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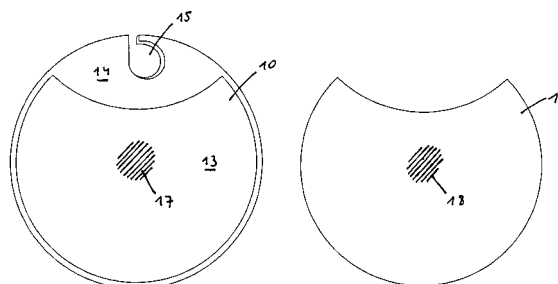
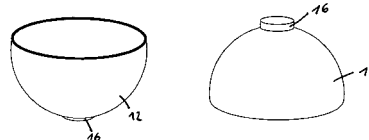
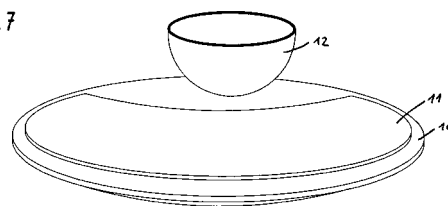
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(54) **Multi-purpose set of crockery**

(57) The invention relates to a set of crockery comprising a plate (3; 10) and a first container (4, 4A-4E; 11) for holding courses. The plate (3; 10) and first container (4, 4A-4E; 11) comprise cooperating first attaching means (1, 1A, 2A-2E; 17, 18) for detachably attaching the first container (4, 4A-4E; 11) on the plate (3; 10). The plate (3; 10) is dimensioned for being held single-handedly by a person and comprises a peripheral cut-out (6; 15) for suspending a glass (7). The first container (4, 4A-4E; 11) has predetermined dimensions so as not to cover the peripheral cut-out (6; 15) in the plate (3; 10) while being attached on the plate (3; 10). The set further comprises at least one second container (9A; 12) having a bottom side with second attaching means (9C) cooperating with the peripheral cut-out (6; 15) for holding the second container (9A; 12) on the plate (3; 10).

Fig. 7



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Description

[0001] The invention relates to a set of crockery according to the preamble of the first claim.

[0002] From DE-U-1975348 a set of crockery is known which comprises a carrier which is adapted to be held single-handedly and a first food container which comprises cooperating first attaching means for holding the first container on the carrier. These cooperating first attaching means comprise a large hole in the carrier and a corresponding rim on the bottom side of the first container. The carrier further comprises peripheral cut-outs for holding wine glasses or the like.

[0003] The set of crockery known from DE-U-1975348 has the disadvantage that its use is limited to receptions, walking dinners and like celebrations, where food and drink is consummated while standing up.

[0004] It is an aim of the present invention to provide a set of crockery which is suitable for a wider variety of celebrations.

[0005] This aim is achieved according to the invention with a set of crockery showing the technical features of the first claim.

[0006] The set of crockery of the invention comprises a plate and a first container for holding courses, the plate and first container comprising cooperating first attaching means for detachably attaching the first container on the plate. The plate further comprises one or more peripheral cut-outs for suspending a glass. The set of the invention further comprises at least one second container having a bottom side with second attaching means cooperating with the peripheral cut-out for holding the second container on the plate.

[0007] The plate of the set of crockery is dimensioned for being held single-handedly by a person. This means that the plate is not of such size that a user requires both hands for holding it, which is for example the case with a tray or a platter and the like. Typical dimensions for a plate are for example a diameter between 15 and 40 cm, preferably however not larger than 30 cm. The plate can have a variety of shapes, such as round, oval, rectangular, square, triangular, or other shapes known to the person skilled in the art.

[0008] The dimensions of the first container of the set of crockery according to the invention are chosen such that it does not cover the peripheral cut-out in the plate while being attached on the plate. As a result, the cut-out remains available for holding a glass or a second container. Consequently, the set of crockery according to the invention is suitable for occasions where courses and drinks are consummated while standing up, such as receptions, walking dinners and other celebrations, where it is convenient that the user suspend a glass on the cut-out to have one hand free for manipulating cutlery and consummating the courses. Furthermore, the set of crockery according to the invention is suitable for occasions where courses and drinks are consumed while being seated, such as breakfasts, lunches, din-

ners and other celebrations. At such "seated occasions", the plate is placed on a table and the peripheral cut-out is unsuitable for suspending a glass (it is too close to the table) and it is furthermore unnecessary to suspend one's glass on the plate. But since the set of crockery of the invention also comprises the second container, this part of the plate is not a lost space, but a suitable space for presenting other courses next to the courses which are presented on the first container. This shows that the set of crockery according to the invention is more suitable for use at a wider variety of occasions than the prior art.

[0009] The set of crockery according to the invention makes it possible to consummate multiple courses at the same time while standing up, without danger of dirtying clothes and such of the consummating person. According to the invention, the first container for the courses is intended to mean a (small) plate, a (small) bowl, a (small) dish, a (small) saucer and so on. The set of crockery according to the invention makes it possible to offer courses in a wide variety of containers at the same time. Containers of varying shapes can be used. This enhances the possibilities for the cook to express his creativity with respect to the presentation of the courses. The first and second containers according to the invention may be provided at their top edge with one or more grooves for holding for example a fork, a spoon, a knife, and/or other suitable cutlery. Suitable first and second containers according to the invention can have any size, although they preferably have characteristic dimensions on the order of 2 to 30 cm, more preferably 5 to 20 cm, still more preferably 8 to 15 cm. The base plane of the containers can have smaller dimensions, for example between 1 and 10 cm. The second containers are preferably smaller than the first containers, although this is not essential.

[0010] It is evident that the total weight of the containers to be attached onto the carrier is preferably chosen such that the consummating person can hold the carrier in one hand without noticeable effort. The carrier according to the invention has as additional advantage that the courses placed on it can be consummated just as easily by right-handed as left-handed persons.

[0011] Another advantage of the set of crockery according to the invention is the fact that heated courses can be easily offered at the desired temperature. With known plates, the plate is often heated along when the plate is used for serving a heated course. This can occur by heating of the at first cold plate as a result of heat exchange with the heated course. In industrial kitchens it is however also common to prepare the courses beforehand on the known plate, and heat them together in a suitable oven. As a result of this, the known plate becomes too hot to manipulate immediately. Then a cooling period needs to be taken into account, in which the plate is sufficiently cooled. This leads to a loss of time in the kitchen and to the courses being served partly cooled. The plate of the crockery according to the inven-

tion can however be served cold in all circumstances, only the first or second containers attached on it being heated. In other words, the set of crockery of the invention makes it possible to serve oven dishes directly, without requiring a cooling period. In this respect, it is advantageous to construct the plate of the invention in a heat-isolating material. This also has the advantage that drinks to be served cold, such as for example white wine or champagne, remain cold for a long period of time.

[0012] The plate of the set of crockery of the invention preferably has a closed bottom wall outside an area in which the peripheral cut-out is located. In other words, it is preferred that the only opening in the bottom wall is the peripheral cut-out. Of course, more than one peripheral cut-out can be provided in the plate if desired. Because of the closed bottom wall, the plate can in itself serve as a dish for serving courses. In this case, the second containers, which are attachable on the one or more peripheral cut-outs in the plate, can be dishes and/or cups with garnishes for the course which is presented on the closed bottom wall of the plate. With garnish are meant sauces, salads and such. Because of the attachment of the second containers to the plates, courses which require a garnish can now be served from the kitchen to the table in a single act.

[0013] The first attaching means for detachably attaching the first container for courses onto the plate preferably comprise at least one magnet, which is located in the bottom wall of the plate and which can cooperate with a magnetic attractable material in the first container. Such an attaching means between the plate and the first container makes sure that the containers cannot slide from the plate and/or can easily fall over. Furthermore such containers can be easily placed on the plate because they are as it were sucked onto the plate. This saves time for the serving personnel. The magnetic attractable material, for example iron, is included at suitable locations, for example in the bottom plane, of the first container. It is advantageous to locate the magnetic attractable material approximately in the middle of the bottom plane. As a result of this, the first container is more easily detachable from the plate, without disturbing the consumer. According to the invention, the magnets can be applied in, at the top side, and/or at the bottom side of the bottom wall of the plate. It is also possible to provide the plate with a magnet which extends over substantially the entire area of the bottom wall of the first container. Preferably the magnetic connection is applied in the plate in such a way that it is not visible to the eye. This can for example simply be achieved by integrating the magnet in the wall of the plate during the production process. It is evident that it is also possible according to the invention to apply magnets in the first containers, and to provide the plate with magnetic attractable material. The plate and/or the first containers can furthermore be provided with multiple magnets and/or parts magnetic attractable material.

[0014] The magnets are preferably cobalt magnets,

because such magnets are resistant against humidity and can without problems be heated to high temperatures up to 250°C. In case of attachment on the bottom side of the plate or the first container, the attachment is preferably performed by means of a silicon which is allowed by the food industry, and which is resistant against humidity and high temperatures.

[0015] In a preferred embodiment of the set of crockery of the invention, the plate and the first container have corresponding shapes and dimensions, such that the first container covers substantially the whole upper surface of the plate except an area around the peripheral cut-out. This has the advantage that about the largest possible area of the plate is used for supporting a first container which is as large as possible. In this way, substantially the whole area of the plate can be used for presenting courses: for example a course on the first container and a garnish on the second container, the combination covering substantially the whole of the plate.

[0016] The peripheral cut-out can have any shape, as long as it can cooperate with the second attaching means on the bottom side of the second container. In this way it is for example possible to provide relatively shallow cut-outs in the bottom wall of the plates, which substantially have the shape of the bottom wall of the container. Of course, multiple cut-outs of different shapes can be applied in the plate.

[0017] In a particular embodiment of the plate according to the invention, the cut-out is an opening with a narrower passage towards the periphery of the plate for passing the foot of a glass, such as for example a wine glass, a champagne flute or the like. In this embodiment, the second attaching means comprise a protrusion on the bottom side of the second container, corresponding to the opening of the cut-out. The shape of the opening and the protrusion is preferably round for reasons of conformity with the most common shapes of glasses, but can also be any other shape known to the person skilled in the art, such as square, triangular, oval etc.

[0018] The set of crockery according to the invention makes it possible to present multiple courses and drinks at the same time to the consummating person. Furthermore it is also possible to present the cutlery needed for consummating the offered courses by providing a suitable space for it on the plate. This space is then preferably provided with a magnet in the bottom wall of the plate. Further it is now possible to offer other second containers such as ash trays, finger cups, and such in one single act, together with the plate. Indeed in this way it is avoided that the plate is dirtied with ashes. Furthermore the ashtray can be replaced easily and as often as necessary with a clean one.

[0019] It is clear that the set of crockery according to the invention can in principle be constructed in any material which is common in the catering industry. Suitable materials are for example earthenware, porcelain, plastics, metal, wood, or another rigid material. The attach-

ing means such as the magnets can be integrated in the bottom of the plate, or can be attached to it after production of the plate. Apart from this, the plate of the invention has as additional advantage that it is not limited to a given geometry. It is possible to give the plate a planar, flat, slightly bent, round, hollow, rectangular, square, polygonal shape. The fact that the creativity of the designer is not limited to certain shapes is a great advantage in the world of catering, where image and style form important elements. Known plates necessarily need to have a shape which is adapted to reception of courses. The plate according to the invention can for example be held at the edge by the consummating person. If desired, the first and/or second containers can be provided with a grip, placement and shape being then chosen such that the freedom of motion of the consummating person is not unnecessarily hampered.

[0020] The plate and the containers according to the invention make it possible to severely limit the number of acts for the cook, waiter and guest. For example it is now possible to use the following method, for example during walking receptions. Upon entry of the guests 3 to 5 plates according to the invention are brought by a first waiter on a suitable tray to the room where the guests are. Afterwards or at the same time, a second waiter serves preferably 25 to 30 first and second containers on a suitable tray. In the containers the courses and/or drinks to be served are located. Suitable trays for the plate and the containers according to the invention are known per se and are for example constructed in laminated wood and have a rectangular shape with characteristic dimensions of 50 to 80 cm. One or more containers are then placed on the plates, either by the waiter or by the guests themselves. After consummating the courses the first and/or second containers, again 25 to 30 pieces per round, are easily removed and/or replaced. The crockery according to the invention makes it possible to serve a large number of guests by only a few waiters. Furthermore, the amount of dish-washing is also reduced, because only the (smaller) containers are served and collected, the plate remaining with the consummating person until all courses have been consummated.

[0021] The plate according to the present invention will be further elucidated below by means of examples. Such examples only serve as information and should therefore not be construed as limiting.

[0022] Figure 1 shows a schematic view of a set of crockery according to the invention, comprising a plate and containers.

[0023] Figure 2 shows a top view of plates of the set of crockery according to the invention.

[0024] Figure 3 shows a perspective view of containers of the set of crockery according to the invention.

[0025] Figure 4 shows a perspective view of another set of crockery according to the invention.

[0026] Figures 5 and 6 show detailed views of an embodiment of the set of crockery according to the inven-

tion.

[0027] Figure 7 shows a preferred embodiment of the set of crockery according to the invention.

[0028] In figure 1 a set of crockery for presenting courses and/or drinks according to the invention is shown. The set comprises a plate 3 which is provided with first attaching means 1 for detachably attaching at least one first container 4 for courses and/or drinks. In the embodiment shown in figure 1, the first attaching means 1 comprise a magnet 1, which is applied invisibly to the eye in the bottom wall of the plate 3. The magnet 1 cooperates with a part of magnetic attractable material 2, which is located in the bottom wall of the container 4. If desired, the container 4 is provided with cut-outs 5 in the peripheral edge, which can hold cutlery 8. The plate 3 is provided with a second magnetic area 1 A for detachably attaching another first container, for example an ashtray 4A. The container or ashtray 4A is at its peripheral edge provided with a groove for holding respectively a spoon or a cigarette 8A.

[0029] The plate 3 is constructed in porcelain and/or ceramic suitable for the food industry and is provided with a peripheral cut-out 6 for holding a glass 7 for wine or champagne for example. In figure 1 a champagne flute 7 is shown, suspended in eye opening 6. The peripheral cut-out 6 is located in the peripheral edge of the plate 3.

[0030] The plate 3 and the two first containers 4 form a set of crockery according to the invention together with a second container, such as for example the container 9A of figures 5 and 6. The second container 9A has second attaching means 9C on its bottom side, which cooperate with the eye opening 6. In other words, the eye opening 6 has a double use: suspending a glass 7 and attaching the second container 9A. The plate 3 itself has a closed bottom (apart from the eye opening 6) and thus also has a double use: support for various interchangeable first containers 4 for courses/drinks and dish for serving courses. As a result, the set of crockery shown in figures 1, 5 and 6 is a multi-purpose set of crockery, suitable for use on any occasion where food is consummated while standing up as well as while being seated at a table.

[0031] The plate 3 according to the invention can take different shapes: a substantially square shape 3A, a substantially triangular shape 3B, and/or a substantially elliptic shape 3C (figure 2). Figure 2 further shows different shapes for the eye openings 6A, 6B, and/or 6C. If desired, the plate can be provided with multiple eye openings 6 with different shapes for suspending different types of glasses.

[0032] The first containers 4 according to the invention can take different shapes as shown in figure 3. Preferably the metal 2A-2E is mounted centrally in the bottom plane, for facilitating removal.

[0033] A preferred embodiment of the set of crockery according to the invention is shown in figure 4. It comprises the same substantially round plate 3 and two first

containers 4 and 4A with different shapes, attachable by means of magnets 1 and 1A in the plate 3. Again, at least one cut-out 6 is provided in the peripheral edge of the plate 3 for holding a glass or a second container 9A.

[0034] The second container 9A, shown in figures 5 and 6, has a protruding part 9C on its bottom wall. This protruding part 9C has a round shape corresponding to the shape of the cut-out 6. In figure 5 the bottom side of the plate 3 is shown in which the protruding part 9C is fittingly held in the cut-out 6. The protruding part 9B closes the peripheral opening of the cut-out 6 for the eye. The embodiment as shown in figures 5 and 6 is preferably used at the table, container 9A being suspended on the plate 3 for holding garnishes, such as for example salads, sauces, and such.

[0035] The set of crockery shown in figure 7 likewise comprises a plate 10, a first container 11 and a second container 12. The plate has a round shape with a large, slightly recessed surface area 13 on which courses can be served or on which the first container 11 can be supported. The first container 11 has a shape corresponding to this large area 13, so that it can cover substantially the whole top surface of the plate 10. A magnet 17 provided on the plate 10 and a metallic part 18 provided on a corresponding location on the first container 11 provide for a magnetic attachment between the two. A smaller flat area 14 at the periphery of the plate 10 surrounds a peripheral cut-out 15, which is suitable for holding a wine glass 7 or the like and the second container 12. To this end, the second container 15 has a round protrusion 16 on its bottom side, corresponding to the shape of the cut-out 15. The protrusion 16 tightly fits within the opening of the cut-out 15.

Claims

1. A set of crockery comprising a plate (3; 10) and a first container (4, 4A-4E; 11) for holding courses, the plate (3; 10) and first container (4, 4A-4E; 11) comprising cooperating first attaching means (1, 1A, 2A-2E; 17, 18) for detachably attaching the first container (4, 4A-4E; 11) on the plate (3; 10), the plate (3; 10) being dimensioned for being held single-handedly by a person and comprising a peripheral cut-out (6; 15) for suspending a glass (7), **characterised in that** the first container (4, 4A-4E; 11) has predetermined dimensions so as not to cover the peripheral cut-out (6; 15) in the plate (3; 10) while being attached on the plate (3; 10), and that the set further comprises at least one second container (9A; 12) having a bottom side with second attaching means (9C) cooperating with the peripheral cut-out (6; 15) for holding the second container (9A; 12) on the plate (3; 10).
2. A set of crockery according to claim 1, **characterised in that** the plate (3; 10) has a closed bottom

wall outside an area (14) in which the peripheral cut-out (6; 15) is located, and that the first attaching means (1, 1A, 2A-2E; 17, 18) are formed by the combination of a magnet and a magnetic attractable material.

3. A set of crockery according to claim 2, **characterised in that** the magnet is provided in a bottom wall of the plate (3; 10) and the magnetic attractable material in a bottom wall of the first container (4, 4A-4E; 11).
4. A set of crockery according to claim 2, **characterised in that** the magnet is provided in a bottom wall of the first container (4, 4A-4E; 11) and the magnetic attractable material in a bottom wall of the plate (3; 10).
5. A set of crockery according to any one of the previous claims, **characterised in that** the plate (3; 10) and the first container (4, 4A-4E; 11) have corresponding shapes and dimensions, such that the first container (4, 4A-4E; 11) covers substantially the whole upper surface of the plate (3; 10) except an area (14) around the peripheral cut-out (6; 15).
6. A set of crockery according to any one of the previous claims, **characterised in that** the peripheral cut-out (6; 15) is an opening with a narrower passage towards the periphery of the plate (3; 10) for passing the foot of a glass (7).
7. A set of crockery according to claim 6, **characterised in that** the second attaching means comprise a protrusion (9C; 16) on the bottom side of the second container (9A; 12), corresponding to the opening of the cut-out (6; 15).
8. A set of crockery according to any one of the previous claims, **characterised in that** the second container (9A; 12) is a container for holding smaller courses such as for example garnish or sauce.
9. A set of crockery according to any one of the previous claims, **characterised in that** the second container (9A; 12) is an ashtray.
10. A set of crockery according to any one of the previous claims, **characterised in that** the plate (3; 10) has a diameter between 15 and 40 cm, preferably not larger than 30 cm, and that the first and second containers have dimensions on the order of 2 to 30 cm, more preferably 5 to 20 cm, still more preferably 8 to 15 cm.

Fig 1

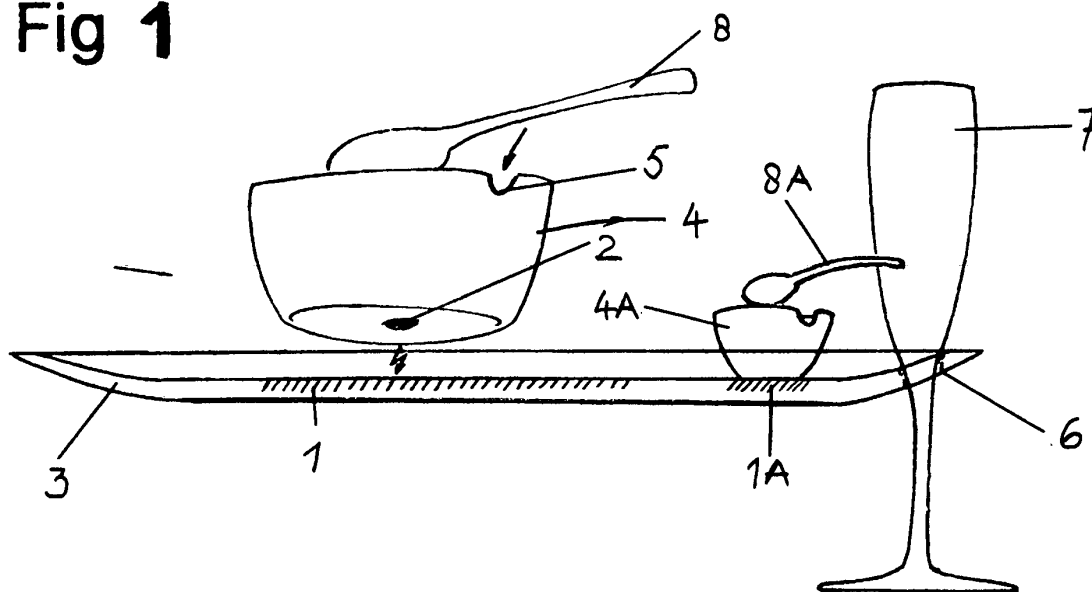


Fig 2

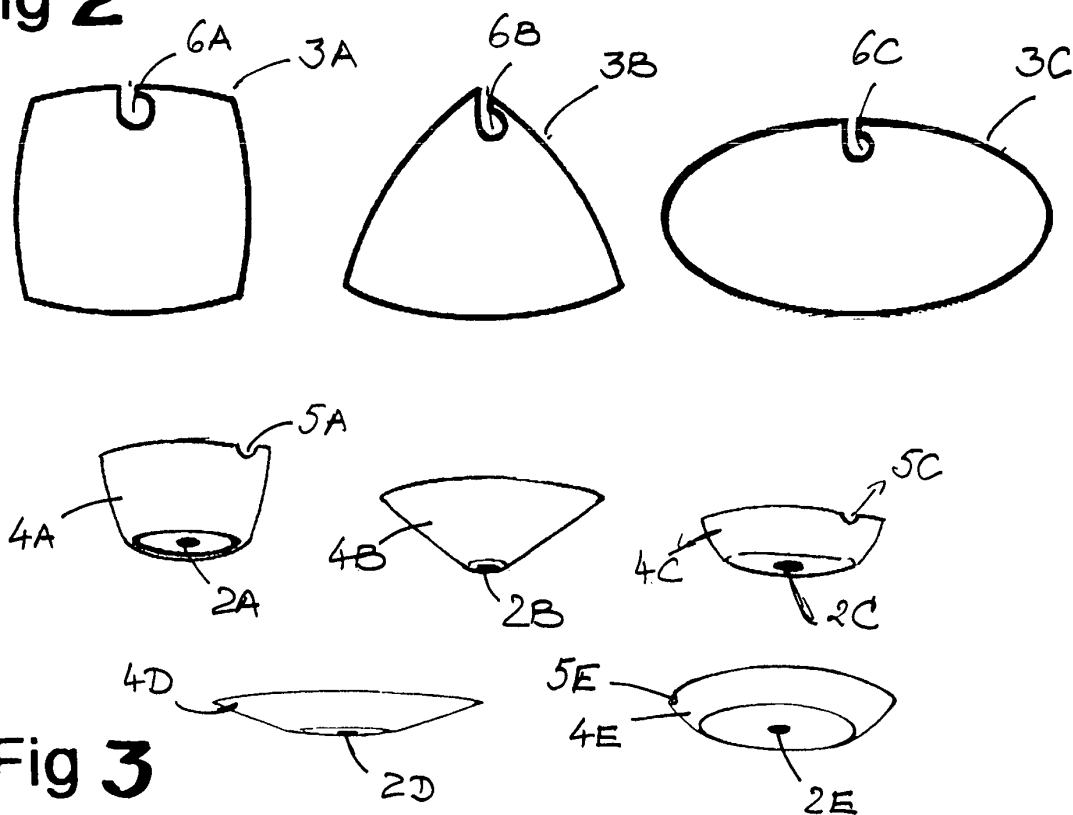


Fig 3

Fig 4

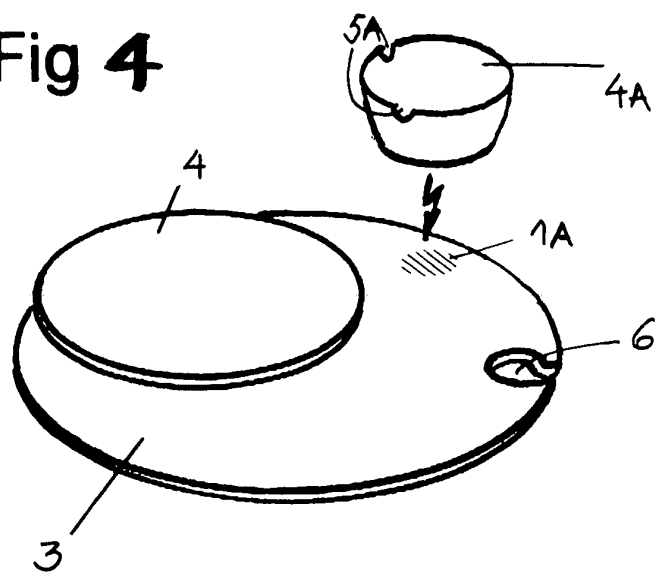


Fig 5

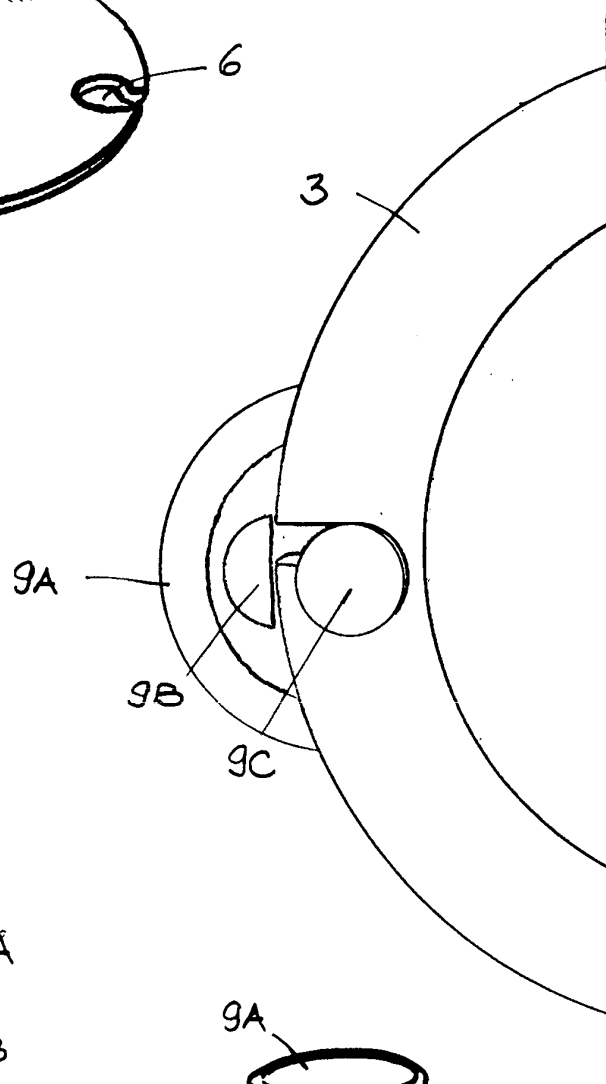


Fig 6

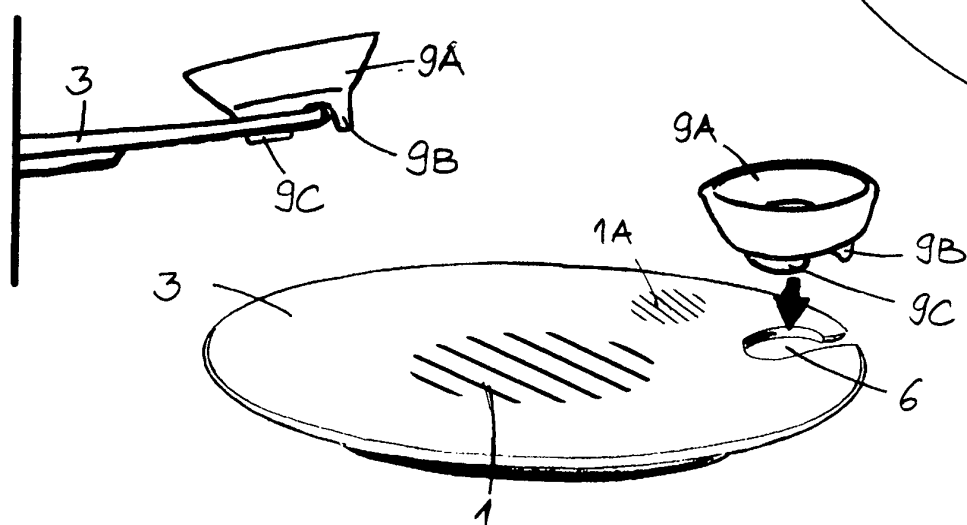


Fig. 7

