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(54) PERFUME TEST PACKAGING

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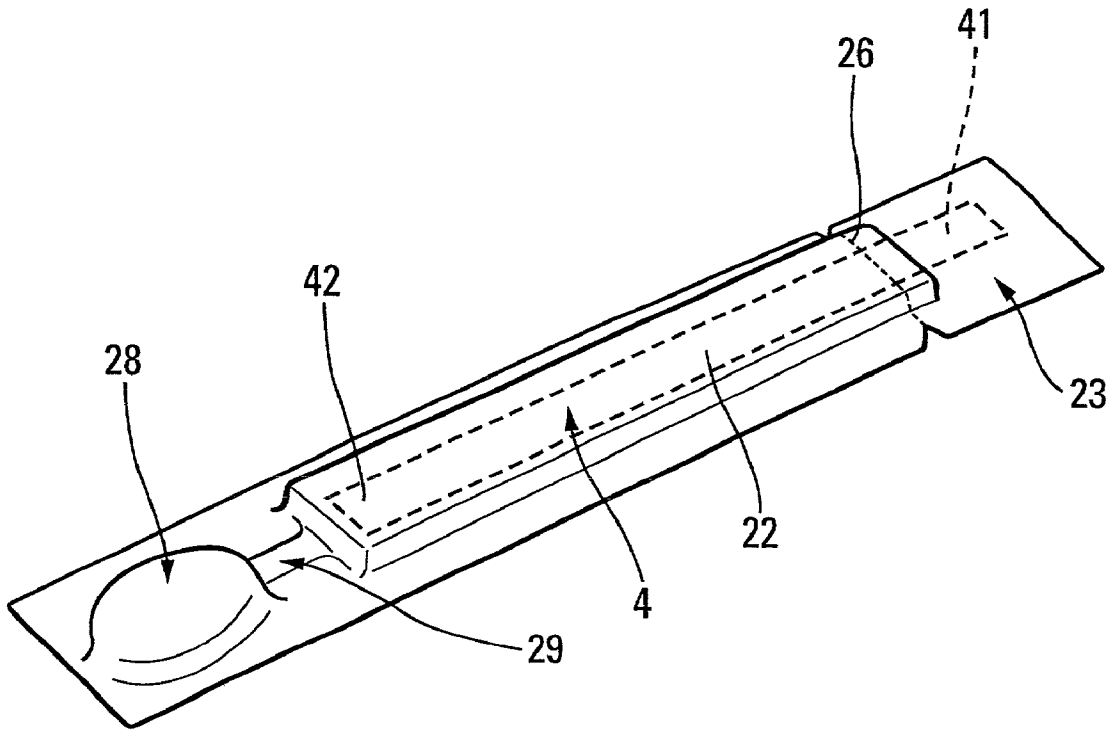
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A perfume test packaging characterized in that it comprises:

a sheath **(25)** having an opening portion **(23)**, said sheath **(25)** being sealed prior to use; and

a backing element **(4)** suitable for receiving a fluid, said element **(4)** being disposed in the sheath **(25)** so that it can be extracted therefrom after the opening portion of the sheath has been opened.



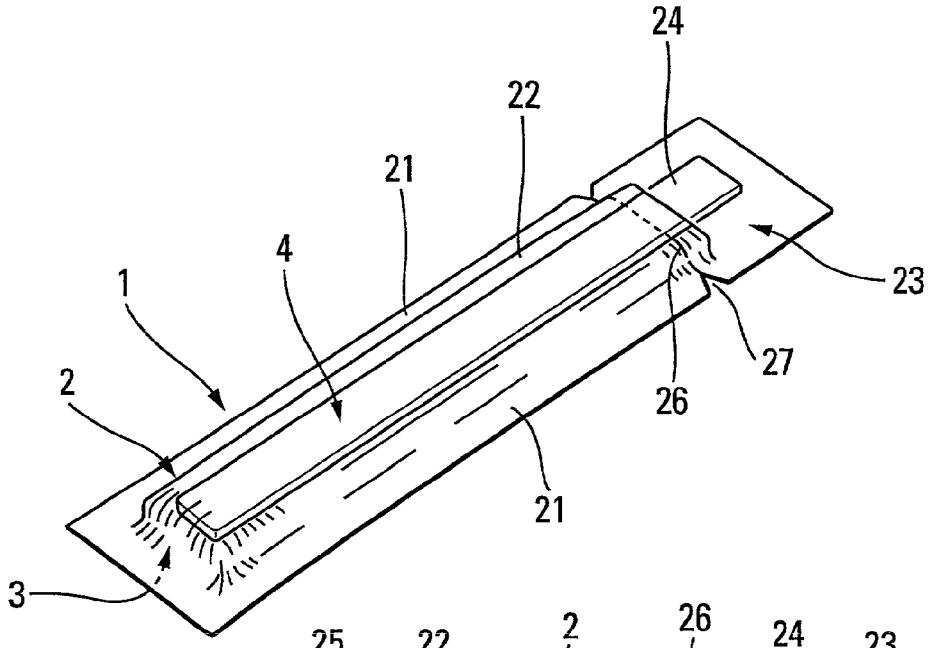


Fig. 1

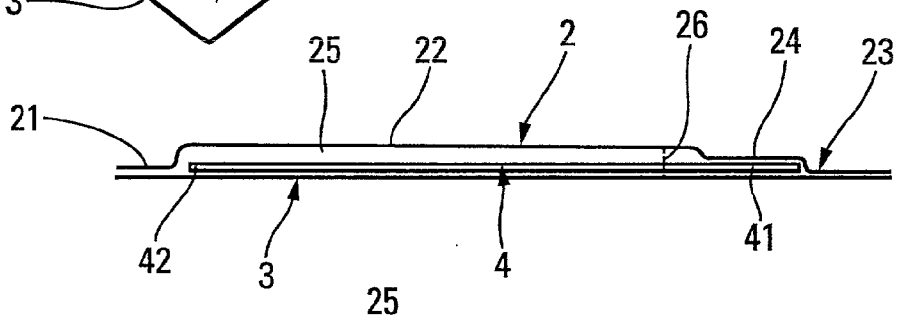


Fig. 2

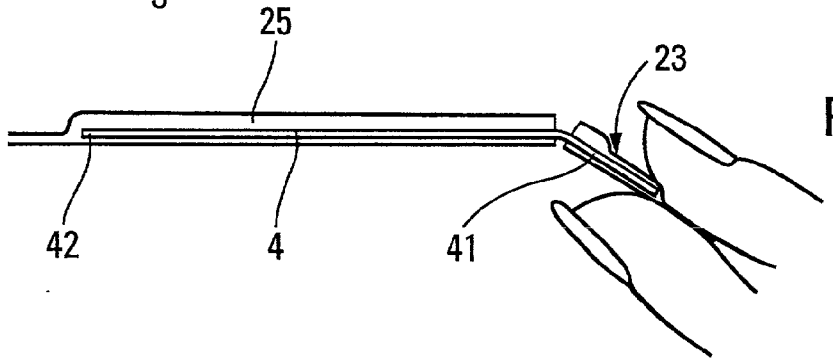


Fig. 3

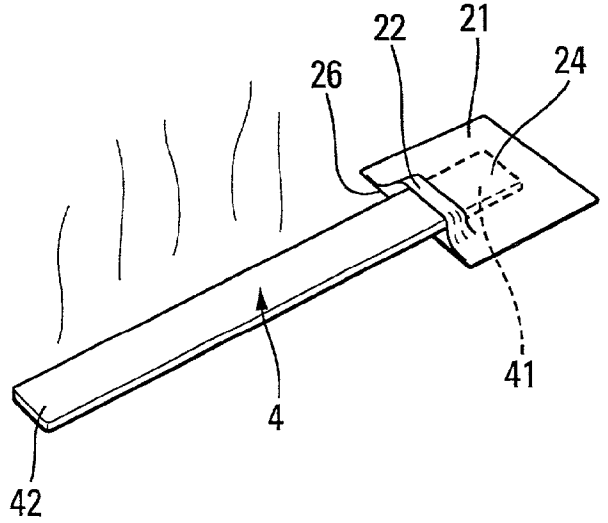


Fig. 4

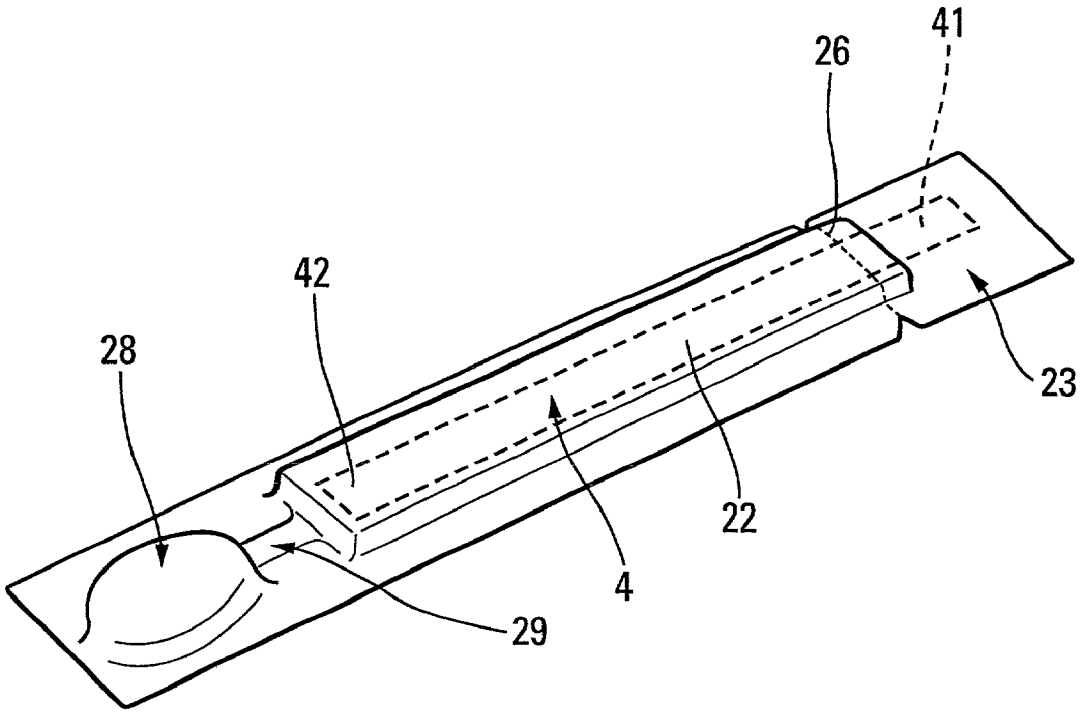


Fig. 5

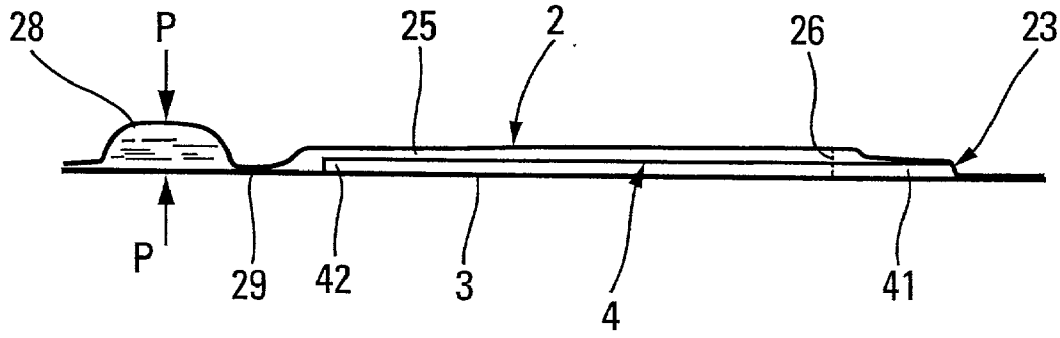


Fig. 6

PERFUME TEST PACKAGING

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application claims the benefit under 35 U.S.C. §119(e) of pending U.S. provisional patent application Serial No. 60/291,005, filed May 16, 2001, and priority under 35 U.S.C. §119(a)-(d) of French patent application No. FR-01.03886, filed Mar. 22, 2001.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] The present invention relates to fluid packaging which is applicable to the fields of perfumes, of cosmetics, or indeed of pharmaceuticals. However, other fields of application are not excluded.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] In the field of perfumes, and more precisely of perfume samples, it is known that strips of paper or of card can be used on which a desired perfume is sprayed for the purpose of smelling it. That avoids having to spray the perfume directly on the skin, and it is then possible to test several perfumes on several strips of paper.

[0004] For the purpose of spraying the perfume on the strip of paper, a sales outlet can allow its customers to use a spray of the kind that is normally sold. However, such sprays are frequently stolen by dishonest customers.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] An object of the present invention is to improve on the perfume test strip principle. To achieve this, the packaging should have very low cost, since it is offered free of charge and is for single use only. However, the present invention may also be used in other applications that are very different from applications to perfume test samples.

[0006] To solve this problem, the present invention proposes a perfume test packaging characterized in that it comprises:

[0007] a sheath having an opening portion, said sheath being sealed prior to use; and

[0008] a backing element suitable for receiving a fluid, said element being disposed in the sheath so that it can be extracted therefrom after the opening portion of the sheath has been opened.

[0009] Prior to being used, the backing element, which is comparable to the prior art test strip, is protected in its leakproof sheath. When the user opens the sheath to take hold of the backing element, said element may already be coated or imbibed with the fluid. However, the backing element is not necessarily permanently in contact with the fluid prior to use. That is why the backing element may either be suitable for receiving the fluid, or else be already coated or imbibed with the fluid in the sheath.

[0010] In an embodiment, the backing element is made of an absorbant material suitable for becoming imbibed with fluid. However, it is possible to consider using a backing element which is made of a non-porous plastic and on which a fluid is applied, the fluid being, for example, a cream or an ointment to be applied to the skin. In the field of perfume test samples, it is preferable for the backing element to be made of a strip of absorbent material suitable for being imbibed with perfume.

[0011] According to an advantageous characteristic of the invention, the backing element is fixed to the opening portion. Advantageously, the opening portion serves as a handle for holding the backing element. It is thus not necessary to take hold directly of the backing element imbibed with fluid, with the risk that the fluid might soak into the fingers and distort subsequent tests. The opening portion, which is an integral part of the closed sheath, serves both to open the sheath, and to take hold of the backing element.

[0012] In an embodiment, the sheath is formed by a shaped-section shell and by a sealing film, the shell and the film being locally bonded together, and the opening portion being formed by a bonded-together zone of the shell and of the film, which zone is separated from the remainder of the sheath by a line of least resistance. The shaped-section shell, which is advantageously thermoformed, makes it possible to define an internal volume in which the backing element can extend freely without being subjected to any stress.

[0013] In a variant, the sheath is made up of two sheets that are locally bonded together, the opening portion being formed by a bonded-together zone that is separated from the remainder of the sheath by a line of least resistance. By using two sheets, packaging is obtained that is particularly flat and whose total thickness is equal to the thickness of the backing element plus the thickness of the two sheets.

[0014] According to another characteristic of the invention, the packaging further comprises a fluid reservoir connected to the sheath via a passageway that is initially sealed off, but that is suitable for being opened by means of a sufficient pressure being applied on the reservoir so that the fluid in the reservoir is driven from the reservoir through the passageway into the sheath which contains the backing element on which it fixes itself. In which case, the backing element is not in contact with the fluid prior to use, i.e. prior to pressing on the fluid reservoir. Advantageously, the sheath, the fluid reservoir and the passageway are formed by a shaped-section shell and by a sealing film that are locally bonded together. Naturally, in the absence of such an initially-separate fluid reservoir, the backing element is initially imbibed or coated with the fluid.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0015] The invention is described more fully with reference to the accompanying drawings showing two embodiments of the invention by way of non-limiting example.

[0016] In the figures:

[0017] **FIG. 1** is a perspective view of a first embodiment of packaging of the invention;

[0018] **FIG. 2** is a vertical longitudinal section view through the packaging of **FIG. 1**;

[0019] **FIG. 3** is a view similar to the **FIG. 2** view of the packaging while the sheath is being opened;

[0020] **FIG. 4** is a perspective view of the backing element with its opening portion attached;

[0021] **FIG. 5** is a perspective view of a second embodiment of packaging of the invention; and

[0022] **FIG. 6** is a longitudinal vertical section view through the packaging of **FIG. 5**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0023] In the first embodiment shown in FIGS. **1** to **4**, the packaging is a perfume test sample designated by the numerical reference **1**. It comprises a sheath inside which a backing element **4** extends. The sheath includes an opening portion **23** that makes it possible to access the inside of the sheath in which the backing element **4** is situated.

[0024] The sheath may be made integrally with its opening portion **23**. However, in the embodiment shown in the drawings, the sheath is made up of two sheets **2** and **3** bonded together around their peripheries to form a bonded peripheral margin **21** which surrounds the sheath where it defines its working volume that contains the backing element **4**. The opening portion **23** may be constituted by a bonded-together zone defined or separated from the remainder of the sheath by a line of least resistance **26** along which the opening portion **23** can be torn off, detached, or folded back. To facilitate detaching the opening portion **23** from the remainder of the sheath along the line of least resistance **26**, break starters **27** in the form of notches may advantageously be provided, between which the line of least resistance **26** extends.

[0025] Advantageously, one end **41** of the backing element **4** may be fixed to the opening portion **23**, e.g. by being fixed between the two sheets **2** and **3**. Thus, the backing element **4** can be extracted from the sheath by using the opening portion **23** as a handle member for pulling on the backing element **4**. This can be seen in **FIGS. 3 and 4**.

[0026] As mentioned above, the sheath may be made up of two sheets **2** and **3**. These sheets may be of the same type, e.g. a laminated composite film of metal and of plastic. In which case, the reservoir **25** formed by the sheath is relatively flat, and the two faces of the sheath are identical. In this embodiment, the backing element **4** can be subjected to stresses through the sheets of the sheath. The two sheets may even be connected together along one of their sides to form a single sheet folded over on itself.

[0027] In the embodiment shown in FIGS. **1** to **4**, one of the sheets, namely sheet **2**, may be made in the form of a shaped-section shell, advantageously by thermoforming, so as to form a flat peripheral margin **21** and a dome **22** that makes it possible to define the volume of the sheath **25**. To complete the sheath **25**, the sheet **23** may be implemented in the form of a sealing film which is bonded to the shell **2** at its flat peripheral margin **21**. A relatively rigid sheath is thus obtained in which the backing element **4** extends freely without it being possible for it to be subjected to stress from the outside. Thus, as shown in the figures, the dome **22** extends to the level of the opening portion **23** and the line of least resistance **26** extends across the dome **22** at its end facing the opening portion **23**. Similarly, the shaped-section shell **2** forms a portion slightly in relief **24** where the end **41** of the backing element **4** is held between the shell **2** and the sheet **3**.

[0028] **FIG. 4** shows the backing element **4** more clearly, with its free end **42** and its secured end **41** fixed to the opening portion **23**.

[0029] The backing element **4** is shown in the figures in the form of an elongate strip. However, it is possible to consider other shapes for the backing element, e.g. shorter or rounder. The present invention is not limited to the particular embodiment of the backing element **4**. When the packaging is used as a perfume test sample, the backing element **4** is preferably made of an absorbant material suitable for becoming imbibed with fluid. Thus, the support element **4** inside the sealed sheath, as shown in **FIGS. 1 and 2**, is already impregnated with a small quantity of fluid. After the sheath has been opened, and after the backing element **4** has been removed, it is very easy to smell the fragrance given off by the backing element **4** by holding it by the opening portion **23**. In another embodiment, the backing element **4** may be made of a non-absorbant material on which a fluid, such as cream, an ointment, or a gel is applied. The backing element **4** may thus be flexible, relatively flexible, relatively rigid, or rigid.

[0030] To secure the end **41** of the backing element **4** to the opening portion **23**, it is possible to use the heat-sealing performed between the two sheets, but naturally it is also possible to use other techniques, such as gluing, for example.

[0031] The embodiment shown in **FIGS. 5 and 6** differs from the embodiment shown in FIGS. **1** to **4** in that the packaging comprises a fluid reservoir suitable for being connected to the sheath **25** via a passageway **29** which is initially sealed off, and which can be opened by applying sufficient pressure on the reservoir **28**. Therefore, in the initial state prior to being used, the backing element **4** contained in the sheath **25** is not in contact with the fluid, which is stored in the reservoir **28**. To use the packaging, the user starts by applying pressure to the reservoir **28** to open up the passageway **29** and thus to drive the fluid out of the reservoir **28** into the sheath **25** which contains the backing element **4**. The reservoir **28** and the passageway **29** may be made in the same manner as the sheath **25**, i.e. they may be defined by two sheets bonded together, or more advantageously, they may be formed between a shaped-section sheet and a sealing film. As can be seen in **FIGS. 5 and 6**, the reservoir **28** may be formed in alignment with the sheath at the end opposite from the opening portion **23**. To define the reservoir **28**, the shaped-section shell forms a small second dome completed by the sealing film **3**. The passageway **29** may then be formed by a zone in which the shell and the film are very weakly bonded together, through which zone the fluid under pressure can force its way between the shell and the film to the sheath **25**.

[0032] The packaging of the invention constitutes an advantageous improvement to perfume test strips in that the packaging can be opened anywhere, and not only in the perfume sales outlet, and in that it is not necessary to make relatively expensive sprays available to customers. It can also be noted that the backing element and the fluid are isolated from the outside prior to being used.

What is claimed is:

1/ A perfume test packaging to be smelled characterized in that it comprises:

a sheath **(25)** having an opening portion **(23)**, said sheath **(25)** being sealed prior to use; and

a backing element (**4**) suitable for receiving a fluid, said element (**4**) being disposed in the sheath (**25**) so that it can be extracted therefrom after the opening portion (**23**) of the sheath has been opened.

2/ A perfume test packaging according to claim 1, in which the backing element (**4**) is made of an absorbant material suitable for becoming imbibed with fluid.

3/ A perfume test packaging according to claim 1, in which the backing element (**4**) is fixed to the opening portion (**23**).

4/ A perfume test packaging according to claim 1, in which the opening portion (**23**) serves as a handle for holding the backing element (**4**).

5/ A perfume test packaging according to claim 1, in which the sheath (**25**) is formed by a shaped-section shell (**2**) and by a sealing film (**3**), the shell and the film being locally bonded together, and the opening portion (**23**) being formed by a bonded-together zone of the shell and of the film, which zone is separated from the remainder of the sheath by a line of least resistance (**26**).

6/ A perfume test packaging according to claim 1, in which the sheath (**25**) is made up of two sheets (**2**, **3**) that are locally bonded together, the opening portion (**23**) being formed by a bonded-together zone that is separated from the remainder of the sheath by a line of least resistance (**26**).

7/ A perfume test packaging according to claim 1, further comprising a fluid reservoir (**28**) connected to the sheath (**25**) via a passageway (**29**) that is initially sealed off, but that is suitable for being opened by means of a sufficient pressure (P) being applied on the reservoir (**28**) so that the fluid in the reservoir is driven from the reservoir through the passageway (**29**) into the sheath (**25**) which contains the backing element (**4**) on which it fixes itself.

8/ A perfume test packaging according to claim 7, in which the sheath (**25**), the fluid reservoir (**28**) and the passageway (**29**) are formed by a shaped-section shell (**2**) and by a sealing film (**3**) that are locally bonded together;

9/ A perfume test packaging characterized in that it comprises:

a sheath (**25**) having an opening portion (**23**), said sheath (**25**) being sealed prior to use; and

a backing element (**4**) to which a fluid is applied, said element (**4**) being disposed in the sheath (**25**) so that it can be extracted therefrom after the opening portion of the sheath has been opened.

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