



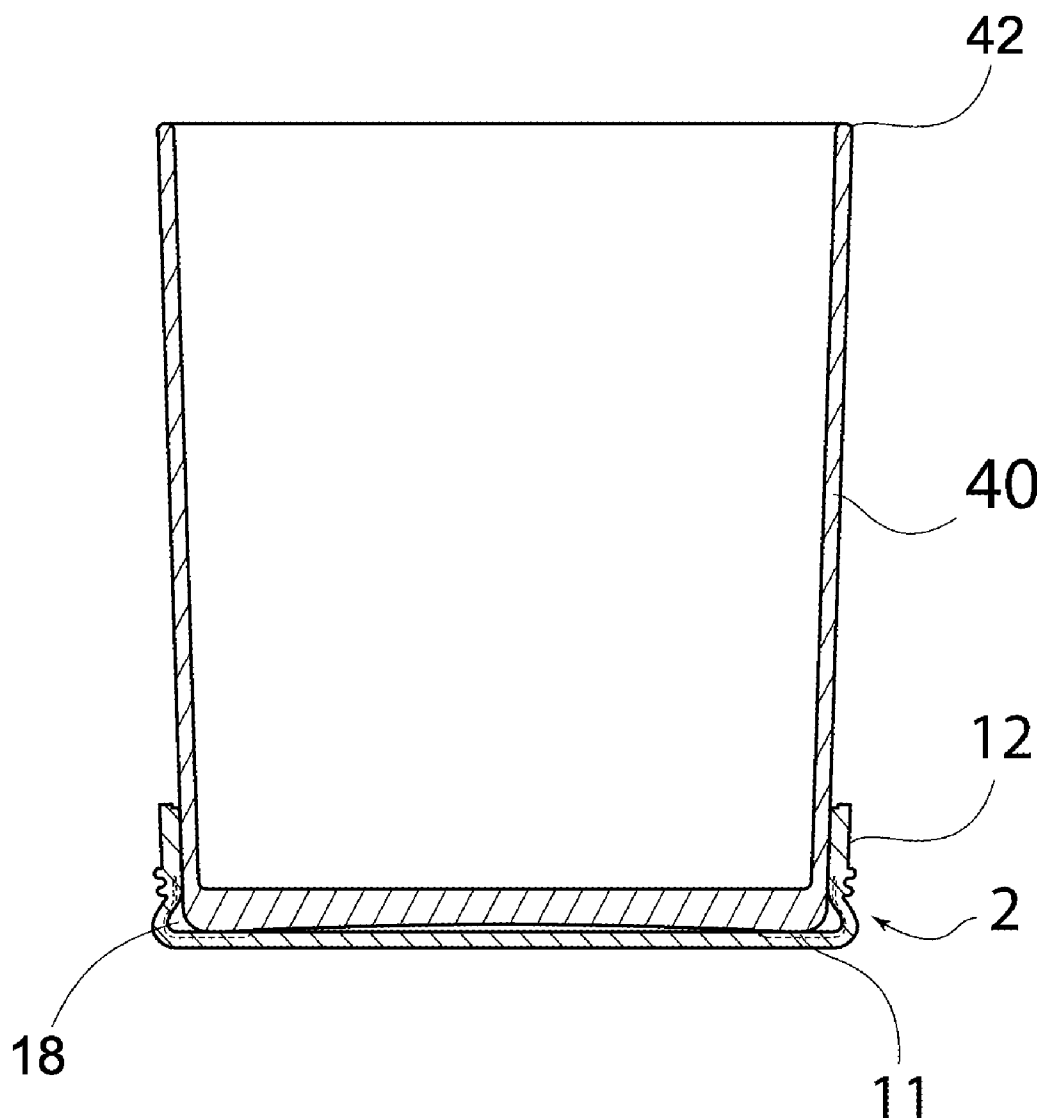
US 20110297639A1

(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication**
SORREN-NORNESS et al.(10) **Pub. No.: US 2011/0297639 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Dec. 8, 2011**(54) **COASTER****Publication Classification**(76) Inventors: **Rose SORREN-NORNESS,**
Nelson (NZ); **Kenneth M.**
NORNESS, JR., Nelson (NZ)(51) **Int. Cl.**
A47G 23/03 (2006.01)
(52) **U.S. Cl.** **215/393**(21) Appl. No.: **13/153,273**(22) Filed: **Jun. 3, 2011**(57) **ABSTRACT**

A support, such as a coaster, for a beverage container, having a resilient lip for use in attaching the support to the beverage container. The lip can have ribs for maintaining separation between the lip and the beverage container for catching condensate within the support. Recessed channels can also be provided on an inside surface of the support for directing condensate flow to a bottom portion of the support. Methods of supporting beverage containers and collecting condensate are also provided.

Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Provisional application No. 61/351,265, filed on Jun. 3, 2010.



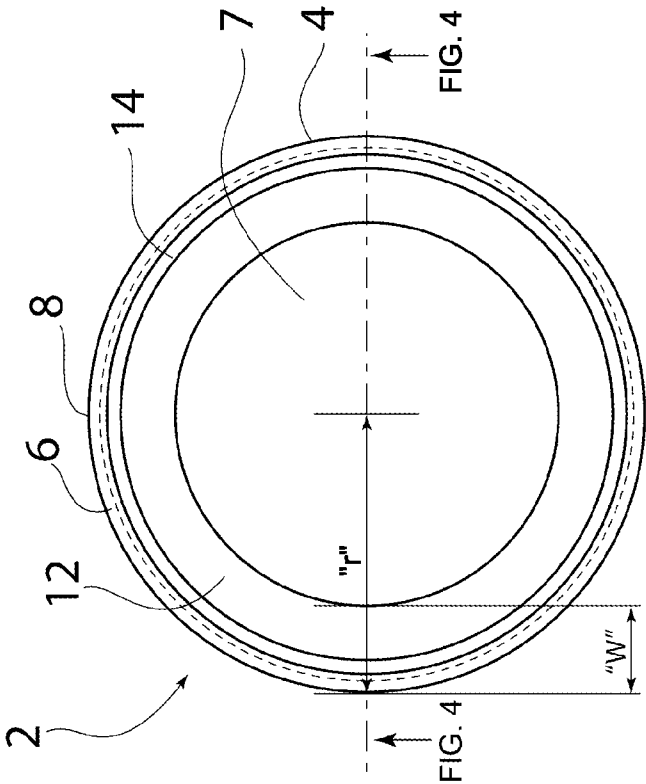


FIG. 1

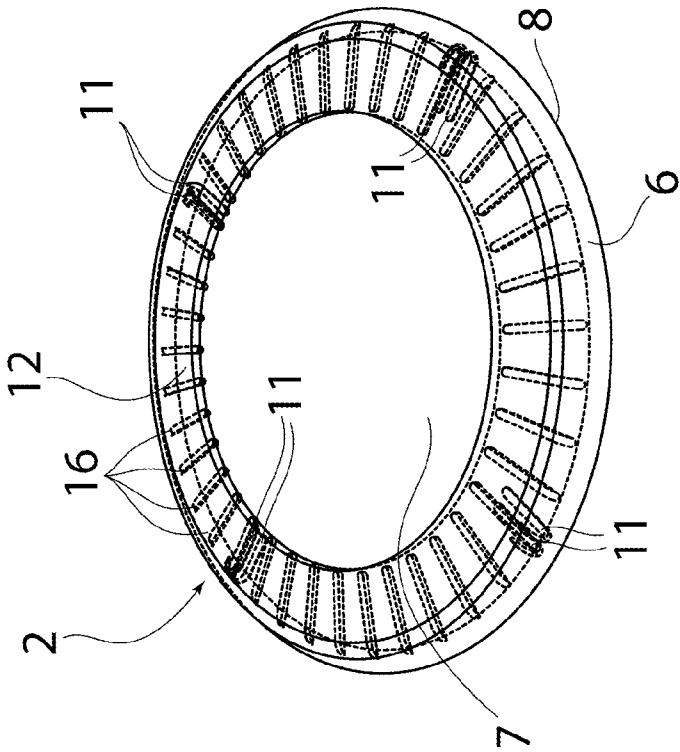
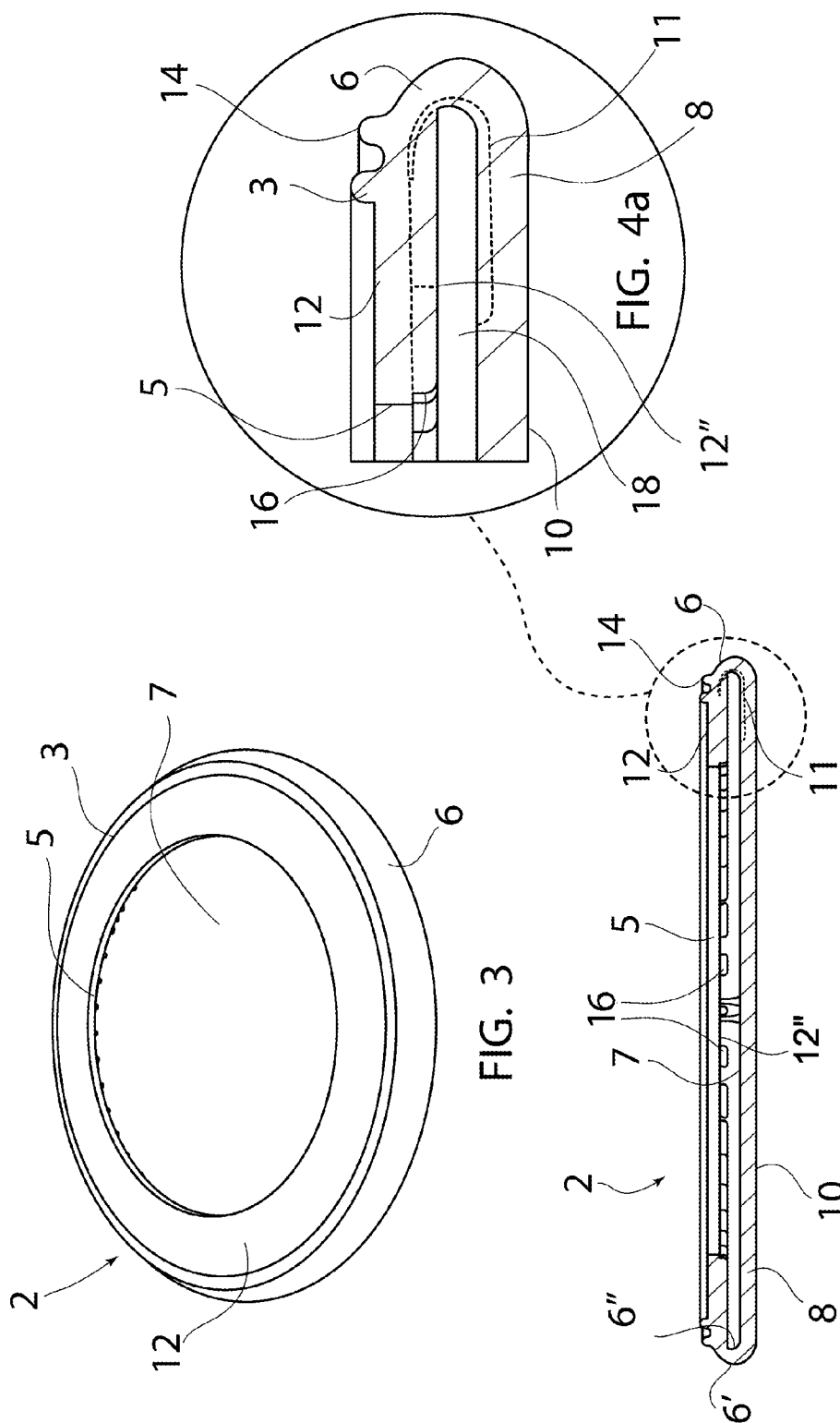


FIG. 2



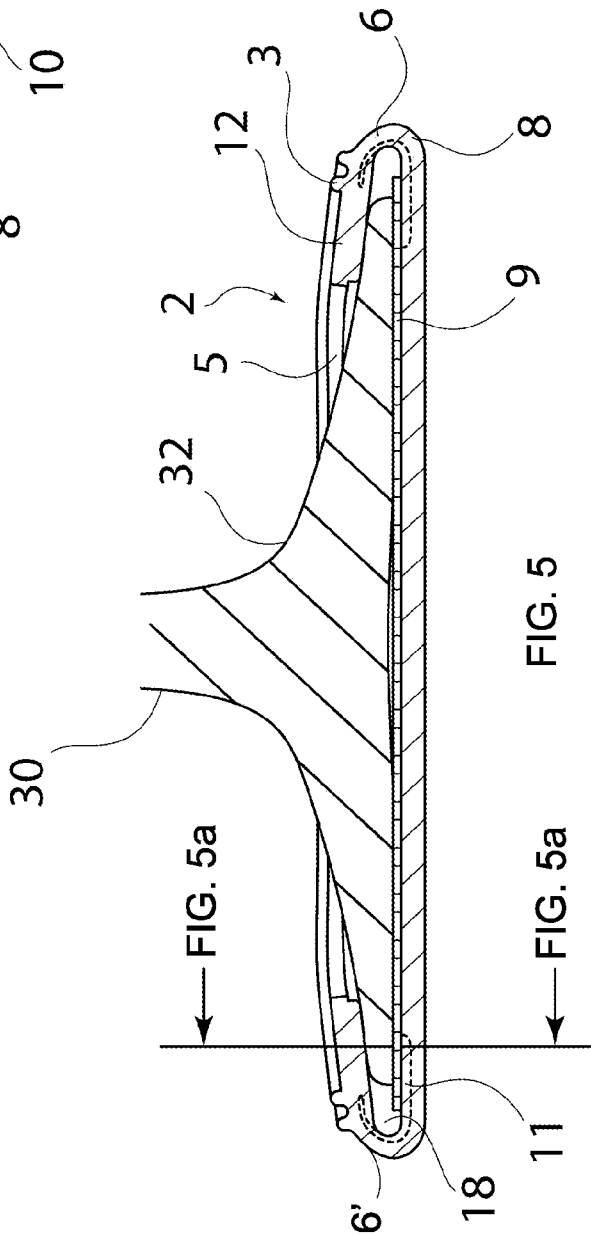
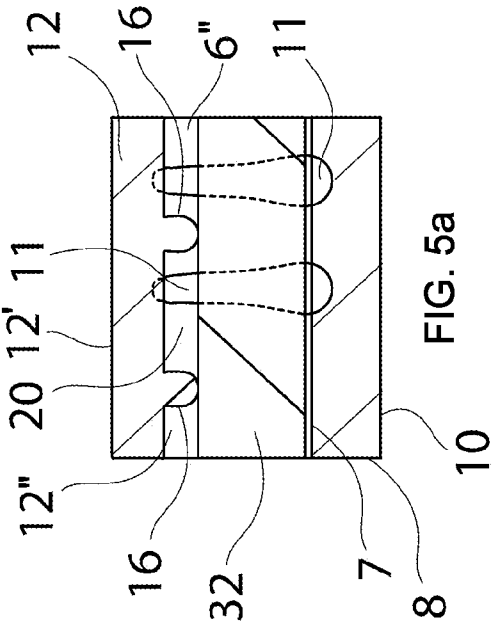


FIG. 5

FIG. 5a

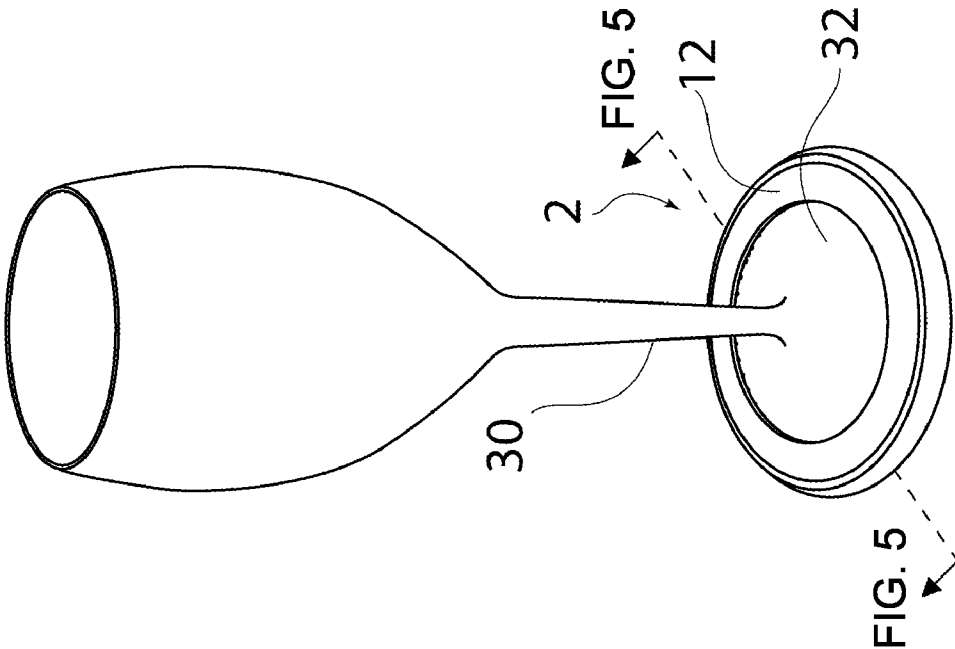


FIG. 7

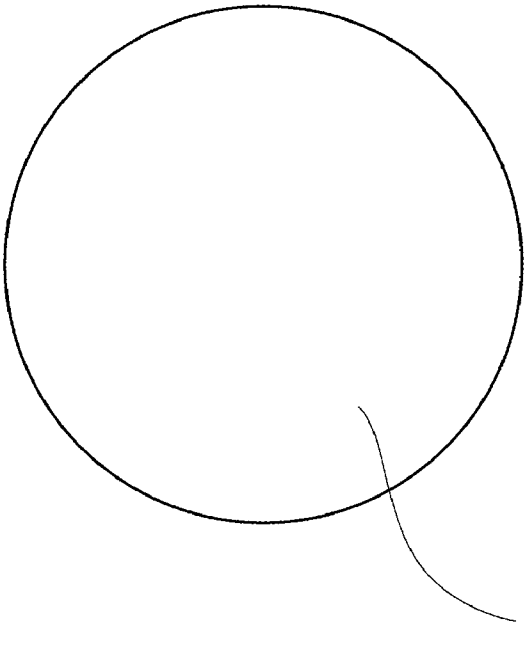


FIG. 6

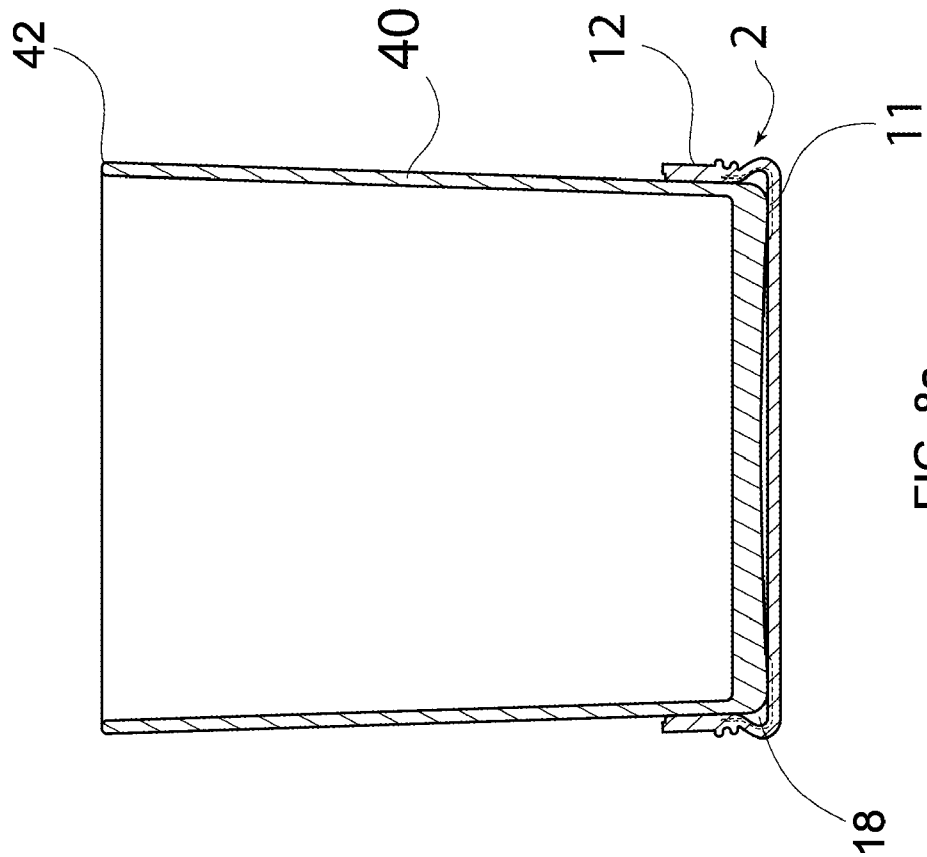


FIG. 8a

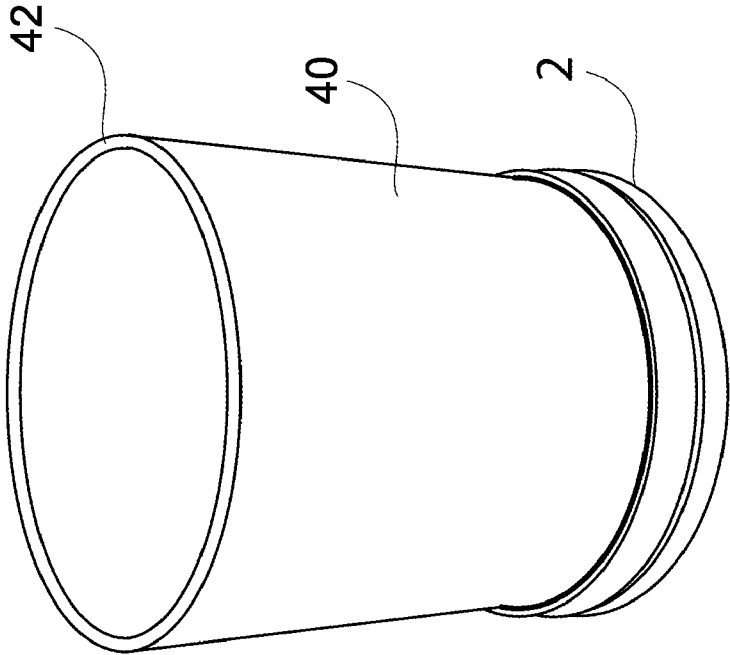


FIG. 8

COASTER

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION(S)

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. provisional patent application Ser. No. 61/351,265, filed Jun. 3, 2010, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

BACKGROUND

[0002] 1. Field of the Disclosure

[0003] The present disclosure relates generally to a beverage container support structure, and in particular, to a coaster that is attachable to the base of a glass, cup or other beverage container.

[0004] 2. Description of Related Art

[0005] U.S. Pat. No. 6,877,705 discloses a stemware coaster that is generally circular, made of a material that can absorb and/or prevent transmission of moisture. The coaster has shaped slots or cuts on a top surface so that the base of stemware can be inserted through a top portion of the coaster and into a hollow cavity. The coaster is generally limited to use with stemware because the disk-shaped based of stemware allows it to be inserted through the slots or cuts to attach it to the coaster.

[0006] U.S. Pat. No. 5,353,926 discloses a coaster that is attachable to a mug. However, the coaster and mug form an assembly, with the coaster being configured for use with a particular mug. The coaster has a resilient and flexible annular side wall and an annular lip extending radially inwardly from the side wall. The mug is snugly fitted inside the coaster with the annular lip of the coaster resiliently gripping a bend of the mug to hold the coaster securely to the mug. The coaster may be removed from the mug by lifting the resilient annular lip of the coaster and peeling it from the mug.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] In some embodiments, a support of for a beverage container, such as a coaster, is provided having a base portion, circumferential sidewall, and circumferential lip. The support or the circumferential lip thereof, can be made of resilient material having elastic properties, capable of providing a biasing force against a beverage container (e.g., glass, stemware, tumbler, shot glass, etc) for gripping the beverage container and attaching the coaster to the beverage container. The support can be attached to a variety of beverage container shapes due to its configuration, flexibility and resiliency

[0008] In some embodiments of the present disclosure, the circumferential lip is formed with a plurality of spaced apart ribs on an inside wall surface thereof. The ribs can maintain separation between the inside wall surface and a beverage container. This can help provide ease of removal of the support from the beverage container and provide gaps between the inside wall surface of the circumferential lip and beverage container to allow condensate to collect within the support,

[0009] In some embodiments, channels are formed on an inside surface of the support, to allow condensate to flow through the channels and collect at a top surface of the base portion of the support beneath the beverage container.

[0010] In some embodiments of the present disclosure, methods of supporting beverage containers and collecting condensate are also provided.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] FIG. 1 illustrates a top plan view for an example embodiment of the coaster of the present disclosure.

[0012] FIG. 2 shows a perspective view of the coaster illustrated in FIG. 1, with ribs and channels beneath the circumferential lip of the coaster being reflected in dot-line.

[0013] FIG. 3 shows the perspective view of coaster FIG. 2.

[0014] FIG. 4 is a cross-sectional view of the coaster of FIG. 1, as viewed from line FIG. 4-FIG. 4 in FIG. 1.

[0015] FIG. 4a is an enlarged partial cross-sectional view of the coaster as shown in FIG. 4, showing a close up view of the circumferential lip.

[0016] FIG. 5 is a cross sectional view of an embodiment of the coaster of the present disclosure, as viewed from line FIG. 5-FIG. 5 of FIG. 7, with the base of a stem for a glass being held within the coaster.

[0017] FIG. 5a is a partial cross sectional view as viewed from line FIG. 5A-FIG. 5A of FIG. 5, showing a plurality of ribs of the circumferential lip of the coaster and the gap maintained by the ribs between an inside wall of the circumferential lip and a base of a stem glass.

[0018] FIG. 6 is a plan view of an embodiment of a graphic circular insert for use with the coaster of FIG. 1.

[0019] FIG. 7 is a perspective view of a wine glass having a stem, with the stem base attached to the coaster of FIG. 1.

[0020] FIG. 8 shows a perspective view of an example glass coupled to the coaster of FIG. 1.

[0021] FIG. 8a shows a cross sectional view the glass and coaster of FIG. 8.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0022] In the following description, certain specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of various embodiments of the disclosure. However, upon reviewing this disclosure one skilled in the art will understand that the various embodiments disclosed herein may be practiced without many of these details and that other types and sizes of beverage containers (including, for example, without limitations, glasses, stem glasses, tumblers, cups, etc.), other than those specifically illustrated, may be usable with various embodiments of the coaster of the present disclosure. In other instances, some well-known structures and materials associated with coasters and beverage containers have not been described in detail to avoid unnecessarily obscuring the descriptions of the embodiments of the disclosure.

[0023] FIGS. 1-3 show an embodiment of the coaster 2 of the present disclosure. The coaster 2 can be generally circular in shape having an outer perimeter 4 defined by a base portion 8.

[0024] As shown in FIG. 4, a bottom surface 10 of the base portion 8 can be generally flat for resting on a flat surface, such as a table (not illustrated). A circumferential side wall 6 with an outer surface 6', and an inner surface 6'', can rise from the base portion 8 near the outer perimeter 4 of the coaster 2. In some embodiments of the present disclosure, the thickness of the circumferential sidewall 6 is thicker near a bottom portion thereof, and thinner near an upper portion thereof, with the thickness of the upper portion being approximately similar to an average thickness of the base portion 8.

[0025] As can be seen in FIGS. 3, 4 and 4a, in some embodiments of the present disclosure, a circumferential lip 12 extends radially and laterally inward from a top portion 14 of the circumferential sidewall 6. That is, for example, an outer perimeter of the circumferential lip 12 can be attached to, or integrally formed with a top portion 14 of the circumferential sidewall 6, and the circumferential lip 12 can extend radially inward from the top portion 14 to form an overhanging wall that circles about the full circumference of the coaster.

[0026] Referring to FIG. 1, the circumferential lip 12 can have a radial width "w" that is approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ (one third) to $\frac{1}{2}$ (one half) the radius "r" of the coaster 2. The radius of the coaster 2 can be measured from the center of the coaster 2 to an outer perimeter of a top surface 7 of the base portion 8, the top surface 7 being the top of the base portion 8 that is exposed within the coaster 2. The width "w" of the circumferential lip 12 can be measured along a radial line of the coaster 2 starting above the outer perimeter of the top surface 7 and extending inward until the inner edge of the circumferential lip 12. In other embodiments of the present disclosure, the width "w" of the circumferential lip 12 can be larger or smaller in relation to the radius "r" of the coaster. In some embodiments, the width "w" of the circumferential lip is measured from the outer perimeter 4 of the coaster 2 to an inward edge of the circumferential lip 12, as can be seen in FIG. 1.

[0027] In some embodiments of the coaster 2, such as that shown in FIG. 3, the circumferential lip 12 can be angled downward, with an outer lip portion 3 being higher than at least some surface areas of the inner lip portion 5 of the circumferential lip 12. In addition, in some embodiments of the present disclosure, the outer lip portion 3 can comprise a greater wall thickness than an inner lip portion 5, as best seen in FIG. 4a. In further embodiments, the circumferential lip extends horizontally inward and is not angled downward. In other embodiments, the circumferential lip can be angled upward.

[0028] As can be seen in FIGS. 2, 4 and 4a, the circumferential lip 12 can bear spaced apart ribs 16, which can be formed on an inside wall 12" of the circumferential lip 12. The ribs 16 can protrude downward (relative to FIGS. 2, 4 and 4a) away from the inside wall 12". In some embodiments, the vertical thickness of the ribs 16, such as illustrated in FIG. 4a, can be similar to the thickness of the inner lip portion 5 of the circumferential lip 12.

[0029] In some embodiments of the present disclosure, the circumferential lip 12 is made of a resilient flexible material (e.g., an elastomer, such as, for example, without limitation Silicone, EVA, or PVC), and has a spring characteristic sufficient to exert a biasing force against an object, such as a glassware, when displaced from its resting, or equilibrium position (the resting position being shown in FIGS. 3, 4, and 4a for some embodiments). For example, as shown in FIGS. 5 & 7, a circular base 32 of a stem glass 30 can be inserted into the coaster 2, by manually fitting the outer portions of the circular base 32 snugly beneath the circumferential lip 12 within the cavity 18 defined by the circumferential lip 12, circumferential sidewall 6 and base portion 8 of the coaster (See, e.g., FIG. 5). The circular base 32 of the stem glass 30 displaces the circumferential lip 12 from its resting position, which is generally horizontal, or angled downward in some embodiments, to a displaced position wherein the circumferential lip 12 is inclined upward with the inner lip portion 5 of the circumferential lip 12 raised in relation to the outer lip

portion 3, as shown in FIG. 5. The biasing force of the circumferential lip 12 exerts force on the base 32 of the stem glass 30 in a downward direction to grip the base 32 to hold the coaster 2 to the base 32, while being easily removable by user that can overcome the biasing force of the circumferential lip 12 and pull the base 32 from the coaster 2.

[0030] Due, in part, to the flexibility the circumferential lip and/or its width, the cavity 18 can be sufficient for accommodating stem glasses having different base shapes and/or diameters or heights. In addition, larger or smaller coasters 2 can be provided to accommodate additional glassware. However, the flexibility of each coaster 2 will be apparent to those skilled in the art after reviewing this disclosure. For example, the same coaster 2 as shown in FIG. 7 can accommodate other shapes of glasses in addition to stemware glasses, such as, for example, without limitation, the tumbler 42 shown in FIGS. 8 & 8a. The circumferential lip 12 can be bent upward to assume a greater inclined configuration in order to accommodate the upwardly extending outer walls 40, 42 of the tumbler and cocktail glass. Nonetheless, the coaster 2 can attach to the tumbler 42 due the biasing force of the circumferential lip 12 that exerts force inward against the walls 40, 42 and grips the walls due to friction between the circumferential lip 12 (or rib 16 portions thereof, as described further below) and the surface of the walls 40, 42.

[0031] As will be appreciated by those skilled in the art after reviewing this disclosure, for each type of glassware illustrated above, and other types of glassware or beverage containers, when the circumferential lip 12 abuts against a surface of the glassware, such as the circular base 32 of stemware or the walls 40 of glasses, the ribs 16 of the circumferential lip 12 can provide the contact surfaces that abut against the surface of the glass or other container. Thus, the inside wall 12" of the circumferential lip 12 can be spaced apart from the surface of the glassware, leaving gaps 20 between the surface of the glassware and the circumferential lip 12, as can be seen in FIG. 5a. This can allow condensate to flow through the gaps 20 and into the cavity 18 of the coaster 2, so that the condensate does not flow over an outside surface 12' of circumferential lip 12.

[0032] Referring to FIGS. 2, 4a, and 5a, some embodiments of the coaster 2 in the present disclosure include recessed channels 11, formed on an inside surface of the coaster 2. In some embodiments, a pair of recessed channels 11 are positioned closely together, but separated by ribs 16 formed on the inside surface 12" of the lip 12, at about each of the following relative positions on the coaster 2 (which define midpoints between each pair of channels 11): zero (0) degrees, ninety (90) degrees, one hundred and eighty (180) degrees, two hundred and seventy (270) degrees. In some embodiments, at least one of the spaced apart ribs 16 is located at each of the relative positions, with a channel 11 disposed immediately on either side thereof. In other embodiments, a channel 11 is located at each of the relative positions, and in some embodiments, a single channel 11 is located at each of the relative positions (as opposed to a pair of channels 11). In other embodiments, the channels 11 are disposed at different relative positions, and more or less channels 11 can be provided than the number of channels expressly shown herein.

[0033] Referring to FIGS. 4a and 5a, a top portion of the channels 11 can recess upward into the circumferential lip 12, on the inside surface 12" thereof, and continue downward along the circumferential side wall 6, and then extend inward

along the base portion 8 of the coaster 2. The channels 11 can be exposed to liquid from condensate that runs from the glasses or beverage containers, downward along the walls 42 or stem bases 32, to a location between the ribs 16. See, e.g., FIG. 5a. The lower portion of the channels 11 on the base portion 8 can extend inward beneath a bottom surface of a glass 40, circular base 32, or other beverage container surface. Condensate can be drawn from any exposed portion of the channels downward along the sidewall 6 portion of the channels 11, to the lower portion of the channels 11 on the base portion 8, until the liquid accumulates beneath the glass 40, circular base 32, or other beverage container. In some embodiments, the maximum width of the channels 11 can be greater at the base portion 8 than at the top portion of the side walls 6. The maximum width of the channels 11 on the circumferential lip 12 can be the narrowest portion of the channels 11. In some embodiments, the maximum width of the channels 11 at the top of the sidewall 6 is similar to the width of the ribs 16.

[0034] Referring to FIG. 6, in some embodiments of coaster for the present disclosure, a circular flat insert panel 9 is provided, which can be securely but removably disposed on the top surface 7 of the base portion 8 within the coaster 2. When the insert panel 9 is placed over the top surface 7, the outer edge portions of the insert panel 9 are disposed within the cavity 18 of the coaster 2. The insert panel 9 can be constructed of, for example, without limitation, Polymer, PVC, PP, PET, or a metal, and can be resilient and flexible. In addition, a surface of the insert panel 9 can be printable for providing graphic displays, such as promotional material like logos, advertisements, etc., as will be appreciated by those skilled in the art after reviewing this disclosure. The insert panels 9 can be printed when separated from the coaster 2 and then inserted in the coaster 2 thereafter. The insert panels 9 can also be interchangeably removed and replaced.

[0035] In some embodiments of the present disclosure, multiple insert panels 9 can have different indicia marked thereon, or can be printed with different colors, so as to be distinguishable. Thus, users of the coasters 2 can identify their glasses by a unique color or graphic associated with an insert panel 9 disposed within the user's coaster 2. The coaster 2 is attachable to the glass, or other beverage container as described above, so can be used to identify the user's glass or other beverage container based on the color or indicia of the insert panel 9.

[0036] Although specific embodiments of the coaster of the present disclosure, and specific embodiments of methods for supporting a beverage container, and examples thereof, have been described supra for illustrative purposes, various equivalent modifications can be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the disclosure, as will be recognized by those skilled in the relevant art after reviewing the present disclosure. The various embodiments described can be combined to provide further embodiments. The described structures and methods can omit some elements or acts, can add other elements or acts, or can combine the elements or execute the acts in a different order than that illustrated, to achieve various advantages of the disclosure. These and other changes can be made to the disclosure in light of the above detailed description.

[0037] In general, in the following claims, the terms used should not be construed to limit the disclosure to the specific embodiments disclosed in the specification. Accordingly, the

claimed invention is not limited by the disclosure, but instead its scope is determined entirely by the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A coaster comprising:
 - a base portion;
 - a circumferential sidewall; and
 - a resilient circumferential lip extending inwardly from a top portion of the circumferential sidewall, the circumferential lip having a width that extends radially inward at least a distance of one third of the radius of the coaster, when the circumferential lip is in a resting position.
2. The coaster of claim 1 further comprising a plurality of circumferentially spaced apart ribs positioned on an inside surface of the circumferential lip.
3. The coaster of claim 2 wherein a vertical thickness of ribs is equal to a thickness of an inner lip portion of the circumferential lip.
4. The coaster of claim 1 further comprising a plurality of recessed channels formed on a surface of the coaster.
5. The coaster of claim 4 wherein the recessed channels extend from a surface of the circumferential lip to the base portion of the coaster.
6. The coaster of claim 4, further comprising a plurality of circumferentially spaced apart ribs positioned on an inside surface of the circumferential lip.
7. The coaster of claim 6 wherein the recessed channels are disposed between the spaced apart ribs.
8. A method of supporting a beverage container comprising:
 - providing a circular coaster having a base portion, a circumferential sidewall, and a circumferential lip extending inwardly from a top portion of the circumferential sidewall, the circumferential lip having a plurality of spaced apart ribs formed on an inside wall of the circumferential lip;
 - placing a wall portion of a beverage container beneath a surface of the circumferential lip and displacing the circumferential lip;
 - gripping the wall portion of the beverage container with the spaced apart ribs using a biasing force of the circumferential lip;
 - allowing condensate to flow from the wall portion through a plurality of gaps between the spaced apart ribs.
9. The method of claim 8 wherein a radial width of the circumferential lip is at least one third the radius of the coaster.
10. The method of claim 8 further comprising collecting the condensate in at least one channel formed on the coaster.
11. The method of claim 10 wherein the channel directs the condensate to a base portion of the coaster.
12. The method of claim 10 wherein the channel extends from the circumferential sidewall to the base portion.
13. The method of claim 12 wherein the channel extends from the circumferential lip to the circumferential sidewall.
14. The method of claim 10 wherein the channel is disposed between spaced apart ribs.
15. A support for a beverage container comprising:
 - a base portion;
 - a circumferential sidewall;
 - a resilient circumferential lip extending inwardly from a top portion of the support; and
 - a plurality of spaced apart ribs from on an inner surface of the circumferential lip.

16. The support of claim **15** further comprising a plurality of channels that are recessed into a surface of the support.

17. The support of claim **16** wherein the channels extend from the circumferential lip, to the circumferential sidewall, to the base portion.

18. The support of claim **16** wherein the channels are disposed between spaced apart ribs formed on the circumferential lip.

19. The support of claim **16** wherein the channels are positioned in pairs with a midpoint between each pair being

disposed at each of the following relative positions on the support: zero degrees, ninety degrees, one hundred and eighty degrees, and two hundred and seventy degrees.

20. The support of claim **15**, further comprising an insert panel which can be removably inserted beneath the circumferential lip to rest against a top surface of the base portion, the insert panel having indicia marked thereon.

* * * * *