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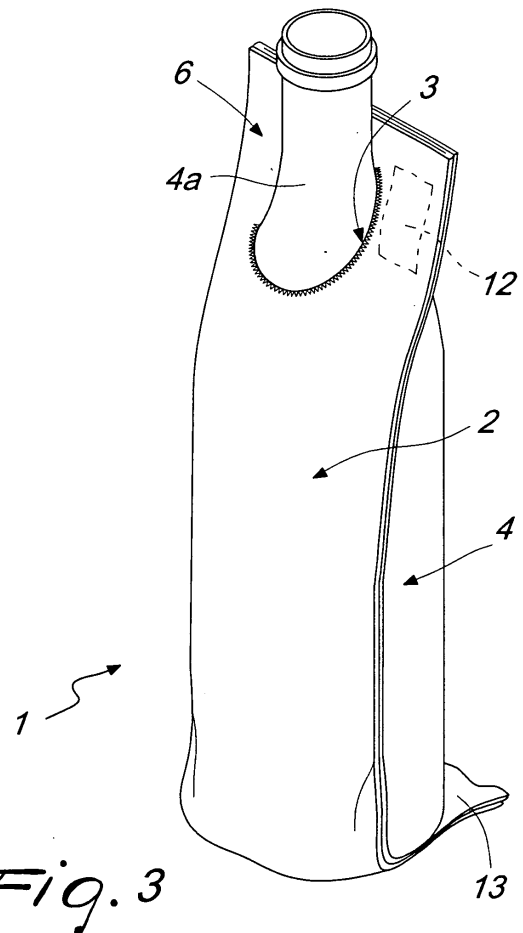
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(54) **Napkin particularly for wine-waiters**

(57) A napkin (1) particularly but not exclusively for wine-waiters, comprising a sheet-like element (2) provided with at least one annular region (3) which can be arranged around at least one portion (4a) of the body of a bottle (4).



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Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a napkin particularly for wine-waiters and more generally for serving wine at the table, typically known in Italian as "frangino".

[0002] When wine-waiters open a bottle of wine and when they serve the wine at the table, they currently use a particular napkin as a "frangino".

[0003] In particular, such napkin is used to carry and present the bottle to the table of the customer, to clean its neck after removing the capsule, and to clean its mouth of any residues of cork after removing the cork.

[0004] Moreover, before storing the bottle, the napkin is used to collect any drops that might flow along the bottle and thus dirty the body of the bottle, the label and/or the table.

[0005] In general, the napkin used for this purpose has a light color (typically a white base), so as to allow the person who serves the wine, typically the wine-waiter, to also use it as a background to assess the color of the wine.

[0006] The napkin is then stored next to the bottle, to be picked up whenever it is necessary to pour the wine from the bottle into the glasses of the customers.

[0007] As mentioned earlier, napkins made of fabric, generally cotton, linen or otherwise natural fibers, are currently used usually as "frangino"; though being widely used, they are not devoid of drawbacks.

[0008] First of all, a certain inconvenience in use is observed which is determined by the fact that both during the presentation of the bottle and in the subsequent steps it is rather difficult to be able to position rapidly and elegantly the napkin around the bottle body.

[0009] In some cases, the corners, usually the corners arranged along a diagonal, are tied together so as to provide a tubular body which is intended to surround the body of the bottle. It is in fact important to be able to associate uniquely the napkin with the bottle so as to prevent it from being taken inadvertently by a waiter if needed.

[0010] However, this operation not only has to be performed by using both hands but it creases the napkin excessively, consequently obtaining a presentation which is not always elegant and swift.

[0011] Another particularly annoying drawback that is currently observed relates to the tendency of the napkins that are used to become dirty very quickly, since they are generally light-colored.

[0012] It is convenient to note, in this regard, that wine stains are so-called "difficult" stains; this determines the need to use high washing water temperatures (up to 90 °C) and very often aggressive and particularly fragrant detergents in order to cover the odors of food, lipstick, et cetera.

[0013] This of course determines not only rapid deterioration of the fibers that constitute the napkin but also a substantial problem regarding the specific use of the napkin as a "frangino", since the residual odors of the

detergents or due to the stagnant moisture caused by storage performed immediately after the ironing process can disturb and alter the fragrance of the wine, with consequences on the assessment by the professional, the customers and the connoisseurs who attend the many wine and gastronomical circuits.

[0014] The aim of the present invention is to provide a napkin, particularly for wine-waiters, which allows to eliminate or at least reduce drastically the drawbacks noted above in the napkins usually used for this purpose.

[0015] Within this aim, an object of the present invention is to offer a napkin, particularly for wine-waiters, which can be associated rapidly, effectively and elegantly with the bottle.

[0016] Another object of the present invention is to provide a napkin particularly for wine-waiters which is capable of ensuring more convenient use.

[0017] Another object is to provide a napkin particularly for wine-waiters which can be more resistant to stains with respect to the ones currently used and at the same time is easily washable.

[0018] Another object of the invention is to provide a napkin particularly for wine-waiters which can be washed at low temperatures and by using neutral detergents, so as to allow optimum use without the risk of contaminations from residual odors or heavy fragrances.

[0019] Another object of the invention is to provide a napkin particularly for wine-waiters which has a very simple structure and not only has a competitive production cost but also provides savings during its use, so that its use is advantageous also from an economical standpoint.

[0020] This aim and these and other objects which will become better apparent hereinafter are achieved by a napkin, particularly for wine-waiters, characterized in that it comprises a sheet-like element which is provided with at least one annular region which can be arranged around at least one portion of the body of a bottle.

[0021] Conveniently, said at least one annular region has a closed shape and is adapted to be fitted around the neck of the bottle and/or around a portion of a bucket for containing the bottle.

[0022] Further characteristics and advantages of the invention will become better apparent from the description of some preferred but not exclusive embodiments of a napkin particularly for wine-waiters according to the present invention, illustrated by way of non-limiting example in the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of an exemplary embodiment of a napkin particularly for wine-waiters, in the unfolded condition;

Figure 2 is a perspective view, but in the folded condition, of the napkin particularly for wine-waiters shown in Figure 1;

Figure 3 is a perspective view of the napkin particularly for wine-waiters, in the folded condition but associated with a bottle of wine;

Figure 4 is an enlarged-scale perspective view of a portion of the sheet-like element on which an annular region is formed.

[0023] In the exemplary embodiments that follow, individual characteristics, given in relation to specific examples, may actually be interchanged with other different characteristics that exist in other exemplary embodiments.

[0024] Moreover, it is noted that anything found to be already known during the patenting process is understood not to be claimed and to be the subject of a disclaimer.

[0025] With reference to the figures, a napkin particularly for wine-waiters is generally designated by the reference numeral 1.

[0026] In particular, according to the present invention, the napkin 1 has a sheet-like element 2 provided with at least one annular region 3 which can be positioned around at least one portion of the body of a bottle 4.

[0027] In greater detail, and with particular reference to the embodiment shown in the figures, the annular region 3 has a closed shape and is adapted to be fitted around the neck 4a of the bottle 4.

[0028] The sheet-like element 2 of course can be made of fabric: in this regard, it has been found that it is particularly advantageous, for reasons that will be explained better hereinafter, to use a fabric that contains polyester and in particular a fabric composed of a polyester weft and a polyester microfiber warp or vice versa.

[0029] However, there is nothing to forbid the sheet-like element from being also made of cotton, linen or other natural or synthetic fibers.

[0030] According to a preferred embodiment, shown in the figures, the annular region 3 is formed around at least one through opening 5 formed in the sheet-like element 2 and conveniently arranged substantially at a peripheral portion 6 of said sheet-like element 2.

[0031] According to a particularly important aspect of the present invention, the sheet-like element 2 has at least two regions 7 and 8 in mutually different colors.

[0032] In particular, the two regions 7 and 8 in different colors may be obtained by providing at least two bands which are substantially parallel to each other, each having a respective through opening 5.

[0033] In the illustrated example, the sheet-like element 2 is obtained by providing three bands, each of which has a through opening 5.

[0034] Two of such three bands form the region 8 in a first color and a third band forms the region 7 in another color.

[0035] In the illustrated example, the region 7 is provided in a light color (white, ivory, or similar colors) and is used, while serving, as a base for assessing the color, while the region 8 is provided in a darker color (ruby, red, violet even pink) and parts of such region 8 are used to perform the operations for cleaning the bottle 4 or collecting the drop from the bottle neck 4a.

[0036] Advantageously, the sheet-like element 2 further has a plurality of through openings 5; as shown, by moving the napkin 1 from the unfolded condition shown in Figure 1 to the folded condition shown in Figure 2, the two or more (three, in the illustrated case) through openings 5 substantially align with each other, so as to form said annular region 3 which can be fitted around the neck 4a of the bottle 4.

[0037] The through opening or openings 5 can have different shapes: for example, they can be constituted by a circle or they can have an oval or elongated shape.

[0038] In the figures, the through openings 5 have a so-called teardrop shape.

[0039] Of course, there is nothing to prevent the fitting of said openings around a portion of a bucket for containing the bottle.

[0040] With particular reference to the enlarged-scale perspective view shown in Figure 4, it can be noted that the through opening or openings 5 can have a reinforced rim 10 provided for example by stitching or hemming.

[0041] The sheet-like element 2 can be further provided with at least one decoration portion 12, which can be customized by providing embroidery or the like.

[0042] It is possible to embroider or print on such decoration portion 12 an image (and the object of such image can be changed after a certain period of time) and/or the emblem or trademark of a winemaker or restaurant or markings related to particular cultural or sports events or markings of sponsors of events.

[0043] The method of use of a napkin particularly for wine-waiters according to the present invention is directly derivable from what has been described above.

[0044] In particular, it is possible to associate stably, rapidly and effectively the napkin 1 with the bottle 4 by fitting the annular region 3 around the bottle neck 4a. At this point it is simple to keep the "frangino" properly arranged with respect to the body of the bottle by optionally providing, as clearly shown in the perspective view of Figure 3, that its portion arranged on the opposite side with respect to the through opening or openings 5, forms a supporting portion 13 designed to be interposed between the bottom of the bottle and the supporting surface on which the bottle 4 is rested.

[0045] Of course, the wine-waiter shall take care to use the darker-colored region to clean the mouth or dry it of any drops so as to keep the lighter-colored region candid and clean, so that it can always be used as a background or base for analysis of the color of the wine.

[0046] Although the examples of use described above are limited to the use of said napkin to present and serve wines, there is nothing to forbid using the same inventive concept to serve other products, such as for example oil.

[0047] Moreover, it has been observed that by using as fabric a microfiber of the type and composition described above, a napkin is provided which is easily washable even and especially at low temperatures and with delicate and neutral detergents, so as to prevent it from being impregnated with odors and/or perfumes that are

unwanted during use.

[0048] Moreover, it has been observed that a napkin made of such fabric does not necessarily have to be ironed, to the full benefit of practicality and professionalism in use.

[0049] All the characteristics of the invention indicated above as advantageous, convenient and the like may also be omitted or replaced with equivalents.

[0050] The invention thus conceived is susceptible of numerous modifications and variations, all of which are within the scope of the appended claims.

[0051] Thus, for example, the annular region can be provided by means of an open loop, which can optionally be widened and can be connected, by means of a tape or similar element, to a conventional napkin.

[0052] In practice it has been found that the invention has achieved its intended aim and objects in all of its embodiments.

[0053] In practice, the materials used, as well as the contingent shapes and dimensions, may be any according to requirements.

[0054] All the details may further be replaced with other technically equivalent elements.

[0055] The disclosures in Italian Patent Application No. VR2006A000037 from which this application claims priority are incorporated herein by reference.

[0056] Where technical features mentioned in any claim are followed by reference signs, those reference signs have been included for the sole purpose of increasing the intelligibility of the claims and accordingly such reference signs do not have any limiting effect on the interpretation of each element identified by way of example by such reference signs.

Claims

1. A napkin (1) particularly for wine-waiters, **characterized in that** it comprises a sheet-like element (2) provided with at least one annular region (3) which can be positioned around at least one portion of the body of a bottle (4).
2. The napkin (1) particularly for wine-waiters, according to claim 1, **characterized in that** said at least one annular region (3) has a closed shape and is adapted to be fitted around the neck (4a) of said bottle (4).
3. The napkin (1) particularly for wine-waiters, according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said sheet-like element (2) is made of fabric.
4. The napkin (1) particularly for wine-waiters, according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said fabric comprises at least a percentage of polyester.
5. The napkin (1) particularly for wine-waiters, according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said fabric comprises a polyester weft and a polyester microfiber warp.
6. The napkin (1) particularly for wine-waiters, according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said fabric comprises a polyester microfiber weft and a polyester warp.
7. The napkin (1) particularly for wine-waiters, according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said at least one annular region (3) is formed around at least one through opening (5) which is formed substantially at a peripheral portion (6) of said sheet-like element (2).
8. The napkin (1) particularly for wine-waiters, according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said sheet-like element (2) has at least two regions (7, 8) of different colors.
9. The napkin (1) particularly for wine-waiters, according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said sheet-like element (2) has at least two through openings (5), said sheet-like element (2) being foldable in order to substantially align said at least two through openings (5) so as to form said at least one annular region (3).
10. The napkin (1) particularly for wine-waiters, according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said at least two regions (7, 8) of different colors comprise at least two bands which are substantially parallel to each other, each having a respective through opening (5).
11. The napkin (1) particularly for wine-waiters, according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said at least one through opening (5) has an elongated or teardrop shape.
12. The napkin (1) particularly for wine-waiters, according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said at least one through opening (5) has a rim (10) which is reinforced by means of a stitched seam.
13. The napkin (1) particularly for wine-waiters, according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said at least two different colors comprise a light color and a dark color.
14. The napkin (1) particularly for wine-waiters, according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said sheet-like element (2) comprises at least one decoration portion (12) which can be customized by providing embroidery or the like.

15. The napkin (1) particularly for wine-waiters, according to one or more of the preceding claims, **characterized in that** said sheet-like element (2) has a supporting portion (13) which is arranged on the opposite side with respect to said at least one through opening (5) which is designed to be interposed, during use, between the bottom of said bottle (4) and the supporting surface on which said bottle (4) is rested.

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Fig. 1

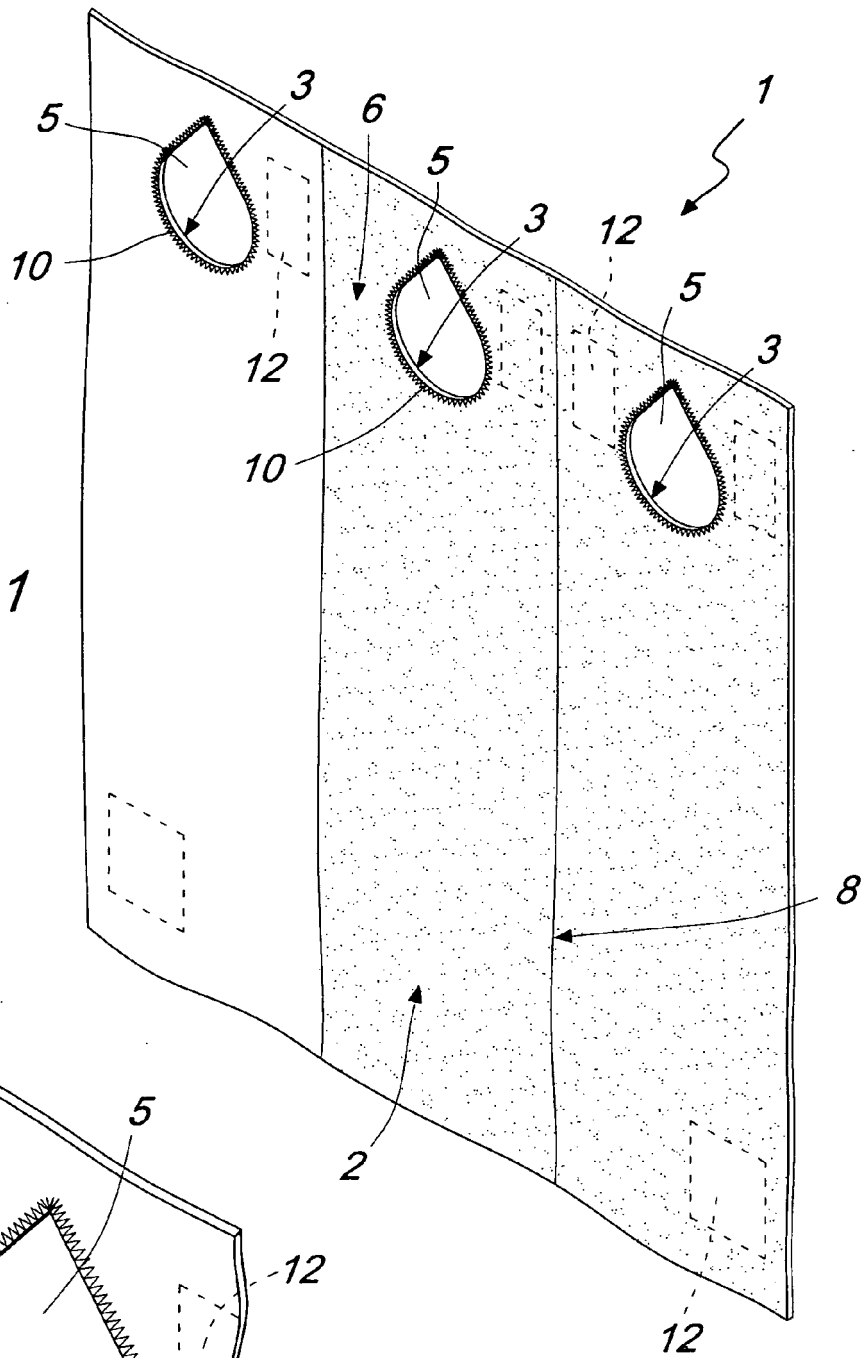
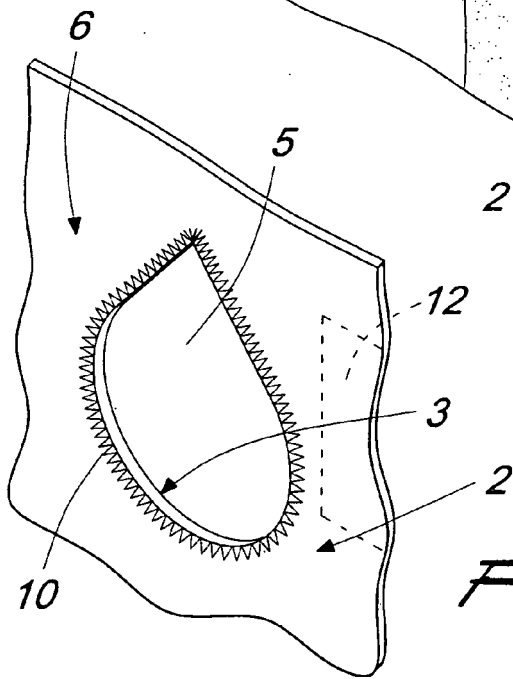


Fig. 4



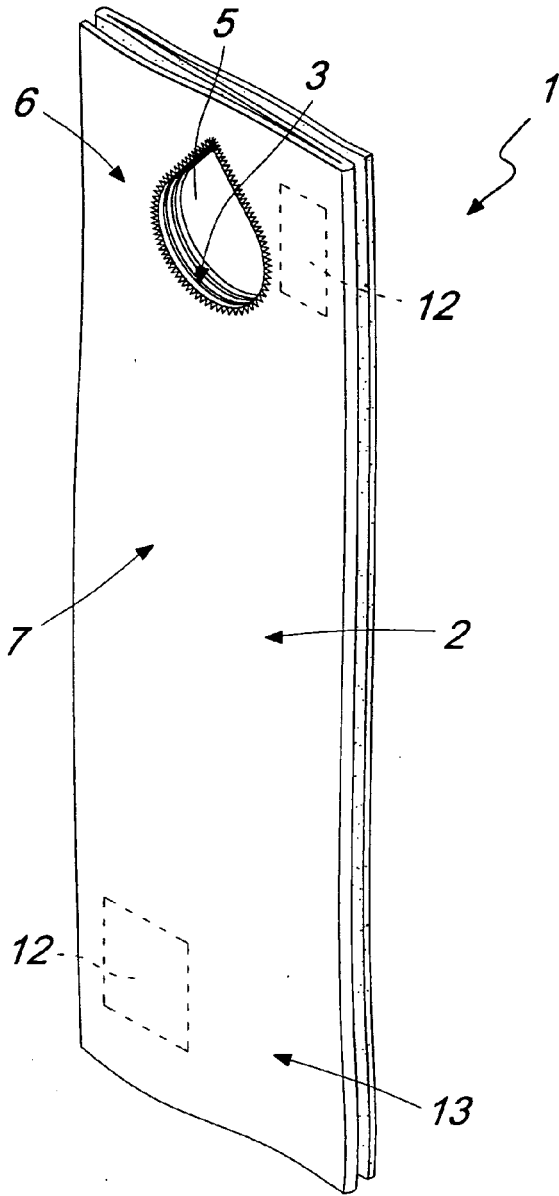


Fig. 2

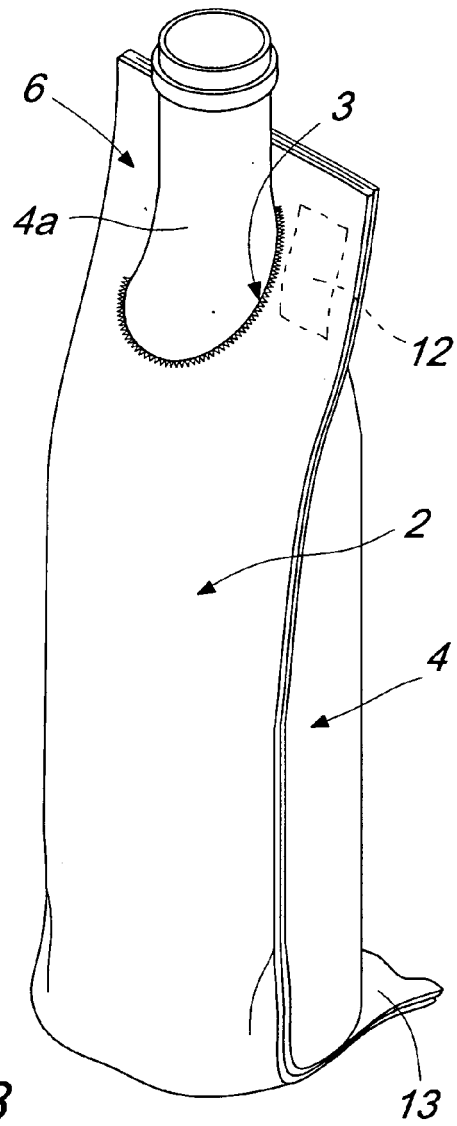


Fig. 3



| DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT | | | |
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| Place of search The Hague | | Date of completion of the search 12 January 2007 | Examiner Vistisen, Lars |
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| X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document | | T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document | |

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ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report. The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
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