to carry container via a strap or tie. It is contemplated in an alternate embodiment that container could comprise any size, shape or number of neck portions and handles. It is further contemplated in another alternate embodiment that outer container could embody other suitable shapes, such as, for exemplary purposes only, spherical, cubical or pyramidal.

Rim preferably defines a generally circular-shaped aperture, wherein contents are placed into or removed from container therethrough. Preferably, rim is configured and dimensioned to receive top thereon, as more fully described below.

Inner container is preferably a vessel capable of containing liquids, wherein inner container is preferably situated within first cavity of outer container. Preferably, inner container is defined by neck portion, and design portion, wherein neck portion and design portion jointly form second cavity. Preferably, handle defines a portion of second cavity; however it is recognized that handle could be separate from second cavity.

In the preferred embodiment, first cavity and second cavity preferably have the capacity to retain equal volumes of liquid. However, one skilled in the art would readily recognize that any relationship of storage volumes could be utilized without departing from the intended scope of the present invention.

Preferably, neck portion of inner container comprises wall, wherein wall is integrally coincidentally formed to with inner wall of outer container, thus enabling a dual-compartment design for neck portion. Thus, neck portion functions as a conduit to connect design portion of inner container to rim of outer container and preferably, wall of neck portion divides rim into two separate apertures and, wherein aperture allows contents to be placed in or taken out of first cavity, and wherein aperture allows contents to be placed in or taken out of second cavity.

Although wall of neck portion is preferably integrally coincidentally formed to with inner wall of outer container, it is contemplated in an alternate embodiment that neck portion does not contact inner wall, wherein neck portion is connected to outer container at rim.

Referring now to FIG. 9, preferably, design portion is defined by front side, rear side, bottom wall, first sidewalk and second sidewalk, wherein design portion defines three-dimensional design, which can be viewed from the exterior of container. Without limitation, design could embody, for exemplary purposes only, an animal, team mascot, emblem, logo, block lettering, and/or any other desirable licensed character, trademark or symbol.

Preferably, front side and rear side of design portion are mirror images one another, wherein front side and rear side are raised and/or otherwise textured surfaces that provide a realistic depiction and/or depth for design. It is contemplated in an alternate embodiment that front side and rear side could also have raised and/or textured inner surfaces, and/or that front side and rear side could be smooth and essentially flat with design printed on the outer surfaces of front side and rear side. As shown in FIG. 8, it is further contemplated in another alternate embodiment that front side could display design...
82, wherein rear side 74 could be a generally flat, blank surface. It is also recognized that rear side 74 could represent the rear of design 82, such as, for exemplary purposes only, the rear of an elephant.

[0037] As best shown in FIGS. 7 and 9, bottom wall 76, first sidewall 78 and second sidewall 80 preferably connect front side 72 to rear side 74, wherein bottom wall 76, first sidewall 78 and second sidewall 80 are preferably smooth, non-textured surfaces. It is contemplated in an alternate embodiment, however, that bottom wall 76, first sidewall 78 and second sidewall 80 could define the bottom and sides of the selected design 82, such as, for exemplary purposes only, the bottom and sides of an elephant.

[0038] Preferably, inner container 50 is situated within outer container 20, wherein design portion 70 of inner container 50 does not contact inner wall 21 of outer container 20. It is contemplated in an alternate embodiment, however, that design portion 70 could share one or more walls with outer container 20, wherein inner container 50 is integrally/coincidentally formed with inner wall 21 of outer container 20. For example, it is recognized that either front side 72 or rear side 74 of design portion 70, or both front side 72 and rear side 74 of design portion 70, could share a wall with outer container 20. In this embodiment, design 82 is defined by a textured surface, or ink disposed on peripheral wall 24 of outer container 20.

[0039] As best shown in FIGS. 6 and 8, top 90 preferably is a lid for sealing container 10, wherein top 90 is preferably capable of dispensing liquids from first cavity 32 and second cavity 52. Top 90 generally preferably comprises peripheral lip 92 and lid 94. Preferably, peripheral lip 92 is dimensioned and configured to receive and removably secure rim 30 of outer container 20 therein via frictional fit; however, it is contemplated that any conventional attachment means known within the art could be utilized, such as, for exemplary purposes only, threaded engagement.

[0040] Lid 94 of top 90 generally preferably comprises divider 100, topside 110, and apertures 120 and 122. Preferably, divider 100 effectively extends wall 62 of inner container 50 to topside 110, thereby separating first cavity 32 of outer container 20 and second cavity 52 of inner container 50. Preferably, apertures 120 and 122 are disposed on topside 110, wherein aperture 120 is positioned above first cavity 32, and wherein aperture 122 is positioned above second cavity 52. It is contemplated in an alternate embodiment that lid 94 could possess greater than two apertures, or that lid 94 could lack apertures, wherein lid 94 must be removed in order to access first cavity 32 and second cavity 52. Lid 94 further preferably comprises caps 130 and 132 for sealing and opening apertures 120 and 122, wherein caps 130 and 132 preferably engage apertures 120 and 122 via frictional fit. It is contemplated in an alternate embodiment that lid 94 could possess other suitable devices for dispensing liquids contained within container 10, such as, for exemplary purposes only, spouts, hand pumps, or straws. It is further contemplated in another alternate embodiment that lid 94 could define other suitable shapes and/or sizes, so long as lid 94 is capable of sealing container 10 while maintaining the division between first cavity 32 and second cavity 52.

[0041] In the preferred use of container 10, either top 90, cap 130 and/or cap 132 is removed from container 10 to permit contents to be placed within first cavity 32 and/or second cavity 52. Top 90, cap 130 and/or cap 132 is subsequently replaced back onto container 10 to facilitate storage and/or transportation of the contents previously placed therewithin. To access first cavity 32 and/or second cavity 52, either top 90, cap 130 and/or cap 132 is removed from container 10, wherein the contents stored therewithin can be either poured or squeezed out. In an alternative embodiment, first cavity 32 and/or second cavity 52 could be accessed via straws inserted into apertures 120 and 122 of top 90. In another alternate embodiment, contents stored within first cavity 32 and/or second cavity 52 could be dispensed via spouts and/or hand pumps disposed within apertures 120 and 122 of top 90.

[0042] In yet another alternate embodiment, apertures 120 and 122 of top 90 could be sealed via corks.

[0043] In still another alternate embodiment, outer container 20 could lack neck portion 26 and handle 28, wherein outer container 20 is substantially cylinder-shaped.

[0044] In a further alternate embodiment, container 10 could be formed from a resilient, squeezeable material.

[0045] In yet a further alternate embodiment, outer container 20 and/or inner container 50 could possess glow-in-the-dark properties.

[0046] In still a further alternate embodiment, container 10 could comprise more than one inner container 50.

[0047] In yet another alternate embodiment, outer container 20 could comprise a secondary inner wall for thermal insulation of the contents stored therein.

[0048] In still another alternate embodiment, container 10 could be securely sealed for initial sale, wherein the seal is broken by the purchaser for initial consumption of the contents therewithin, and wherein container 10 is resealable for subsequent reuse.

[0049] In a further alternate embodiment, container 10 could possess a design that is produced as part of a set or series of designs, such as, for exemplary purposes only, all of the universities in the Atlantic Coast Conference.

[0050] Having thus described exemplary embodiments of the present invention, it should be noted by those skilled in the art that the within disclosures are exemplary only, and that various other alternatives, adaptations, and modifications may be made within the scope of the present invention. Accordingly, the present invention is not limited to the specific embodiments illustrated herein, but is limited only by the following claims.

What is claimed is:
1. A container, said container comprising:
   a first fillable member; and
   a second fillable member, said second fillable member disposed within said first fillable member, wherein said second fillable member defines a three-dimensional design.
2. The container of claim 1, wherein each said fillable member of said container further comprises a neck member and a vessel member, and wherein said vessel member of said second fillable member is carried substantially within said vessel member of said first fillable member.
3. The container of claim 2, further comprising a fill aperture, wherein said neck member of said first fillable member and said neck member of said second fillable member define said fill aperture.

4. The container of claim 1, wherein said first fillable member is of a generally transparent nature and said design of said second fillable member is visible from the exterior of said first fillable member.

5. The container of claim 1, wherein said first fillable member is formed from a solid material, said solid material selected from a group consisting of transparent material, translucent material, or a combination thereof.

6. The container of claim 1, wherein said second fillable member shares at least one wall with said first fillable member.

7. The container of claim 1, wherein said design of said second fillable member is selected from a group consisting of an animal, a mascot, a logo, an emblem, block-letters, or a combination thereof.

8. The container of claim 1, wherein said design of said second fillable member is defined by a contoured surface.

9. The container of claim 1, wherein said design of said second fillable member is defined by a substantially smooth, imprinted surface.

10. The container of claim 3, further comprising a lid, said lid dimensioned to removably seal said fill aperture.

11. A container, said container comprising:

   a first fillable member; and

   a second fillable member, said second fillable member disposed within said first fillable member, wherein said second fillable member is visible from the exterior of said first fillable member.

12. The container of claim 11, wherein each said fillable member of said container further comprises a neck member and a vessel member, and wherein said vessel member of said fillable member is carried substantially within said vessel member of said first fillable member.

13. The container of claim 12, further comprising a fill aperture, wherein said neck member of said first fillable member and said neck member of said second fillable member define said fill aperture.

14. The container of claim 11, wherein said second fillable member defines a three-dimensional design.

15. The container of claim 11, wherein said first fillable member is formed from a solid material, said solid material selected from a group consisting of transparent material, translucent material, or a combination thereof.

16. The container of claim 11, wherein said second fillable member shares at least one wall with said first fillable member.

17. The container of claim 14, wherein said design of said second fillable member is selected from a group consisting of an animal, a mascot, a logo, an emblem, block-letters, or a combination thereof.

18. The container of claim 14, wherein said design of said second fillable member is defined by a contoured surface.

19. The container of claim 14, wherein said design of said second fillable member is defined by a substantially smooth, imprinted surface.

20. The container of claim 13, further comprising a lid, said lid dimensioned to removably seal said fill aperture.

21. A method for holding a plurality of beverages within one container, said method comprising the steps of:

   (a) obtaining a multiple-vessel container comprising a lid, a first vessel, and a second vessel, said second vessel defining a three-dimensional design;

   (b) filling said first vessel with a first beverage;

   (c) filling said second vessel with a second beverage;

   (d) closing said container via said lid.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein said second vessel of said multiple-vessel container is positioned within said first vessel.

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