US 20230406590A1

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication** (10) **Pub. No.: US 2023/0406590 A1**

Perrin et al. (43) **Pub. Date: Dec. 21, 2023**

(54) **ARTICLE CARRIERS AND BLANKS THEREFOR**

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(21) Appl. No.: **18/031,325**

(22) PCT Filed: **Oct. 11, 2021**

(86) PCT No.: **PCT/US2021/054421**

§ 371 (c)(1),
(2) Date: **Apr. 11, 2023**

Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Provisional application No. 63/090,499, filed on Oct. 12, 2020.

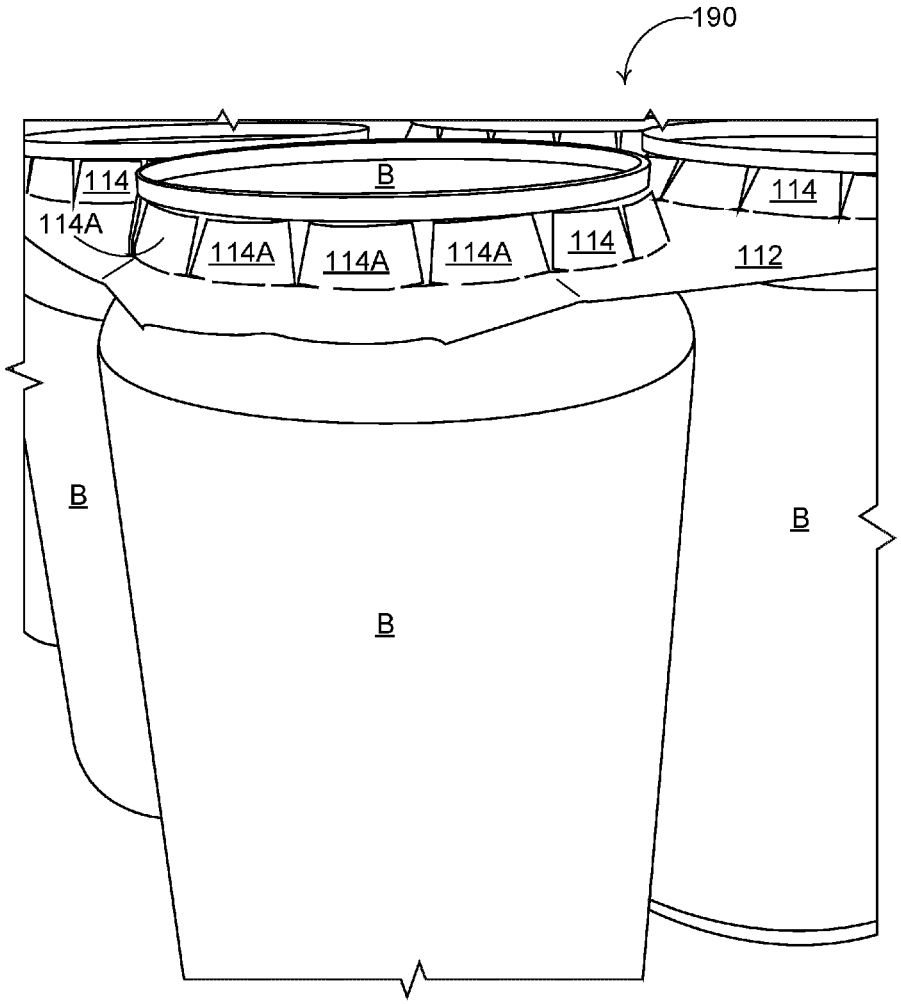
Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.**
B65D 71/42 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC ***B65D 71/42*** (2013.01); *B65D 2571/00444* (2013.01); *B65D 2571/0029* (2013.01)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

Aspects of the disclosure relate to article carriers (**90**; **190**) for forming a package and blanks (**10**; **110**) for forming the article carriers (**90**; **190**). The blank (**10**; **110**) comprises at least one panel (**12**; **112**) having at least one article engaging structure (RT**1**, RT**2**). The at least one article engaging structure (RT**1**, RT**2**) comprises an article receiving aperture (AP**1**, AP**2**) and an annular series of tabs (**14**, **30**; **114**, **114** A) formed around the article receiving aperture (AP**1**, AP**2**). The annular series of tabs (**14**, **30**; **114**, **114**A) is defined at least in part by plurality of radial cut lines (**15**, **31**; **115**, **131**). The annular series of tabs (**14**, **30**; **114**, **114**A) is defined at least in part by plurality of circumferential cut lines (**9**, **11**; **109**, **111**). At least a first one (**31**, **131**) of the radial cut lines extends to a corresponding circumferential cut line (**9**, **109**) and at least a second one (**15**; **115**) of the radial cut lines stops short of a respective circumferential cut line (**9**, **109**).



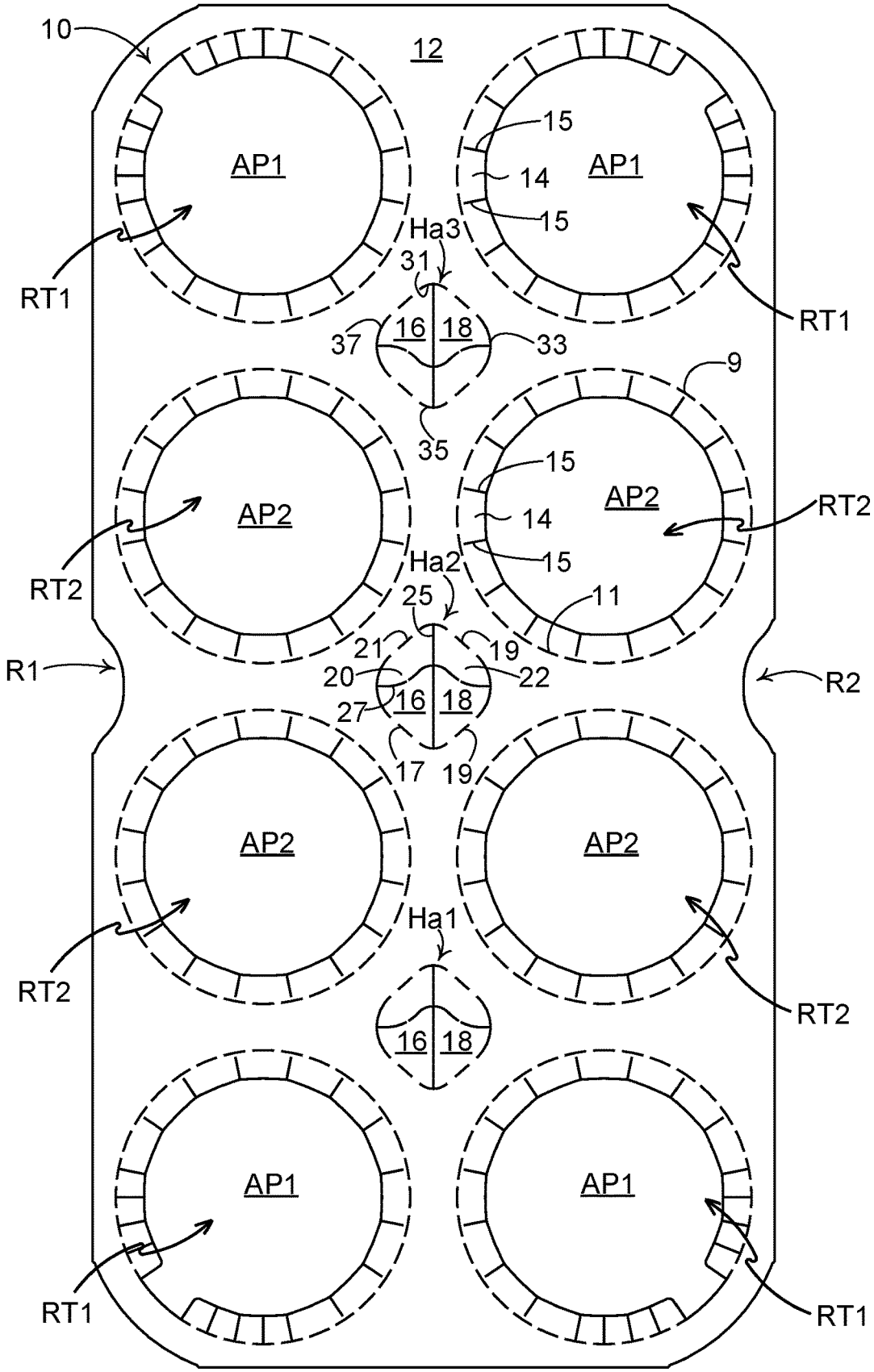

10
12
AP1
AP1
15
14
15
Ha3
31
RT1
RT1
37
16
18
33
9
35
15
AP2
AP2
RT2
RT2
14
15
Ha2
25
11
21
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R1
R2
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22
27
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RT1

FIG. 1

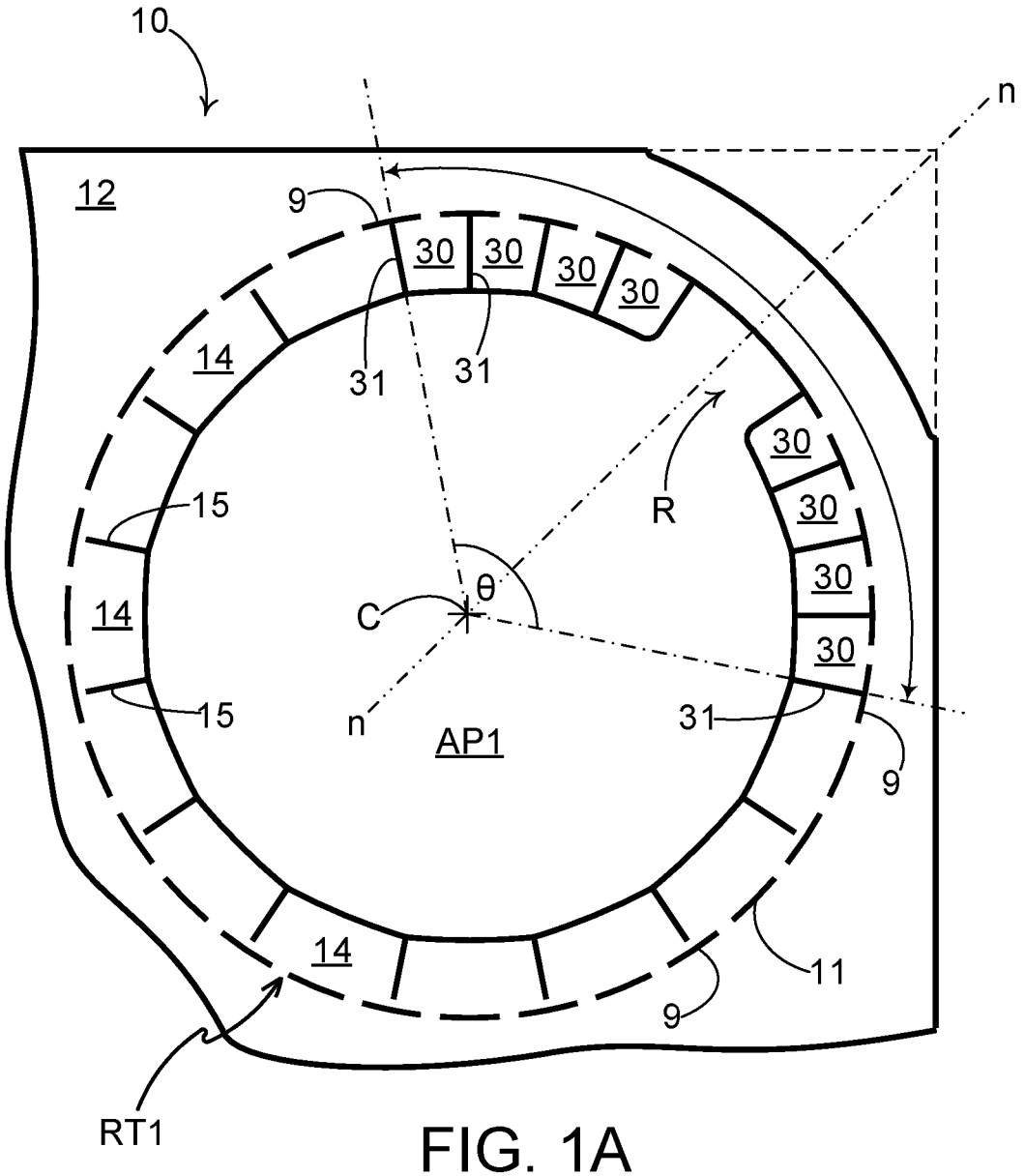

10
12
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30
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31
n
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AP1
31
9
14
11
9
RT1

FIG. 1A

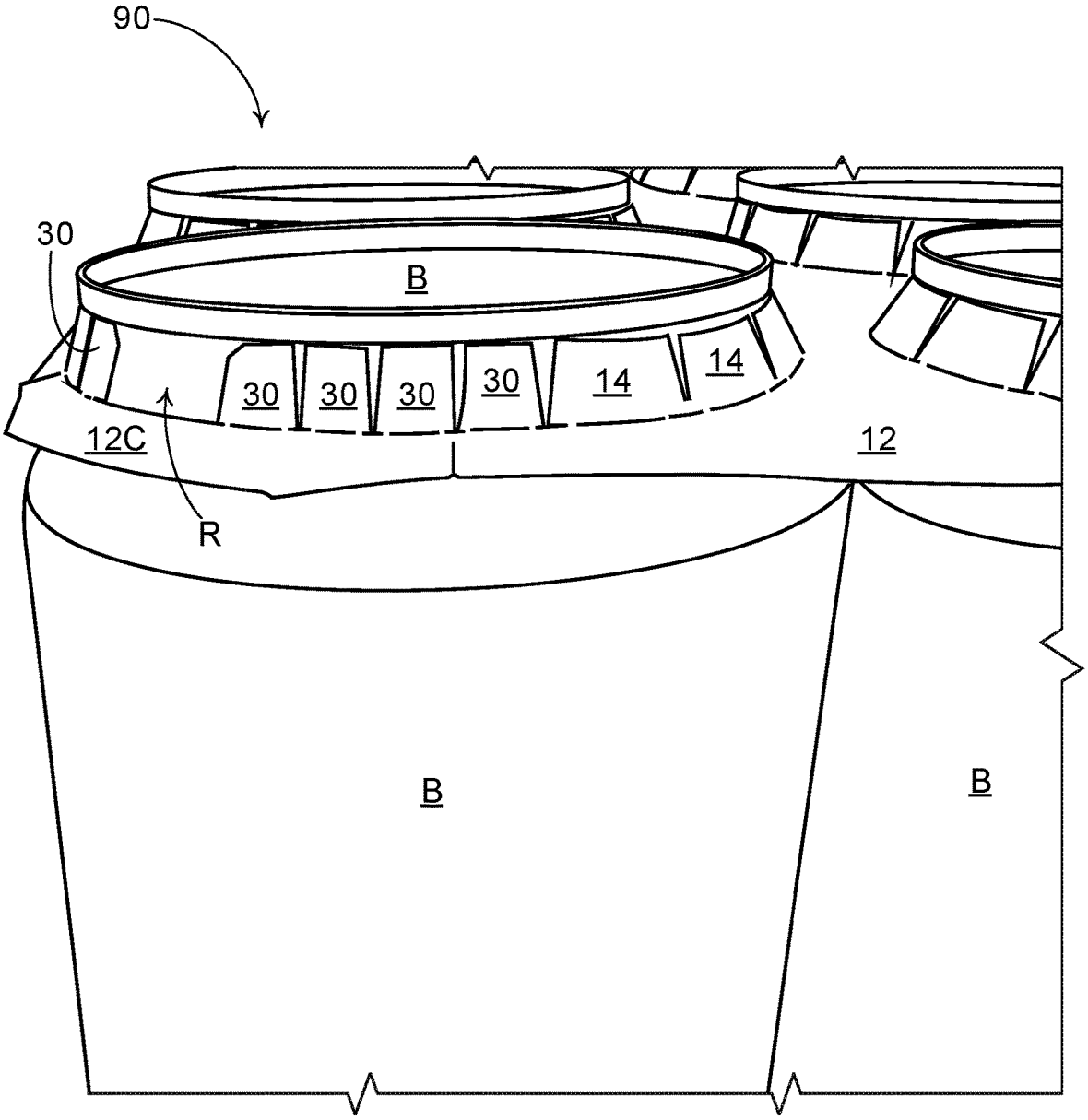


FIG. 2

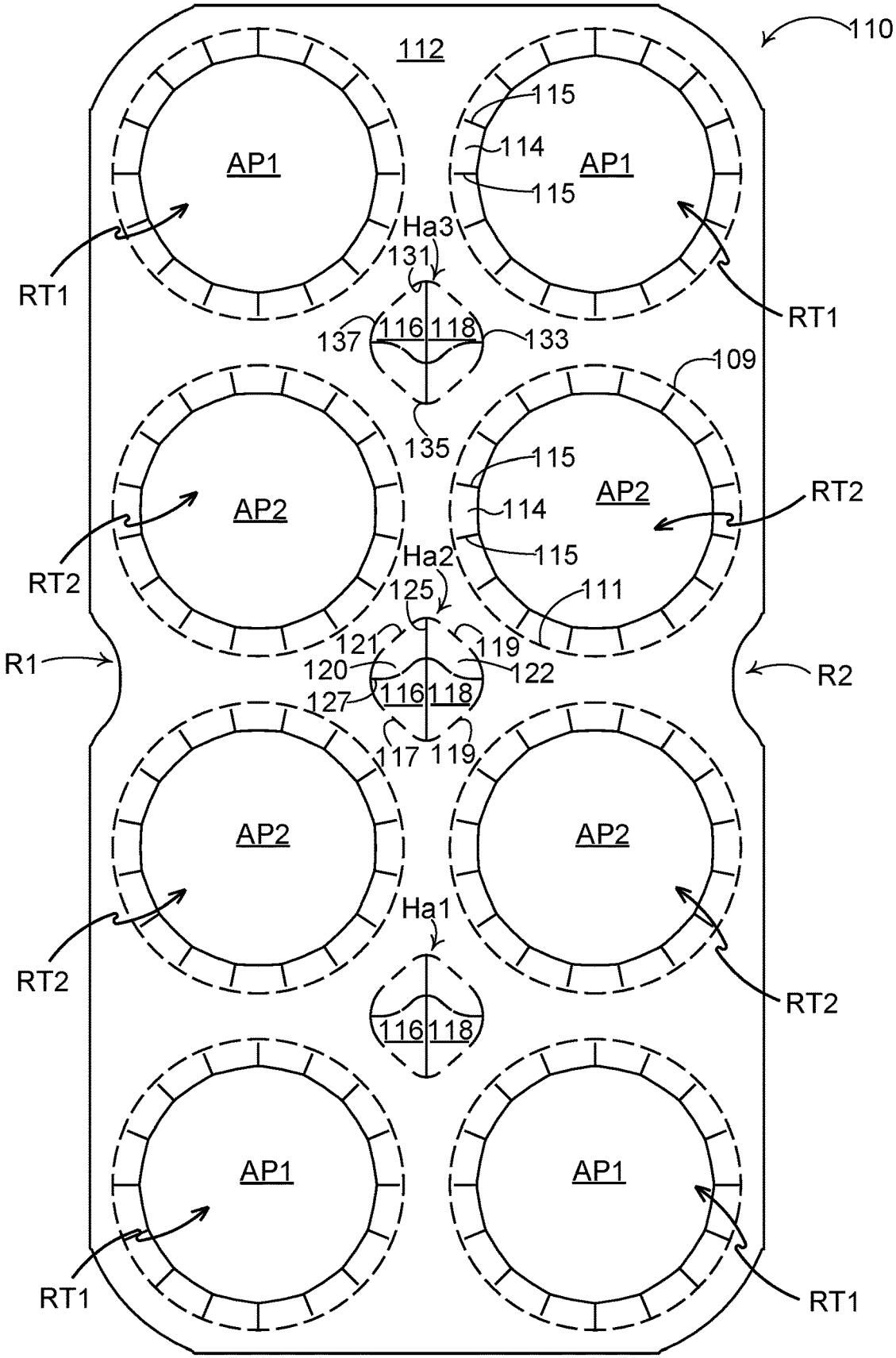

110
112
AP1
AP1
115
114
115
Ha3
131
RT1
RT1
137
116 118
133
109
135
AP2
AP2
115
114
115
RT2
RT2
Ha2
125
111
121
119
120
122
127
116 118
117
119
R1
R2
AP2
AP2
Ha1
RT2
RT2
116 118
AP1
AP1
RT1
RT1

FIG. 3

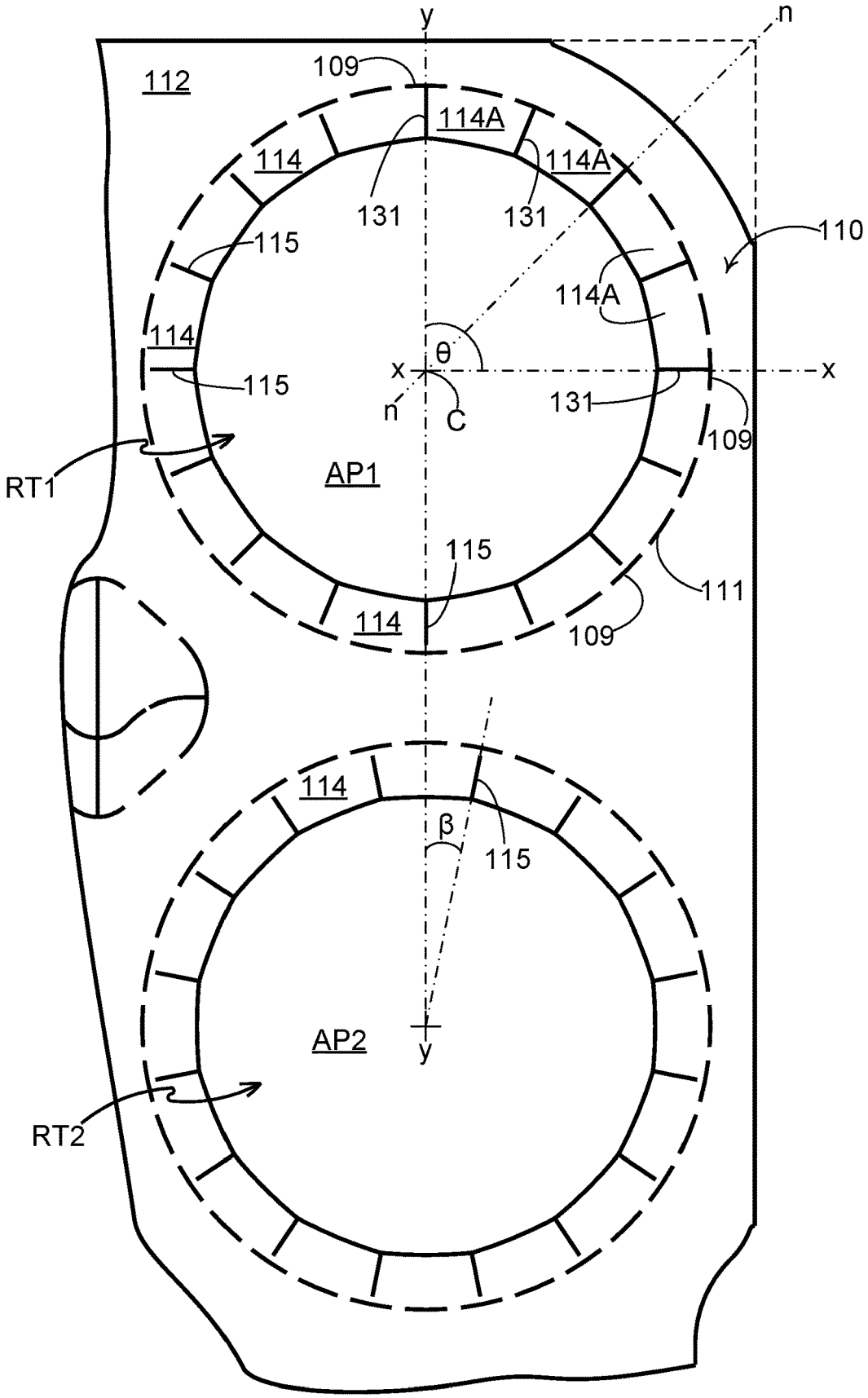

y
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112
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114A
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114A
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AP2
y
RT2

FIG. 3A

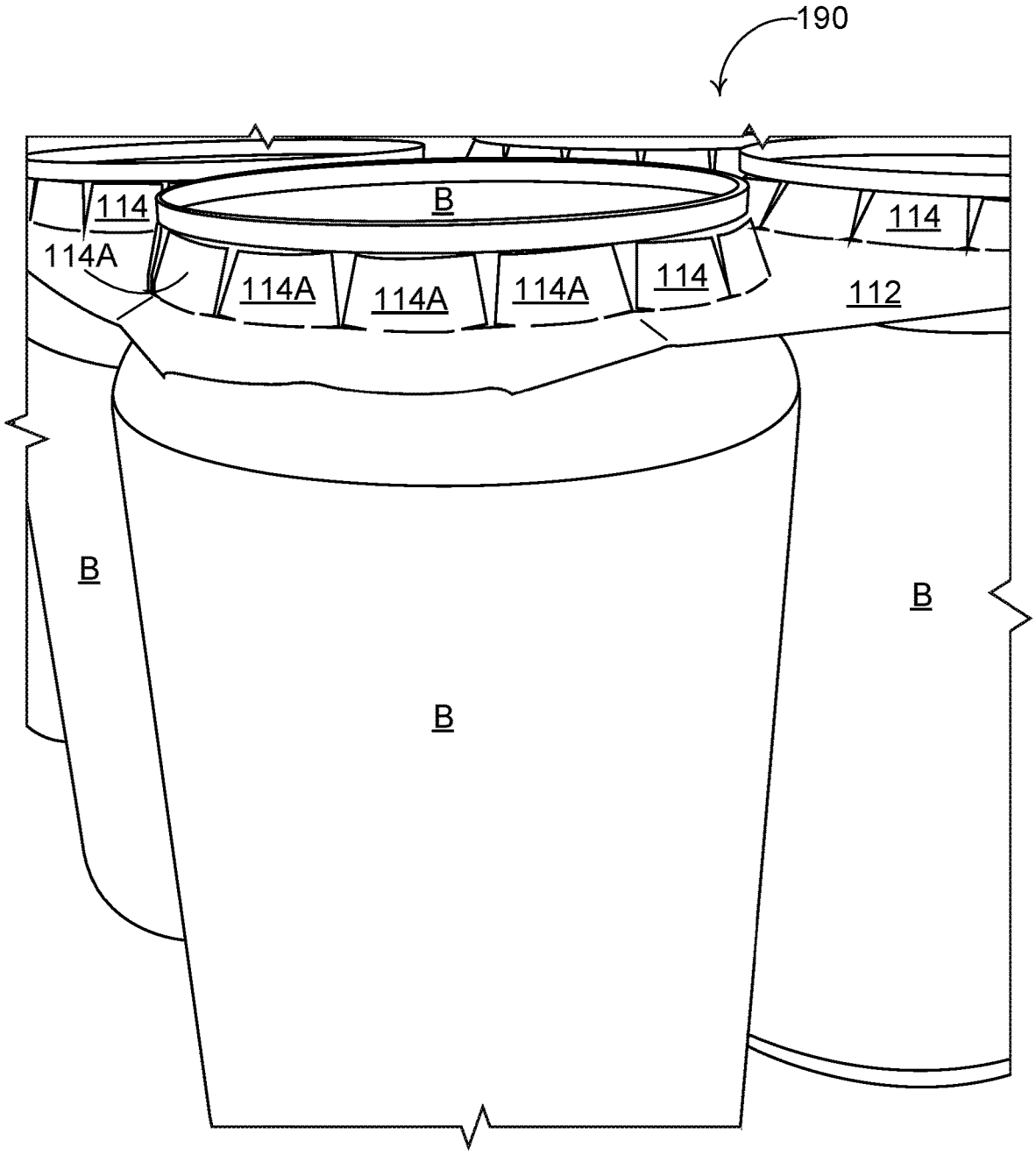


FIG. 4

ARTICLE CARRIERS AND BLANKS THEREFOR

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The present invention relates to packages, to article carriers and to blanks for forming the same. More specifically, but not exclusively, the invention relates to a package comprising a carrier having a main panel including one or more apertures for receiving an article and handle structure.

BACKGROUND

[0002] In the field of packaging it is known to provide cartons for carrying multiple articles. Cartons are well known in the art and are useful for enabling consumers to transport, store and access a group of articles for consumption. For cost and environmental considerations, such cartons or carriers need to be formed from as little material as possible and cause as little wastage in the materials from which they are formed as possible. Further considerations are the strength of the carton and its suitability for holding and transporting a weight of grouped articles. It is desirable that the contents of the carton are securely held by the carton and that the cartons or carriers are easy for a consumer to grasp and carry.

[0003] It is an object of the present disclosure to provide an article carrier for substantially cylindrical articles having a minimalistic appearance and having improved tear resistance and/or reduced deformation.

[0004] The present invention seeks to provide an improvement in the field of cartons, typically formed from paperboard or the like.

SUMMARY

[0005] A first aspect of the invention provides an article carrier for packaging at least one article. The article carrier comprises at least one panel having at least one article engaging structure. The at least one article engaging structure comprises an article receiving aperture and an annular series of tabs formed around the article receiving aperture. The annular series of tabs is defined at least in part by plurality of radial cut lines. The annular series of tabs is defined at least in part by plurality of circumferential cut lines. At least a first one of the radial cut lines extends to a corresponding circumferential cut line and at least a second one of the radial cut lines stops short of a respective circumferential cut line.

[0006] Advantageously, deformation of a corner region of the main panel is reduced by providing at least one T-shaped cut in the article receiving structure. The T-shaped cut is provided in the corner region.

[0007] Optionally, the at least one article receiving aperture is a corner aperture, and the at least first one of the radial cut lines is positioned across from the respective corner of the at least one panel such that the at least first one of the radial cut lines extends from the corner aperture toward the corner.

[0008] Optionally, the at least one article receiving aperture is a corner aperture, and at least two of the annular series of tabs are separated by a tabless area, the at least first one of the radial cut lines defines part of at least one of the at least two of the annular series of tabs.

[0009] Optionally, the tabless area is positioned across from the respective corner of the at least one panel.

[0010] Optionally, the at least two of the annular series of tabs each have a width dimension which is less than a width dimension of at least another one of the annular series of tabs.

[0011] Optionally, the at least first one of the radial cut lines defines part of each of at least two of the annular series of tabs, at least one of the at least two of the annular series of tabs has a width dimension which is less than a width dimension of at least another one of the annular series of tabs.

[0012] A second aspect of the invention provides an article carrier for packaging at least one article. The article carrier comprises at least one panel having at least one article engaging structure. The at least one article engaging structure comprises an article receiving aperture and an annular series of tabs formed around the article receiving aperture. The annular series of tabs comprises a plurality of annularly connected tabs and a plurality of annularly disconnected tabs.

[0013] Optionally, the annularly disconnected tabs are partial tabs, wherein each annularly disconnected tab occupies a smaller portion of the circumference of the at least one article engaging structure than a portion of the circumference of the at least one article engaging structure occupied by one of the annularly connected tabs.

[0014] Optionally, an engaging edge of a first one of the partial tabs is collinear with an engaging edge of a second adjacent one of the partial tabs.

[0015] Optionally, the partial tabs are arranged in pairs, each partial tab of a pair comprises an engaging edge arranged collinearly with an engaging edge of the other one of the pair.

[0016] Optionally, the partial tabs are dimensioned such that an integer number of partial tabs is equivalent to an integer number of annularly connected tabs.

[0017] Optionally, the annular series of tabs is interrupted by a cutaway, the cutaway occupies a portion of the circumference of the at least one article engaging structure disposed in closest proximity to a point of intersection between a first notional line collinear with an end edge of the at least one panel and a second notional line collinear with a side edge of the at least one panel.

[0018] Optionally, the point of intersection is a notional corner of the at least one panel.

[0019] Optionally, the cutaway is a T-shaped cut line.

[0020] Optionally, the cutaway interrupts the annularly disconnected tabs.

[0021] Optionally, the annularly disconnected tabs define a sector of the at least one article engaging structure disposed adjacent to a corner of the at least one panel.

[0022] Optionally, the annularly disconnected tabs define a sector of the at least one article engaging structure disposed proximate to a corner of the at least one panel.

[0023] A third aspect of the invention provides an article carrier for packaging at least one article. The article carrier comprises at least one panel having at least two article engaging structures including a first article engaging structure and a second article engaging structure. The first article engaging structure comprises a first article receiving aperture and a first annular series of tabs formed around the first article receiving aperture. The second article engaging structure comprises a second article receiving aperture and a second annular series of tabs formed around the second article receiving aperture. The first annular series of tabs is

defined at least in part by first plurality of radial cut lines defining a first cut pattern. The second annular series of tabs is defined at least in part by a second plurality of radial cut lines defining a second cut pattern. The first cut pattern is rotated about its centre through a first angle with respect to the second cut pattern.

[0024] Optionally, the first annular series of tabs is defined at least in part by plurality of circumferential cut lines, and the first plurality of radial cut lines comprises at least one radial cut line extending to a corresponding circumferential cut line to be contiguous therewith and at least one further radial cut line spaced apart from a respective circumferential cut line.

[0025] A fourth aspect of the invention provides a blank for forming an article carrier. The blank comprises at least one panel having at least one article engaging structure. The at least one article engaging structure comprises an article receiving aperture and an annular series of tabs formed around the article receiving aperture. The annular series of tabs is defined at least in part by plurality of radial cut lines. The annular series of tabs is defined at least in part by plurality of circumferential cut lines. At least a first one of the radial cut lines extends to a corresponding circumferential cut line and at least a second one of the radial cut lines stops short of a respective circumferential cut line.

[0026] A fifth aspect of the invention provides a blank for forming an article carrier. The blank comprises at least one panel having at least one article engaging structure. The at least one article engaging structure comprises an article receiving aperture and an annular series of tabs formed around the article receiving aperture. The annular series of tabs comprises a plurality of annularly connected tabs and a plurality of annularly disconnected tabs.

[0027] A sixth aspect of the invention provides a blank for forming an article carrier. The blank comprises at least one panel having at least two article engaging structures including a first article engaging structure comprising and a second article engaging structure. The first article engaging structure comprises a first article receiving aperture and a first annular series of tabs formed around the first article receiving aperture. The second article engaging structure comprises a second article receiving aperture and a second annular series of tabs formed around the second article receiving aperture. The first annular series of tabs is defined at least in part by first plurality of radial cut lines defining a first cut pattern. The second annular series of tabs is defined at least in part by a second plurality of radial cut lines defining a second cut pattern. The first cut pattern is rotated about its centre through a first angle with respect to the second cut pattern.

[0028] A seventh aspect of the invention provides an article carrier for packaging at least one article. The article carrier comprises at least one panel having at least one article engaging structure.

[0029] The at least one article engaging structure comprises an article receiving aperture and an annular series of tabs formed around the article receiving aperture. The annular series of tabs is defined at least in part by plurality of radial cut lines. The annular series of tabs is defined at least in part by plurality of circumferential cut lines. At least a first one of the radial cut lines extends to a corresponding circumferential cut line and at least a second one of the radial cut lines is spaced apart from a respective circumferential cut line.

[0030] An eighth aspect of the invention provides a blank for forming an article carrier. The blank comprises at least one panel having at least one article engaging structure. The at least one article engaging structure comprises an article receiving aperture and an annular series of tabs formed around the article receiving aperture. The annular series of tabs is defined at least in part by plurality of radial cut lines. The annular series of tabs is defined at least in part by plurality of circumferential cut lines. At least a first one of the radial cut lines extends to a corresponding circumferential cut line and at least a second one of the radial cut lines is spaced apart from a respective circumferential cut line.

[0031] Within the scope of this application it is envisaged or intended that the various aspects, embodiments, examples, features and alternatives set out in the preceding paragraphs, in the claims and/or in the following description and drawings may be considered or taken independently or in any combination thereof.

[0032] Features or elements described in connection with, or relation to, one embodiment are applicable to all embodiments unless there is an incompatibility of features. One or more features or elements from one embodiment may be incorporated into, or combined with, any of the other embodiments disclosed herein, said features or elements extracted from said one embodiment may be included in addition to, or in replacement of one or more features or elements of said other embodiment.

[0033] A feature, or combination of features, of an embodiment disclosed herein may be extracted in isolation from other features of that embodiment. Alternatively, a feature, or combination of features, of an embodiment may be omitted from that embodiment.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0034] Exemplary embodiments of the invention will now be described with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

[0035] FIG. **1** is a plan view from above of a blank for forming an article carrier according to a first embodiment;

[0036] FIG. **1**A is an enlarged plan view of a portion of the blank of FIG. **1**;

[0037] FIG. **2** is a perspective view from above of an article carrier formed from the blank of FIG. **1**;

[0038] FIG. **3** is a plan view from above of a blank for forming an article carrier according to a second embodiment;

[0039] FIG. **3**A is an enlarged plan view of a portion of the blank of FIG. **3**;

[0040] FIG. **4** is a perspective view from above of an article carrier formed from the blank of FIG. **3**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS

[0041] Detailed descriptions of specific embodiments of the packages, blanks and carriers are disclosed herein. It will be understood that the disclosed embodiments are merely examples of the way in which certain aspects of the invention can be implemented and do not represent an exhaustive list of all of the ways the invention may be embodied. As used herein, the word "exemplary" is used expansively to refer to embodiments that serve as illustrations, specimens, models, or patterns. Indeed, it will be understood that the packages, blanks and carriers described herein may be embodied in various and alternative forms. The Figures are

not necessarily to scale and some features may be exaggerated or minimized to show details of particular components. Well-known components, materials or methods are not necessarily described in great detail in order to avoid obscuring the present disclosure. Any specific structural and functional details disclosed herein are not to be interpreted as limiting, but merely as a basis for the claims and as a representative basis for teaching one skilled in the art to variously employ the invention.

[0042] Referring to FIG. **1**, there is shown a plan view of a blank **10** which is capable of forming a carton or carrier **90**, as shown in FIG. **2**. The carrier **90** is suitable for containing and carrying a group of primary products such as, but not limited to, bottles or cans, hereinafter referred to as articles B. The blank **10** forms a secondary package **90** that packages at least one primary product container B. An alternative blank **110** is shown in FIG. **3** for forming an alternative carton or carrier **190** shown in FIG. **4**.

[0043] In the embodiments detailed herein, the terms "carton" and "carrier" refer, for the non-limiting purpose of illustrating the various features of the invention, to a container for engaging and carrying articles, such as primary product containers (articles B). It is contemplated that the teachings of the invention can be applied to various product containers, which may or may not be tapered and/or cylindrical. Exemplary containers may include bottles (for example metallic, glass or plastics bottles), cans (for example aluminum cans), tins, pouches, packets and the like.

[0044] The blanks **10**; **110** are formed from a sheet of suitable substrate. It is to be understood that, as used herein, the term "suitable substrate" includes all manner of foldable sheet material such as paperboard, corrugated board, cardboard, plastic, combinations thereof, and the like. It should be recognized that one or other numbers of blanks may be employed, where suitable, for example, to provide the carrier structure **90**; **190** described in more detail below.

[0045] The packaging structures or cartons **90**; **190**, described herein, may be formed from a sheet material such as paperboard, which may be made of or coated with materials to increase its strength. An example of such a sheet material is tear-resistant NATRALOCK® paperboard made by WestRock Company. It should be noted that the tear resistant materials may be provided by more than one layer, to help improve the tear-resistance of the package. Typically, one surface of the sheet material may have different characteristics to the other surface. For example, the surface of the sheet material that faces outwardly from a finished package may be particularly smooth and may have a coating such as a clay coating or other surface treatment to provide good printability. The surface of the sheet material that faces inwardly may, on the other hand, be provided with a coating, a layer, a treatment or be otherwise prepared to provide properties such as one or more of tear-resistance, good glue-ability, heat sealability, or other desired functional properties.

[0046] In the illustrated embodiments, the blanks **10**; **110** are configured to form a carton or carrier **90**; **190** for packaging an exemplary arrangement of exemplary articles B. In the embodiments illustrated, the arrangement is a 4×2 matrix or array. In the illustrated embodiments four rows of two articles are provided, and the articles B are beverage cans. Alternatively, the blanks **10**; **110** can be configured to form a carrier for packaging other types, number and size of articles and/or for packaging articles in a different arrangement or configuration.

[0047] FIG. **1** illustrates a first embodiment and shows the blank **10** for forming the article carrier **90** shown in FIG. **2**. The carrier **90** takes the form of a top gripping clip. The article carrier **90** comprises openings configured to receive the articles B. The openings are arranged to accommodate a neck or upper portion of an article B, above a main body and/or shoulders of the article B.

[0048] The blank **10** comprises a main or engaging panel **12**. The main panel **12** of the blank **10** includes at least one article retention structure RT**1**, RT**2**. The main panel **12** comprises a plurality of article retention structures RT**1**, RT**2**, specifically eight article retention structures RT**1**, RT**2** arranged in 2×4 matrix or array. Each of the article retention structures RT**1**, RT**2** comprises an article receiving aperture AP**1**, AP**2** about which a plurality of teeth or tabs **14**, **30** may be disposed. Each of the teeth **14**, **30** is struck from the engaging panel **12** and is hingedly connected thereto. Each tooth **14**, **30** may be defined, in part, by a pair of cut lines **15**, **31**. The cut lines **15**, **31** extend radially outward from a centre of the article receiving aperture AP**1**, AP**2**. The teeth or tabs **14**, **30** are arranged in an annular series about the article receiving aperture AP**1**, AP**2** to form part of an article receiving opening.

[0049] The plurality of teeth **14**, **30** are provided by the main panel **12**. Each of the teeth **14**, **30** is hingedly connected to the main panel **12**, by a hinged connection. The hinged connection may be defined by a plurality of cut lines **9**, **11**. The plurality of cut lines **9**, **11** may be arranged as an annular series of cuts about the article receiving aperture AP**1**, AP**2**.

[0050] The plurality of cut lines **9**, **11** may define or approximate a portion of circle.

[0051] The blank **10** comprises four endmost article retention structures RT**1** each comprising a first article receiving aperture AP**1**. The blank **10** comprises four medial or intermediate article retention structures RT**2** each comprising a second article receiving aperture AP**2**.

[0052] The endmost article retention structures RT**1** comprise an article receiving opening defined in part by the first article receiving aperture AP**1** which is defined in, or struck from, the main panel **12**.

[0053] The intermediate article retention structures RT**2** comprise an article receiving opening defined in part by the second article receiving aperture AP**2** which is defined in, or struck from, the main panel **12**.

[0054] The endmost article retention structures RT**1** comprise a first plurality of teeth or tabs **14**, **30** disposed about the first article receiving aperture AP**1**, best shown in FIG. **1**A. Each of the first plurality of teeth **14**, **30** comprises an engaging edge opposing a hinged edge. The engaging edges are defined by a linear portion of a cut line defining the first article receiving aperture AP**1**. Each engaging edge may define a part of a polygon. The illustrated embodiment comprises nineteen teeth **14**, **30** together defining a substantial portion of hexadecagon. The endmost article retention structures RT**1** comprise eleven full teeth **14** and eight half or partial teeth **30**. The partial teeth **30** occupy a smaller circumferential region of the article receiving opening than the full teeth **14**. Each full tooth **14** comprises a pair of side edges, the side edges are defined by cuts **15** extending radially outward from respective vertices of the hexadeca-

gon forming the first article receiving aperture AP**1**, that is to say, from a respective vertex between a pair of adjacent linear portions of the cut defining the portion of a hexadecagon. The cuts **15** are divergently arranged with respect to each other and define an angle therebetween, the angle may be about 22.5°. Each partial tooth **30** comprises a pair of side edges, the side edges are defined by cuts **31** extending radially outward from the first article receiving aperture AP**1**. The cuts **31** are divergently arranged with respect to each other and define an angle therebetween, the angle may be about 11.25°. Adjacently disposed pairs of the partial teeth **30** define a linear portion of the cut defining the portion of a hexadecagon, that is to say the engaging edges of each of the pairs of partial teeth **30** are collinear.

[0055] The endmost article retention structures RT**1** comprise a plurality of first circumferential cut lines **9**. Each of the plurality of first circumferential cut lines **9** is aligned with one of the radial cut lines **15**, **31** such that said one of the radial cut lines **15**, **31** or a notional extension thereof bisects a respective one of the plurality of first circumferential cut lines **9**.

[0056] Each of the radial cut lines **15** defining a full tooth **14** is spaced apart from a corresponding one of the plurality of first circumferential cut lines **9**. Each radial cut line **15** is arranged with respect to one of the plurality of first circumferential cut lines **9** so as to bisect first circumferential cut lines **9**. In this way a connecting nick or bridge portion is provided between a pair of adjacently disposed full teeth **14**. The radial cut lines **15** and first circumferential cut lines **9** define disconnected T-shaped cuts.

[0057] Each of the radial cut lines **31** defining a partial tooth **30** is connected to, or contiguous with, a corresponding one of the plurality of first circumferential cut lines **9**. Each radial cut line **31** is arranged with respect to one of the plurality of first circumferential cut lines **9** so as to bisect first circumferential cut lines **9**. In this way each partial tooth **30** is disconnected from the adjacently disposed teeth **14**, **30**. The radial cut lines **31** and first circumferential cut lines **9** define connected T-shaped cuts.

[0058] Each of the plurality of first circumferential cut lines **9** may be linear in shape.

[0059] The endmost article retention structures RT**1** comprise a plurality of second circumferential cut lines **11**. Each of the plurality of second circumferential cut lines **11** is disposed between a pair of the plurality of first circumferential cut lines **9** and is spaced apart therefrom so as to define a pair of connecting nick or bridge portions between each full tooth **14** and the main panel **12**. The pair of connecting nick or bridge portions provide a hinged or foldable connection between each full tooth **14** and the main panel **12**.

[0060] Each of the plurality of second circumferential cut lines **11** may be linear in shape.

[0061] The partial teeth **30** are connected to the main panel **12** by a hinged or foldable connection between formed by a connecting nick or bridge portion provided between an adjacent pair of the plurality of first circumferential cut lines **9**.

[0062] In alternative embodiments each of the plurality of first circumferential cut lines **9** may be arcuate or curved. In alternative embodiments each of the plurality of second circumferential cut lines **11** may be arcuate or curved.

[0063] The plurality of teeth **14**, **30** is interrupted by a first recess or cutaway R. The first recess R lies upon a first notional line n-n. First notional line n-n extends radially from the centre C of the apertures AP**1** and passes through a notional corner of the main panel **12**.

[0064] The first recess R may be dimensioned to be equivalent to a pair of partial teeth **30**, and is centered upon the first notional line n-n. In alternative embodiments the first recess R may be replaced with a pair of partial teeth **30** separated by a radial cut line **31** lying upon the first notional line n-n, to form a connected T-cut with a first circumferential cut line **9**.

[0065] The partial teeth **30** and first recess R define a first or minor arc. The full teeth extend about or occupy a second or major arc. The minor arc defines a sector which subtends a first angle θ. The first angle θ may be about 112.5° or equivalent to five full teeth **14** or ten partial teeth **30**.

[0066] The intermediate article retention structures RT**2** comprise a second plurality of teeth or tabs **14** disposed about the second article receiving aperture AP**2**.

[0067] Each of the second plurality of teeth **14** comprises an engaging edge opposing a hinged edge. The engaging edges are defined by a linear portion of a cut line defining the second article receiving aperture AP**2**. Each engaging edge may define a part of a polygon. The illustrated embodiment comprises sixteen full teeth **14** together defining a hexadecagon. Each full tooth **14** comprises a pair of side edges, the side edges are defined by cuts **15** extending radially outward from respective vertices of the hexadecagon forming the second article receiving aperture AP**2**, that is to say, from a respective vertex between a pair of adjacent linear portions of the cut defining the portion of a hexadecagon. The cuts **15** are divergently arranged with respect to each other and define an angle therebetween, the angle may be about 22.5°.

[0068] The intermediate article retention structures RT**2** comprise a plurality of first circumferential cut lines **9**. Each of the plurality of first circumferential cut lines **9** is aligned with one of the radial cut lines **15** such that said one of the radial cut lines **15** or a notional extension thereof bisects a respective one of the plurality of first circumferential cut lines **9**.

[0069] Each of the radial cut lines **15** defining a full tooth **14** is spaced apart from a corresponding one of the plurality of first circumferential cut lines **9**. In this way a connecting nick or bridge portion is provided between pairs of adjacently disposed full teeth **14**. The radial cut lines **15** and first circumferential cut lines **9** define disconnected T-shaped cuts.

[0070] The intermediate article retention structures RT**2** comprise a plurality of second circumferential cut lines **11**. Each of the plurality of second circumferential cut lines **11** is disposed between a pair of the plurality of first circumferential cut lines **9** and is spaced apart therefrom so as to define a pair of connecting nick or bridge portions between each full tooth **14** and the main panel **12**. The pair of connecting nick or bridge portions provide a hinged or foldable connection between each full tooth **14** and the main panel **12**.

[0071] The blank **10** may comprise a handle structure. The handle structure comprises one, two, three or more handle or finger openings spaced apart from each other.

[0072] The handle or finger openings are disposed on a longitudinal axis bisecting the engaging panel **12**.

[0073] A first opening Ha**1** is provided between a first group of four article retention structures RT**1**, RT**2**. The first group of four article retention structures RT**1**, RT**2** is pro-

vided adjacent a first end of the engaging panel **12**. The first opening Ha**1** is disposed between a first row of endmost article retention structures RT**1** and a second row of intermediate article retention structures RT**2**. The first opening Ha**1** is located at the centre of the first group of four article retention structures RT**1**, RT**2**.

[0074] A second opening Ha**2** is provided between a second group of four article retention structures RT**2**. The second group of four article retention structures RT**2** is provided medially of the engaging panel **12**. The second opening Ha**2** is disposed between the second row of intermediate article retention structures RT**2** and a third row of intermediate article retention structures RT**2**. The second opening Ha**2** is located at the centre C of the second group of four article retention structures RT**2**.

[0075] A third opening Ha**3** is provided between a third group of four article retention structures RT**1**, RT**2**. The third group of four article retention structures RT**1**, RT**2** is provided adjacent a second end of the engaging panel **12**. The third opening Ha**3** is disposed between the third row of intermediate article retention structures RT**2** and a fourth row of endmost article retention structures RT**1**. The third opening Ha**3** is located at the centre of the third group of four article retention structures RT**1**, RT**2**.

[0076] The first, second and third openings Ha**1**, Ha**2**, Ha**3** lie, at least in part, between a first column of article retention structures RT**1**, RT**2** and a second column of article retention structures RT**1**, RT**2**.

[0077] Each of the handle openings Ha**1**, Ha**2**, Ha**3** is defined by a plurality of tabs **16**, **18**, **20**, **22**. The first and second handle openings Ha**1**, Ha**2** are substantially similar in construction to each other. The third handle opening Ha**3** is substantially similar in construction to the first and second handle openings Ha**1**, Ha**2** albeit a mirror image thereof. The handle openings Ha**1**, Ha**2**, Ha**3** will be described in further detail by reference to the second handle opening Ha**2** shown in FIG. **1**A.

[0078] Each handle opening Ha**1**, Ha**2**, Ha**3** comprises four tabs **16**, **18**, **20**, **22**. Each tab **16**, **18**, **20**, **22** is hinged to the engaging panel **12** by a hinged connection in the form of a fold line **17**, **19**, **21**, **23**. An arcuate or curvilinear cut line **31**, **33**, **35**, **37** may be provided between each fold line **17**, **19**, **21**, **23** to define a corner or vertex of the handle openings Ha**1**, Ha**2**, Ha**3**. Each of the handle openings Ha**1**, Ha**2**, Ha**3** is substantially rhombus or diamond shaped, in other embodiments other shapes may be employed such as, but not limited to square. Each handle opening Ha**1**, Ha**2**, Ha**3** comprises a pair of major tabs **16**, **18** and a pair of minor tabs **20**, **22**.

[0079] A first major tab **16** is separated from a second major tab **18** by a first cut line or severable line **25**. A first minor tab **20** is separated from a second minor tab **22** by the first cut line or severable line **25**.

[0080] The first and second minor tabs **20**, **22** are separated from the first and second major tabs **16**, **18** by a second cut line or severable line **27**.

[0081] The first cut line **25** is colinear with a notional line passing though the centre C of the group of four intermediate article retention structures RT**2**.

[0082] The first cut line **25** may be linear in shape and may extend between a first pair of opposed vertices of the handle opening Ha**1**, Ha**2**, Ha**3**.

[0083] The second cut line **27** may be non-linear in shape and may extend between a second pair of opposed vertices of the handle opening Ha**1**, Ha**2**, Ha**3**. The second cut line **27** intersects the first cutline **25**, the second cut line **27** comprises an inverted "V" shaped medial portion; a vertex of the "V" shaped portion intersects the first cutline **25**.

[0084] The first major tab **16** is hinged to the engaging panel **12** by a first fold line **17**. The second major tab **18** is hinged to the engaging panel **12** by a second fold line **19**.

[0085] The first minor tab **20** is hinged to the engaging panel **12** by a third fold line **21**. The second minor tab **22** is hinged to the engaging panel **12** by a fourth fold line **23**.

[0086] The first fold line **17** is divergently arranged with respect to the second fold line **19**.

[0087] The first fold line **17** is divergently arranged with respect to the third fold line **21**.

[0088] The second fold line **19** is divergently arranged with respect to the fourth fold line **23**.

[0089] The third fold line **21** is divergently arranged with respect to the fourth fold line **23**.

[0090] Optionally, the blank **10** comprises a first recess or cutaway R**1** struck from a first side edge (see FIG. **1**). The first finger recess or cutaway R**1** lies upon a notional line extending laterally of the blank **10** and bisecting the blank **10**. In this way the first finger recess or cutaway R**1** lies between the second and third rows of article retention structures RT**1**.

[0091] Optionally, the blank **10** comprises a second finger recess or cutaway R**2** struck from a second side edge. The second side edge opposes the first side edge. The second finger recess or cutaway R**2** lies upon a notional line extending laterally of the blank **10** and bisecting the blank **10**. In this way the second finger recess or cutaway R**2** lies between the second and third rows of article retention structures RT**1**.

[0092] The second handle opening Ha**2** is collinear with the first and second finger recesses R**1**, R**2**.

[0093] The blank **10** forms a carrier **90**, the blank **10** is lowered with respect to a group of articles B. Each opening of the retention structures RT**1**, RT**2** receives one of the articles B forming the group. An end closure or upper end of the articles B passes through the openings. The tabs **14**, **30** fold out of the plane of the engaging panel **12**. The tabs **14**, **30** fold upwardly, the tabs **14**, **30** engage an article B below a flange or projection extending radially outward from the neck of the article B. The tabs **14**, **30** support the article B and inhibit movement or withdrawal of the article B from the opening, best shown in FIG. **2**.

[0094] The first recess R has the benefit of reducing deformation of a corner region **12**C of the main panel **12**. The connected T-cuts provided by the radial cut lines **31** and first circumferential cut lines **9** reduce stress in the corner region **12**C of the main panel **12**. The absence of connecting portions between the partial teeth **30** has been found to reduce the likelihood of tear propagation in the main panel **12**.

[0095] The connecting nicks between full teeth **14** may increase the security of the article B within the article receiving structure RT**1**, and may increase biasing of the tabs **14** against the article B so as to improve article retention.

[0096] Referring now to FIGS. **3**, **3**A, and **4**, there is shown an additional embodiment of the present disclosure. In the second illustrated embodiment like numerals have, where possible, been used to denote like parts, albeit with the addition of the prefix "100" to indicate that these features belong to the second embodiment. The additional embodi-

ment shares many common features with the first embodiment and therefore only the differences from the embodiment illustrated in FIGS. **1** and **2** will be described in detail.

[0097] FIG. **3** illustrates a second embodiment and shows a blank **110** for forming an article carrier **190** shown in FIG. **4**.

[0098] The blank **110** comprises an engaging panel **112**. The engaging panel **112** of the blank **110** includes at least one article retention structure RT**1**, RT**2**, each retention structure RT**1**, RT**2** provides an article receiving aperture AP**1**, AP**2** for receiving a respective article. The engaging panel **112** comprises a plurality of article retention structures RT**1**, RT**2**, specifically eight article retention structures RT**1**, RT**2** arranged in 2×4 matrix or array. Each of the article retention structures RT**1**, RT**2** comprises an opening or aperture AP**1**, AP**2** about which a plurality of teeth or tabs **114** may be disposed. Each of the teeth **114** is struck from the engaging panel **112** and is hingedly connected thereto. Each tooth **114** may be defined, in part, by a pair of cut lines **115**. The cut lines **115** extend radially outward from a centre of the article receiving aperture AP**1**, AP**2**. The teeth or tabs **114** are arranged in an annular series about the article receiving aperture AP**1**, AP**2** to form part of an article receiving opening.

[0099] The plurality of teeth **114** are provided by the engaging panel **112**. Each of the teeth **114** is hingedly connected to the engaging panel **112**, by a hinged connection. The hinged connection may be defined by a plurality of cut lines **109**, **111**. The plurality of cut lines **109**, **111** may be arranged as an annular series of cuts about the article receiving aperture AP**1**, AP**2**.

[0100] The plurality of cut lines **109**, **111** may define or approximate a portion of circle.

[0101] The blank **110** comprises four endmost article retention structures RT**1** each comprising a first article receiving aperture AP**1**. The blank **110** comprises four medial or intermediate article retention structures RT**2** each comprising a second article receiving aperture AP**2**.

[0102] The endmost article retention structures RT**1** comprise an article receiving opening defined in part by the first article receiving aperture AP**1** which is defined in, or struck from, the engaging panel **112**.

[0103] The endmost article retention structures RT**1** comprise a first plurality of teeth or tabs **114** disposed about the first article receiving aperture AP**1**, best shown in FIG. **3**A. Each of the first plurality of teeth **114** comprises an engaging edge opposing a hinged edge. The engaging edges are defined by a linear portion of a cut line defining the first article receiving aperture AP**1**. Each engaging edge may define a part of a polygon. The illustrated embodiment comprises sixteen teeth **114** together defining a hexadecagon. Each tooth **114** comprises a pair of side edges, the side edges are defined by cuts **115**, **131** extending radially outward from respective vertices of the hexadecagon forming the first article receiving aperture AP**1**, that is to say, from a respective vertex between a pair of adjacent linear portions of the cut defining the portion of a hexadecagon. The cuts **115**, **131** are divergently arranged with respect to each other and define an angle therebetween, the angle may be about 22.5°.

[0104] The endmost article retention structures RT**1** comprise a plurality of first circumferential cut lines **109**. Each of the plurality of first circumferential cut lines **109** is aligned with one of the radial cut lines **115**, **131**. The endmost article retention structures RT**1** comprise first radial cut lines **115** and second radial cut lines **131**. Each of the second radial cut lines **131** is connected to, or contiguous with, a corresponding one of the plurality of first circumferential cut lines **109**. Each of the second radial cut lines **131** bisects and intersects with a respective one of the plurality of first circumferential cut lines **109**. A notional extension of each of the first radial cut lines **115** bisects a respective one of the plurality of first circumferential cut lines **109**.

[0105] The endmost article retention structures RT**1** comprise five second radial cut lines **131** each defining at least in part one of four annularly disconnected teeth **114**A.

[0106] Each of the first radial cut lines **115** is spaced apart from a corresponding one of the plurality of first circumferential cut lines **109**. In this way a connecting nick or bridge portion is provided between a pair of adjacently disposed full teeth **114**. The first radial cut lines **115** and respective first circumferential cut lines **109** define disconnected T-shaped cuts.

[0107] The endmost article retention structures RT**1** comprise eleven first radial cut lines **115** each defining at least in part one of twelve annularly connected teeth **114**.

[0108] The second radial cut lines **131** and respective first circumferential cut lines **109** define connected T-shaped cuts.

[0109] Each of the plurality of first circumferential cut lines **109** may be linear or arcuate in shape.

[0110] The endmost article retention structures RT**1** comprise a plurality of second circumferential cut lines **111**. Each of the plurality of second circumferential cut lines **111** is disposed between a pair of the plurality of first circumferential cut lines **109** and is spaced apart therefrom so as to define a pair of connecting nick or bridge portions between each full tooth **114** and the engaging panel **112**. The pair of connecting nick or bridge portions provide a hinged or foldable connection between each full tooth **114** and the engaging panel **112**.

[0111] Each of the plurality of second circumferential cut lines **111** may be linear or arcuate in shape.

[0112] The first recess or cutaway R of the embodiment of FIG. **1** has been omitted, the first article receiving aperture AP**1** is surrounded by teeth **114**, **114**A.

[0113] The arrangement of teeth **114**, **114**A, the cut pattern of radial cut lines **115**, **131**, has been rotated about the centre of the first article receiving aperture AP**1** with respect to the arrangement of teeth **114**, the cut pattern of radial cut lines **115**, about the second article receiving aperture AP**2** of the intermediate article retention structures RT**2**, best illustrated in FIG. **3**A. The endmost article retention structures RT**1** are rotated through an angle β with respect to intermediate article retention structures RT**2**. The angle of rotation p may be about 11.25° or equivalent to half a tooth **114**.

[0114] One of the second radial cut lines **131** lies upon a notional line n-n passing through the centre C of the first article receiving aperture AP**1** and through a real, or notional, corner of the engaging panel **112**—the real or notional corner being defined by the intersection of a pair of notional lines collinear with a respective one of the end and side edges of the main panel **112**.

[0115] The endmost article retention structures RT**1** comprises a first second radial cut line **131** which lies upon a notional line y-y extending longitudinally of the blank **110**; said first second radial cut line **131** is oriented perpendicular

with respect to an end edge of the engaging panel **112** and is parallel to a longitudinal axis of the engaging panel **112**.

[0116] The endmost article retention structures RT**1** comprises a second second radial cut line **131** which lies upon a notional line x-x extending transversely of the blank **110**; said second second radial cut line **131** is oriented perpendicular with respect to a side edge of the engaging panel **112** and is perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the engaging panel **112**.

[0117] The endmost article retention structures RT**1** comprises a first radial cut line **115** which lies upon the notional line y-y extending longitudinally of the blank **110**; said first radial cut line **115** lies upon a notional radial line extending from the centre of the second article receiving aperture AP**2** of the adjacent intermediate article retention structures RT**2**. The notional radial line extends through the centre or middle of one of the teeth **114** surrounding the second article receiving aperture AP**2**.

[0118] The annularly disconnected teeth **114**A define a first or minor arc. The annularly connected teeth **114** extend about or occupy a second or major arc. The minor arc defines a sector which subtends a first angle θ. The first angle θ may be about 90° or equivalent to four teeth **114**A.

[0119] The intermediate article retention structures RT**2** comprise a second plurality of teeth or tabs **114** disposed about the second article receiving aperture AP**2**.

[0120] Each of the second plurality of teeth **114** comprises an engaging edge opposing a hinged edge. The engaging edges are defined by a linear portion of a cut line defining the second article receiving aperture AP**2**. Each engaging edge may define a part of a polygon. The illustrated embodiment comprises sixteen teeth **114** together defining a hexadecagon. Each tooth **114** comprises a pair of side edges, the side edges are defined by cuts **115** extending radially outward from respective vertices of the hexadecagon forming the second article receiving aperture AP**2**, that is to say, from a respective vertex between a pair of adjacent linear portions of the cut defining the portion of a hexadecagon. The cuts **115** are divergently arranged with respect to each other and define an angle therebetween, the angle may be about 22.5°.

[0121] The intermediate article retention structures RT**2** comprise a plurality of first circumferential cut lines **109**. Each of the plurality of first circumferential cut lines **109** is aligned with one of the radial cut lines **115** such that said one of the radial cut lines **115** or a notional extension thereof bisects a respective one of the plurality of first circumferential cut lines **109**.

[0122] Each of the radial cut lines **115** defining a tooth **114** is spaced apart from a corresponding one of the plurality of first circumferential cut lines **109**. In this way a connecting nick or bridge portion is provided between pairs of adjacently disposed full teeth **114**. The radial cut lines **115** and first circumferential cut lines **109** define disconnected T-shaped cuts.

[0123] The intermediate article retention structures RT**2** comprise a plurality of second circumferential cut lines **111**. Each of the plurality of second circumferential cut lines **111** is disposed between a pair of the plurality of first circumferential cut lines **109** and is spaced apart therefrom so as to define a pair of connecting nick or bridge portions between each full tooth **114** and the engaging panel **112**. The pair of connecting nick or bridge portions provide a hinged or foldable connection between each full tooth **114** and the engaging panel **112**.

[0124] The present disclosure provides a carrier **90**; **190**, and a blank **10**; **110** for forming the carrier **90**; **190**, having a main panel **12**; **112** with openings for receiving at least one article B. The main panel **12**; **112** may comprise a handle structure.

[0125] The present disclosure provides a blank **10**; **110** for forming an article carrier **90**; **190** of the top engaging type. The blank **10**; **110** or article carrier **90**; **190** comprises at least one panel **12**; **112** having at least one article engaging structure RT**1**, RT**2**. The at least one article engaging structure RT**1**, RT**2** comprises an article receiving aperture AP**1**, AP**2** and an annular series of tabs **14**, **30**; **114**, **114**A formed around the article receiving aperture AP**1**, AP**2**. The annular series of tabs **14**, **30**; **114**, **114**A is defined at least in part by plurality of radial cut lines **15**, **31**; **115**, **131**. The annular series of tabs **14**, **30**; **114**, **114**A is defined at least in part by plurality of circumferential cut lines **9**, **11**; **109**, **111**. At least a first one **31**, **131** of the radial cut lines extends to a corresponding circumferential cut line **9**, **109** and at least a second one **15**; **115** of the radial cut lines stops short of a respective circumferential cut line **9**, **109**.

[0126] Optionally, the at least one article receiving aperture AP**1** may be a corner aperture, and the at least first one of the radial cut lines **131** may be positioned across from the respective corner of the at least one panel **12**; **112** such that the at least first one of the radial cut lines **131** extends from the corner aperture toward the corner.

[0127] Optionally, the at least one article receiving aperture AP**1** may be a corner aperture, and at least two of the annular series of tabs **30** may be separated by a toothless or tabless area or recess R. The at least first one **31** of the radial cut lines may define part of at least one of the at least two of the annular series of tabs **30**. The tabless area or recess R may be positioned across from the respective corner of the at least one panel **12**; **112**.

[0128] The at least two of the annular series of tabs **30** each may have a width dimension which is less than a width dimension of at least another one of the annular series of tabs **14**.

[0129] The at least first one of the radial cut lines **31** may define part of each of at least two of the annular series of tabs **30**, at least one of the at least two of the annular series of tabs **30** may have a width dimension which is less than a width dimension of at least another one of the annular series of tabs **14**.

[0130] The present disclosure provides a blank **10**; **110** for forming an article carrier **90**; **190** of the top engaging type. The blank **10**; **110** or article carrier **90**; **190** comprises at least one panel **12**; **112** having at least one article engaging structure RT**1**, RT**2**. The at least one article engaging structure RT**1**, RT**2** comprises an article receiving aperture AP**1**, AP**2** and an annular series of tabs **14**, **30**; **114**, **114**A formed around the article receiving aperture AP**1**, AP**2**. The annular series of tabs **14**, **30**; **114**, **114**A comprises a plurality of annularly connected tabs **14**; **114** and a plurality of annularly disconnected tabs **30**; **114**A.

[0131] Optionally, the annularly disconnected tabs **30** may be partial or half tabs **30**, that is to say each annularly disconnected tab **30** occupies a smaller portion of the circumference of the at least one article engaging structure RT**1** than a portion of the circumference of the at least one article engaging structure RT**1** occupied by one of the annularly connected tabs **14**; **114**.

[0132] Optionally, an engaging edge of a first one of the partial or half tabs **30** is colinear with an engaging edge of a second adjacent one of the partial or half tabs **30**.

[0133] Optionally, the partial or half tabs **30** are arranged in pairs, each partial or half tab **30** of a pair comprising an engaging edge arranged collinearly with an engaging edge of the other one of the pair. The partial tabs **30** may be dimensioned such that an integer number of partial tabs **30** is equivalent to an integer number of annularly connected tabs **14**; **114**.

[0134] Optionally, the annular series of tabs **14**, **30**; **114**, **114**A is interrupted by a cutaway or recess R. The cutaway or recess R occupies a portion of the circumference of the at least one article engaging structure RT**1** disposed in closest proximity to a point of intersection or vertex between a first notional line collinear with an end edge of the at least one panel **12**; **112** and a second notional line collinear with a side edge of the at least one panel **12**; **112**. The point of intersection being a real or notional corner of the at least one panel **12**; **112**. The cutaway may be a T-shaped cut line.

[0135] The cutaway or recess R may interrupt the annularly disconnected tabs **30**.

[0136] The annularly disconnected tabs **30** may define a sector or quadrant of the at least one article engaging structure RT**1** disposed adjacent, or proximate, to the real or notional corner of the at least one panel **12**; **112**.

[0137] The present disclosure provides a blank **10** for forming an article carrier **90** of the top engaging type, the blank **110** or article carrier **190** comprises at least one panel **112** having at least two article engaging structures RT**1**, RT**2**. A first one of the at least two article engaging structure RT**1**, RT**2** comprises a first article receiving aperture AP**1** and a first annular series of tabs **114**, **114**A formed around the first article receiving aperture AP**1**. A second one of the at least two article engaging structure RT**2** comprises a second article receiving aperture AP**2** and a second annular series of tabs **114** formed around the second article receiving aperture AP**2**.

[0138] The first annular series of tabs **114**, **114**A is defined at least in part by first plurality of radial cut lines **115**, **131** defining a first cut pattern. The second annular series of tabs **114** is defined at least in part by a second plurality of radial cut lines **115** defining a second cut pattern. The first cut pattern is rotated about its centre through a first angle with respect to the second cut pattern. The first annular series of tabs **114**, **114**A may be defined at least in part by plurality of circumferential cut lines **9**, **11**; **109**, **111**. The first plurality of radial cut lines **115**, **131** may comprise at least one radial cut line extending to a corresponding circumferential cut line **9**, **109** to be contiguous therewith and at least another one of the first plurality of radial cut lines **115**, **131** stops short of, or is spaced apart from, a respective circumferential cut line **9**, **109**.

[0139] It will be recognized that as used herein, directional references such as "top", "bottom", "base", "front", "back", "end", "side", "inner", "outer", "upper" and "lower" do not necessarily limit the respective panels to such orientation, but may merely serve to distinguish these panels from one another.

[0140] As used herein, the terms "hinged connection" and "fold line" refer to all manner of lines that define hinge features of the blank, facilitate folding portions of the blank with respect to one another, or otherwise indicate optimal panel folding locations for the blank. Any reference to "hinged connection" should not be construed as necessarily referring to a single fold line only; indeed, a hinged connection can be formed from two or more fold lines wherein each of the two or more fold lines may be either straight/linear or curved/curvilinear in shape. When linear fold lines form a hinged connection, they may be disposed parallel with each other or be slightly angled with respect to each other. When curvilinear fold lines form a hinged connection, they may intersect each other to define a shaped panel within the area surrounded by the curvilinear fold lines. A typical example of such a hinged connection may comprise a pair of arched or arcuate fold lines intersecting at two points such that they define an elliptical panel therebetween. A hinged connection may be formed from one or more linear fold lines and one or more curvilinear fold lines. A typical example of such a hinged connection may comprise a combination of a linear fold line and an arched or arcuate fold line which intersect at two points such that they define a half moon-shaped panel therebetween.

[0141] As used herein, the term "fold line" may refer to one of the following: a scored line, an embossed line, a debossed line, a line of perforations, a line of short slits, a line of half-cuts, a single half-cut, an interrupted cutline, a line of aligned slits, a line of scores and any combination of the aforesaid options.

[0142] It should be understood that hinged connections and fold lines can each include elements that are formed in the substrate of the blank including perforations, a line of perforations, a line of short slits, a line of half-cuts, a single half-cut, a cutline, an interrupted cutline, slits, scores, embossed lines, debossed lines, any combination thereof, and the like. The elements can be dimensioned and arranged to provide the desired functionality. For example, a line of perforations can be dimensioned or designed with degrees of weakness to define a fold line and/or a severance line. The line of perforations can be designed to facilitate folding and resist breaking, to facilitate folding and facilitate breaking with more effort, or to facilitate breaking with little effort.

[0143] The phrase "in registry with" as used herein refers to the alignment of two or more elements in an erected carton, such as an aperture formed in a first of two overlapping panels and a second aperture formed in a second of two overlapping panels. Those elements in registry with each other may be aligned with each other in the direction of the thickness of the overlapping panels. For example, when an aperture in a first panel is "in registry with" a second aperture in a second panel that is placed in an overlapping arrangement with the first panel, an edge of the aperture may extend along at least a portion of an edge of the second aperture and may be aligned, in the direction of the thickness of the first and second panels, with the second aperture.

1. An article carrier for packaging at least one article, the article carrier comprising at least one panel having at least one article engaging structure, the at least one article engaging structure comprising an article receiving aperture and an annular series of tabs formed around the article receiving aperture, the annular series of tabs being defined at least in part by plurality of radial cut lines, the annular series of tabs being defined at least in part by plurality of circumferential cut lines, wherein at least a first one of the radial cut lines extends to a corresponding circumferential cut line and at least a second one of the radial cut lines stops short of a respective circumferential cut line.

2. An article carrier according to claim 1 wherein the at least one article receiving aperture is a corner aperture, and the at least first one of the radial cut lines is positioned across from the respective corner of the at least one panel such that the at least first one of the radial cut lines extends from the corner aperture toward the corner.

3. An article carrier according to claim 1 wherein the at least one article receiving aperture is a corner aperture, and at least two of the annular series of tabs are separated by a tabless area, the at least first one of the radial cut lines defines part of at least one of the at least two of the annular series of tabs.

4. An article carrier according to claim 3 wherein the tabless area is positioned across from the respective corner of the at least one panel.

5. An article carrier according to claim 3 wherein the at least two of the annular series of tabs each have a width dimension which is less than a width dimension of at least another one of the annular series of tabs.

6. An article carrier according to claim 3 wherein the at least first one of the radial cut lines defines part of each of at least two of the annular series of tabs, at least one of the at least two of the annular series of tabs has a width dimension which is less than a width dimension of at least another one of the annular series of tabs.

7. An article carrier according to claim 1, wherein the annular series of tabs comprising a plurality of annularly connected tabs and a plurality of annularly disconnected tabs, the plurality of annularly connected tabs comprise at least a pair of adjacently disposed tabs which are connected by a bridging portion.

8. An article carrier according to claim 7 wherein the annularly disconnected tabs are partial tabs, wherein each annularly disconnected tab occupies a smaller portion of the circumference of the at least one article engaging structure than a portion of the circumference of the at least one article engaging structure occupied by one of the annularly connected tabs.

9. An article carrier according to claim 8 wherein an engaging edge of a first one of the partial tabs is collinear with an engaging edge of a second adjacent one of the partial tabs.

10. An article carrier according to claim 8 wherein the partial tabs are arranged in pairs, each partial tab of a pair comprises an engaging edge arranged collinearly with an engaging edge of the other one of the pair.

11. An article carrier according to claim 8 wherein the partial tabs are dimensioned such that an integer number of partial tabs is equivalent to an integer number of annularly connected tabs.

12. An article carrier according to claim 7 wherein the annular series of tabs is interrupted by a cutaway, the cutaway occupies a portion of the circumference of the at least one article engaging structure disposed in closest proximity to a point of intersection between a first notional line collinear with an end edge of the at least one panel and a second notional line collinear with a side edge of the at least one panel.

13. (canceled)

14. (canceled)

15. (canceled)

16. (canceled)

17. (canceled)

18. (canceled)

19. (canceled)

20. A blank for forming an article carrier, the blank comprising at least one panel having at least one article engaging structure, the at least one article engaging structure comprising an article receiving aperture and an annular series of tabs formed around the article receiving aperture, the annular series of tabs being defined at least in part by plurality of radial cut lines, the annular series of tabs being defined at least in part by plurality of circumferential cut lines, wherein at least a first one of the radial cut lines extends to a corresponding circumferential cut line and at least a second one of the radial cut lines stops short of a respective circumferential cut line.

21. A blank for forming an article carrier, the blank comprising at least one panel having at least one article engaging structure, the at least one article engaging structure comprising an article receiving aperture and an annular series of tabs formed around the article receiving aperture, the annular series of tabs comprising a plurality of annularly connected tabs and a plurality of annularly disconnected tabs, the plurality of annularly connected tabs comprise at least a pair of adjacently disposed tabs which are connected by a bridging portion.

22. (canceled)

23. An article carrier according to claim 1, wherein the at least a second one of the radial cut lines is spaced apart from a respective circumferential cut line.

24. A blank according to claim 20, wherein the at least a second one of the radial cut lines is spaced apart from the respective circumferential cut line.

25. A blank according to claim 20, wherein the at least first one of the radial cut lines is disposed at a position diametrically opposed substantially to the at least second one of the radial cut lines.

26. A blank according to claim 20 wherein the at least one article receiving aperture is a corner aperture, and the at least first one of the radial cut lines is positioned closer to the respective corner of the at least one panel than the at least second one of the radial cut lines.

27. A blank according to claim 20, wherein the at least first one of the radial cut lines comprises a pair of adjacently disposed first radial cut lines which define in part a first tooth, the at least second one of the radial cut lines comprises a pair of adjacently disposed second radial cut lines which define in part a second tooth, and wherein the first tooth is disposed at a position diametrically opposed substantially to the second tooth.

28. A blank according to claim 20 wherein the at least one article receiving aperture is a corner aperture, the at least first one of the radial cut lines comprises a pair of adjacently disposed first radial cut lines which define in part a first tooth, the at least second one of the radial cut lines comprises a pair of adjacently disposed second radial cut lines which define in part a second tooth, and wherein the first tooth is positioned closer to the respective corner of the at least one panel than the second tooth.

29. A blank according to claim 21, wherein the bridging portion comprises a nick defined between at least two cut lines.

30. A blank according to claim 29, wherein the plurality of annularly connected tabs being defined at least in part by

plurality of radial cut lines, the plurality of annularly connected tabs being defined at least in part by plurality of circumferential cut lines, and wherein the at least two cut lines comprise at least one of the radial cut lines and at least one of the circumferential cut lines.

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