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(54) **SEPARABLE BEVERAGE CONTAINERS**

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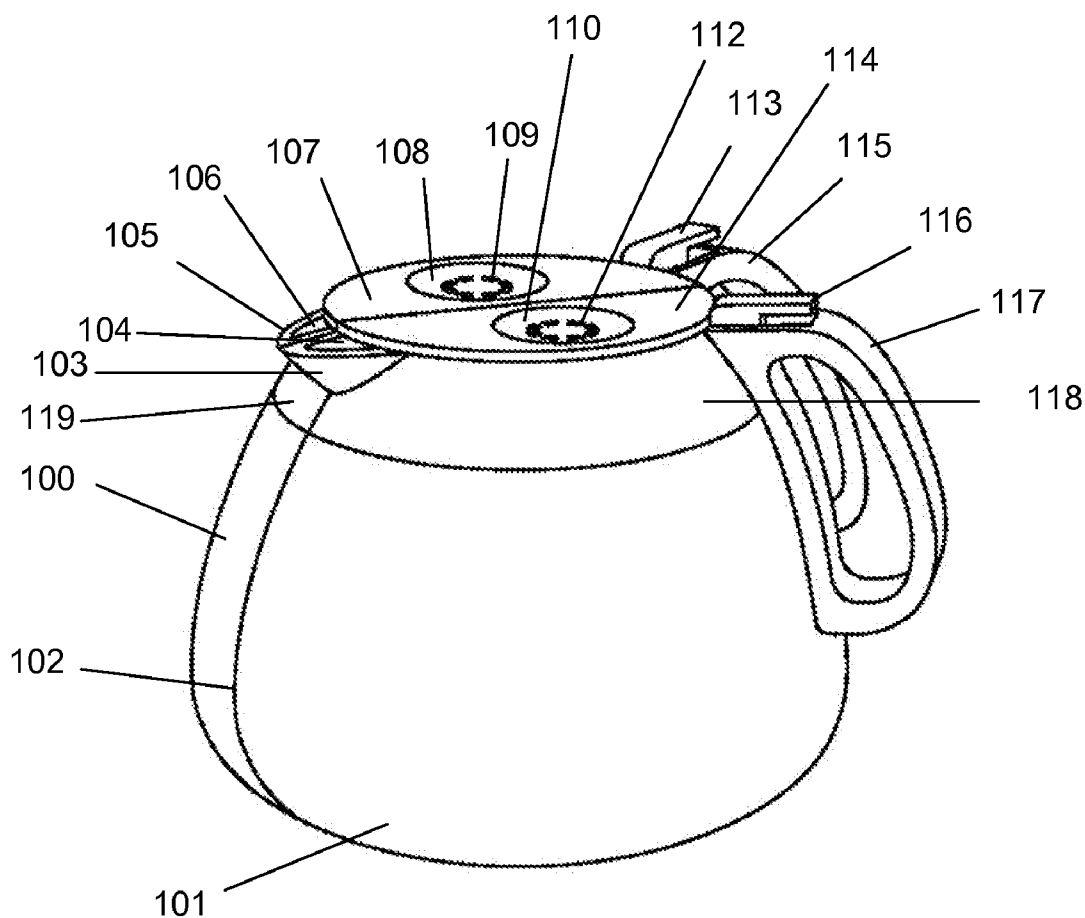
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

Separable beverage containers comprising a mating side, body, lid, handle, that can be joined together to form the appearance of a larger beverage container. Each separable container can be used individually to store or serve hot or cold beverages and can be adapted for use with coffee, tea, or any other brewed beverage.



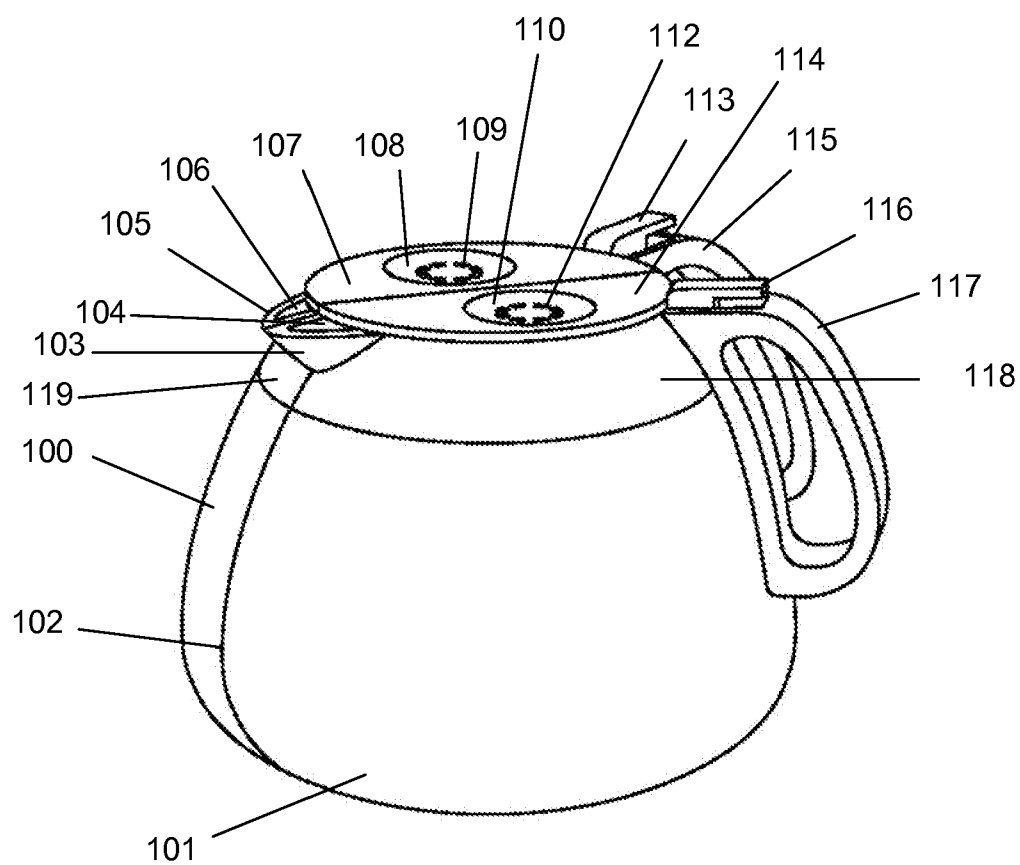
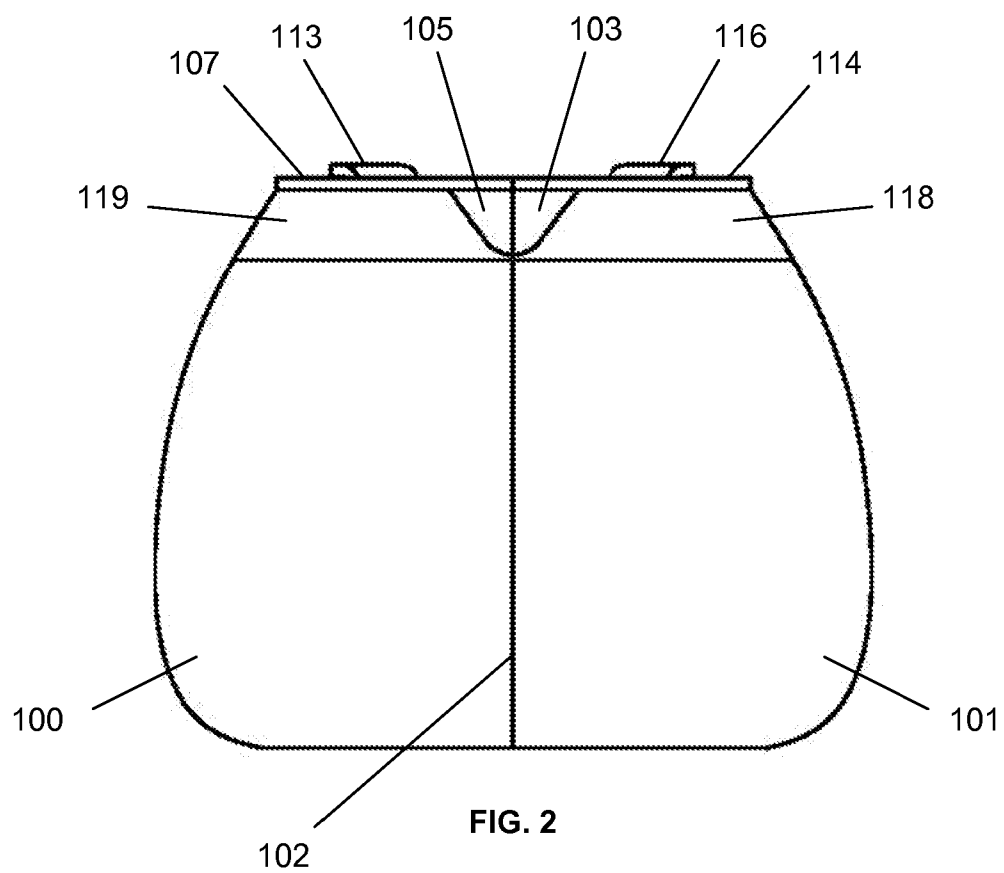
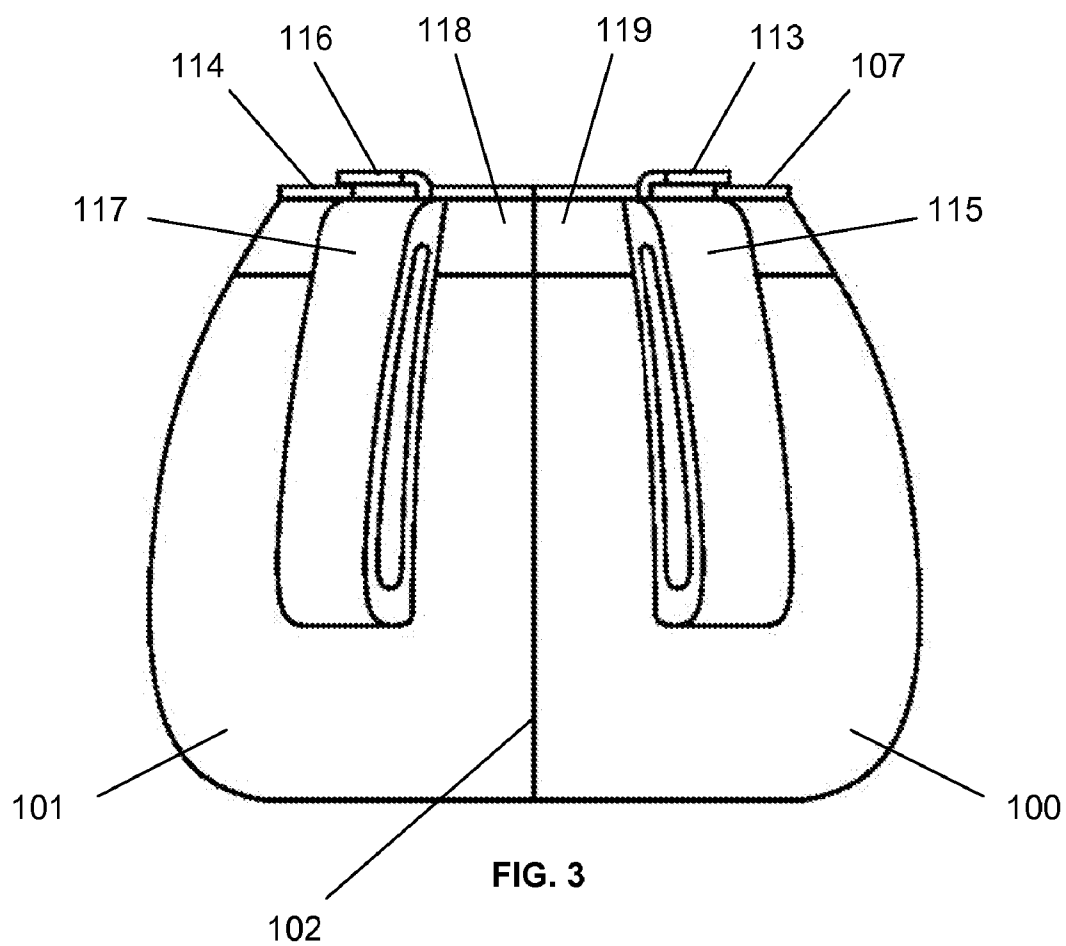


FIG. 1





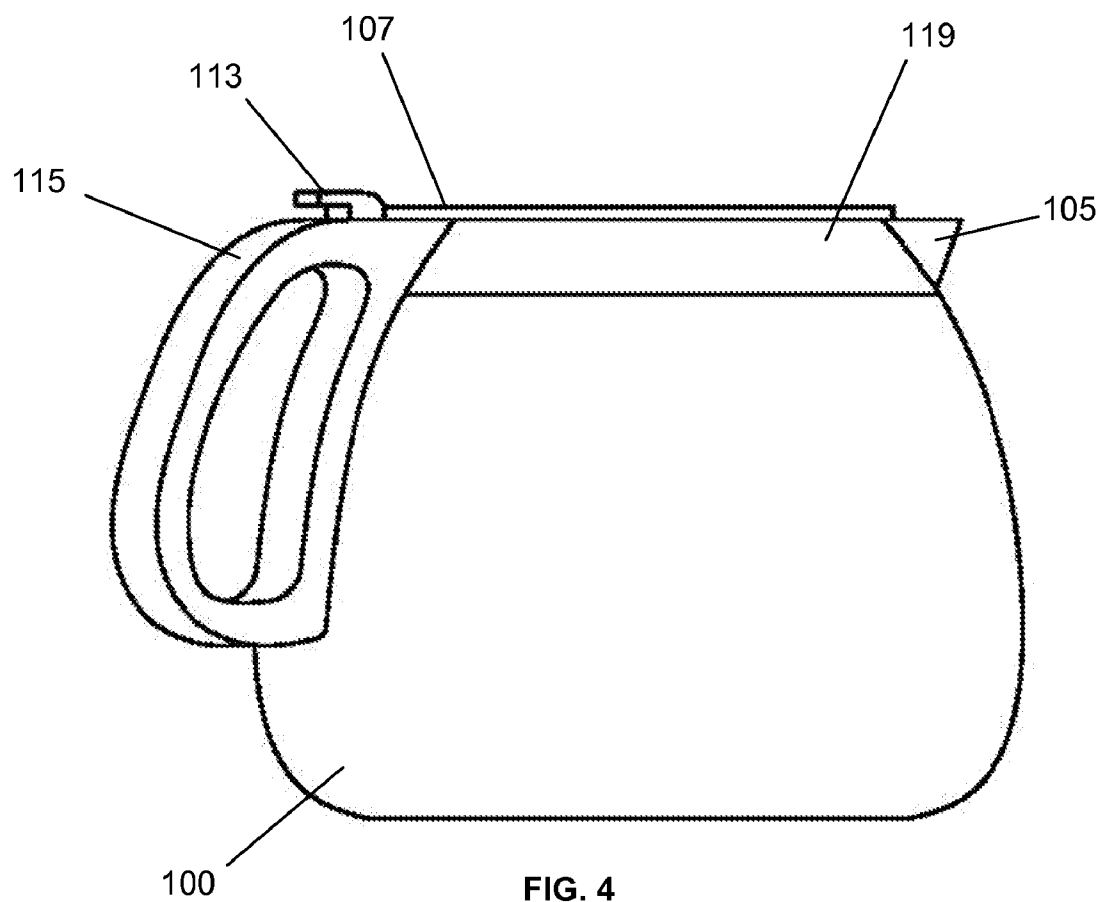


FIG. 4

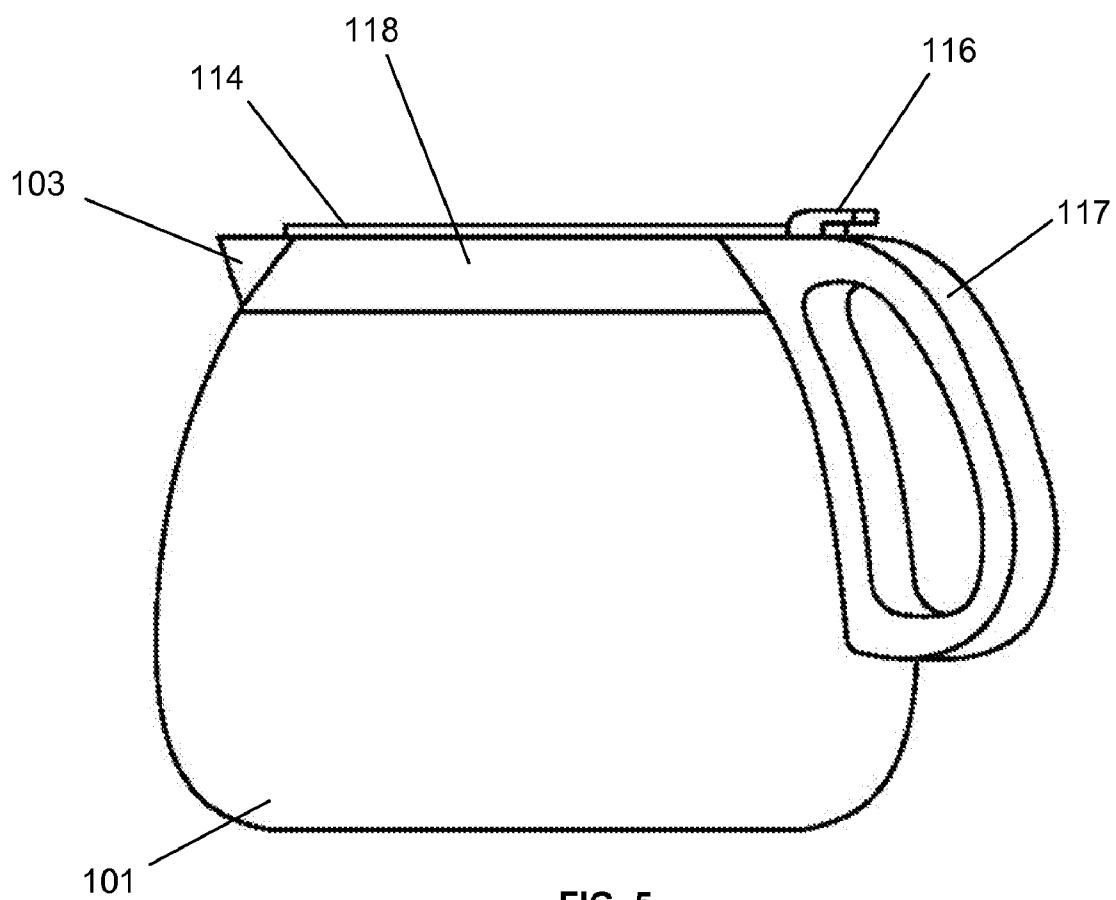
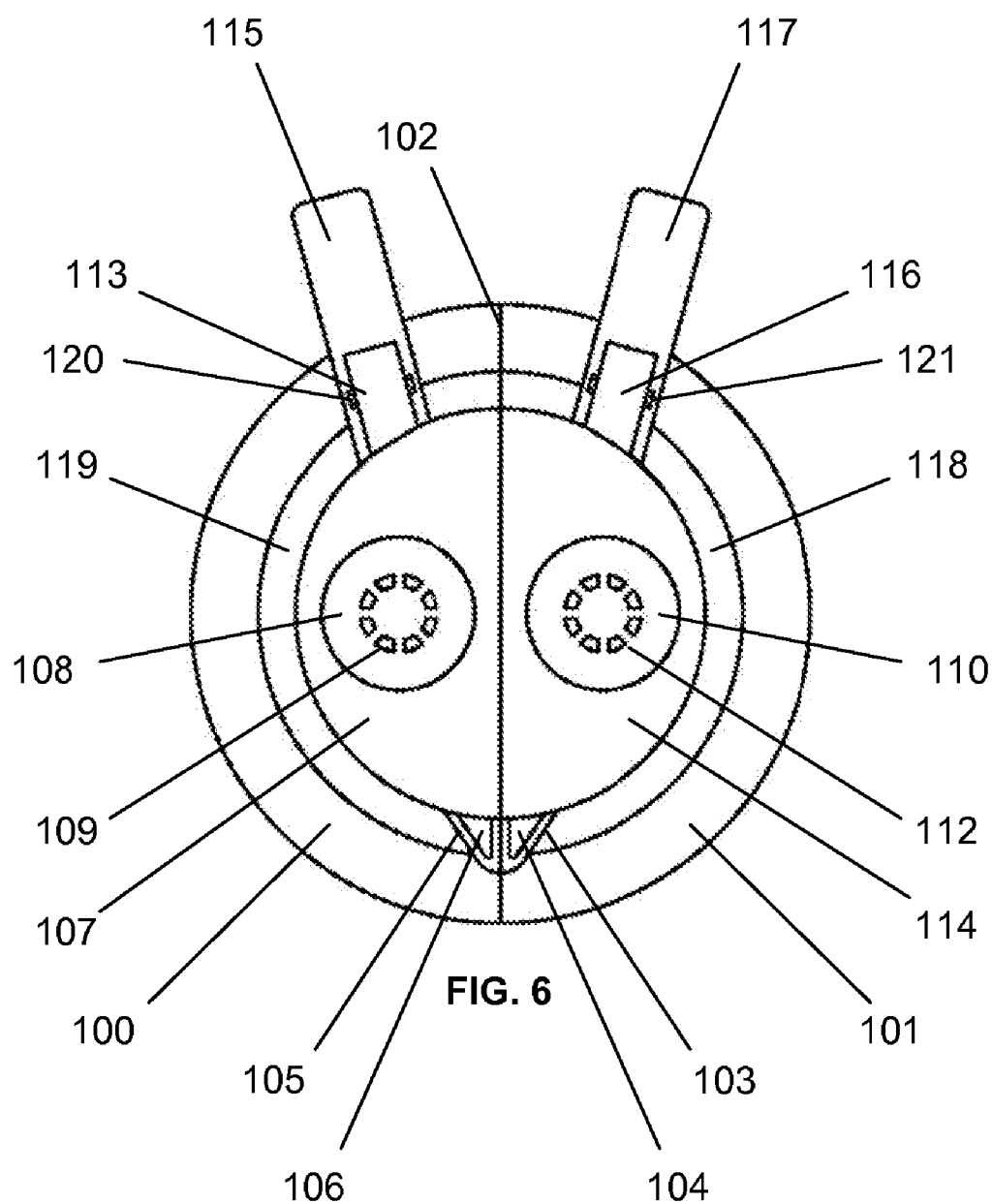
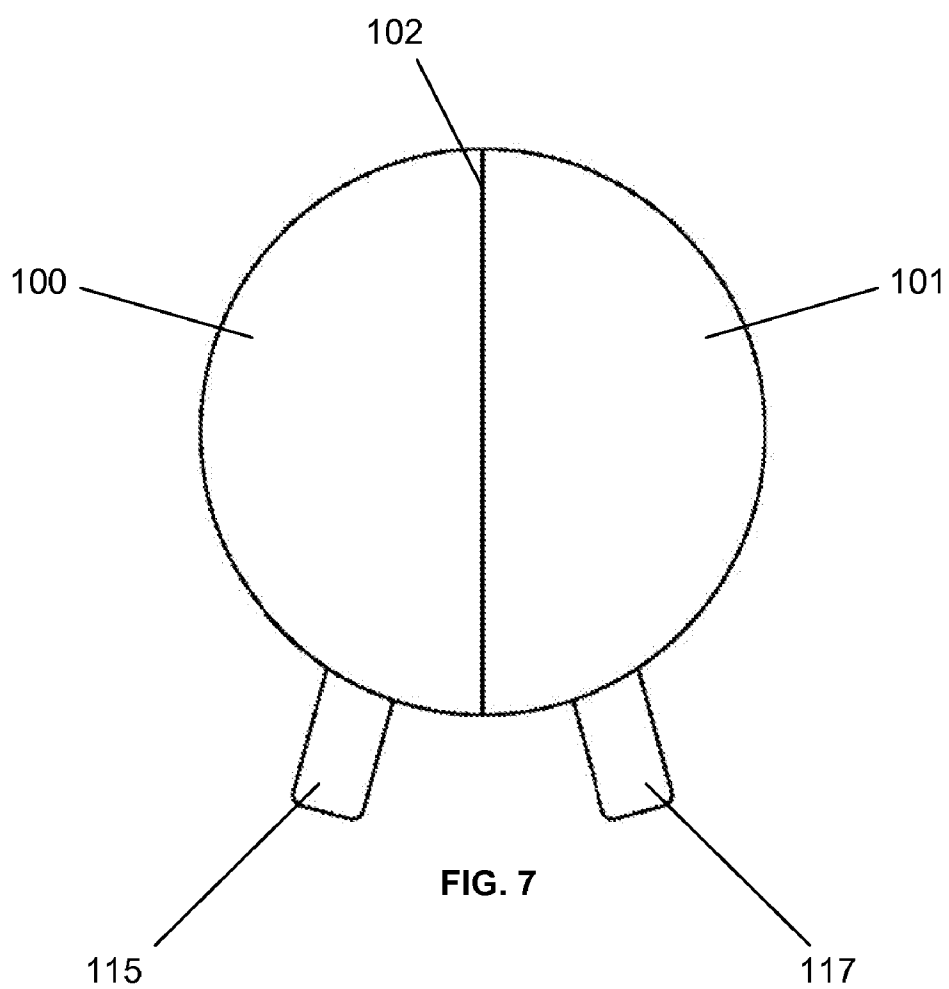


FIG. 5





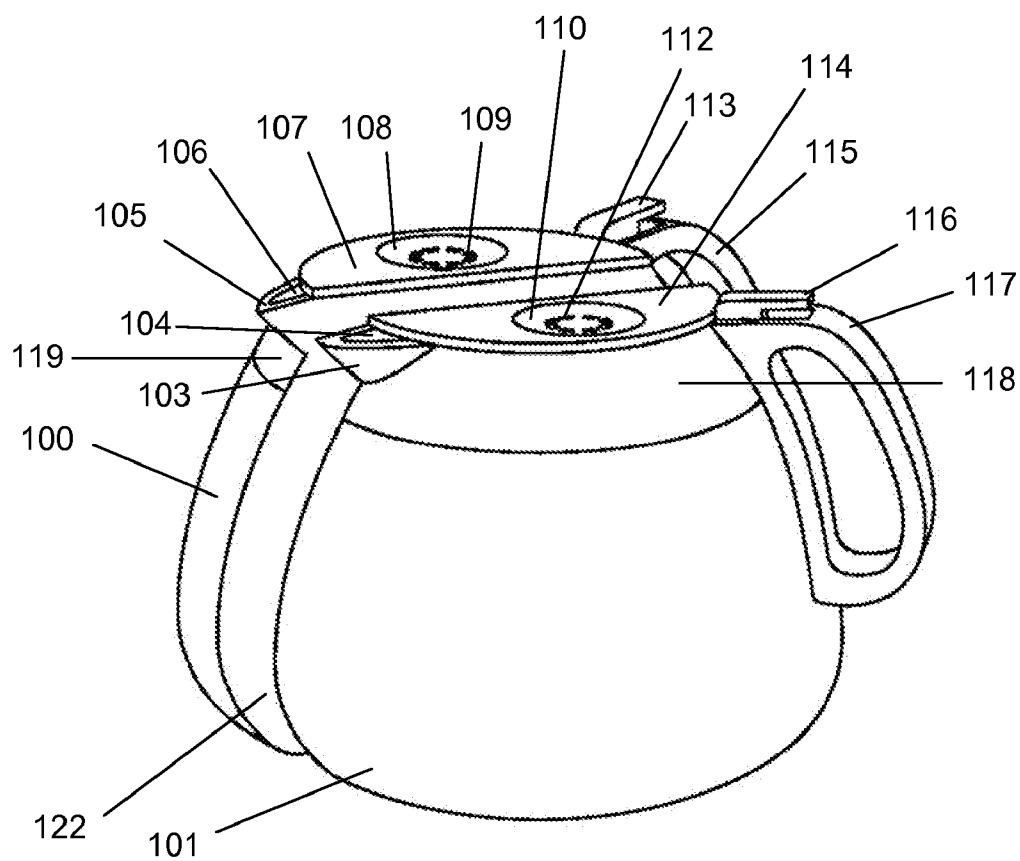
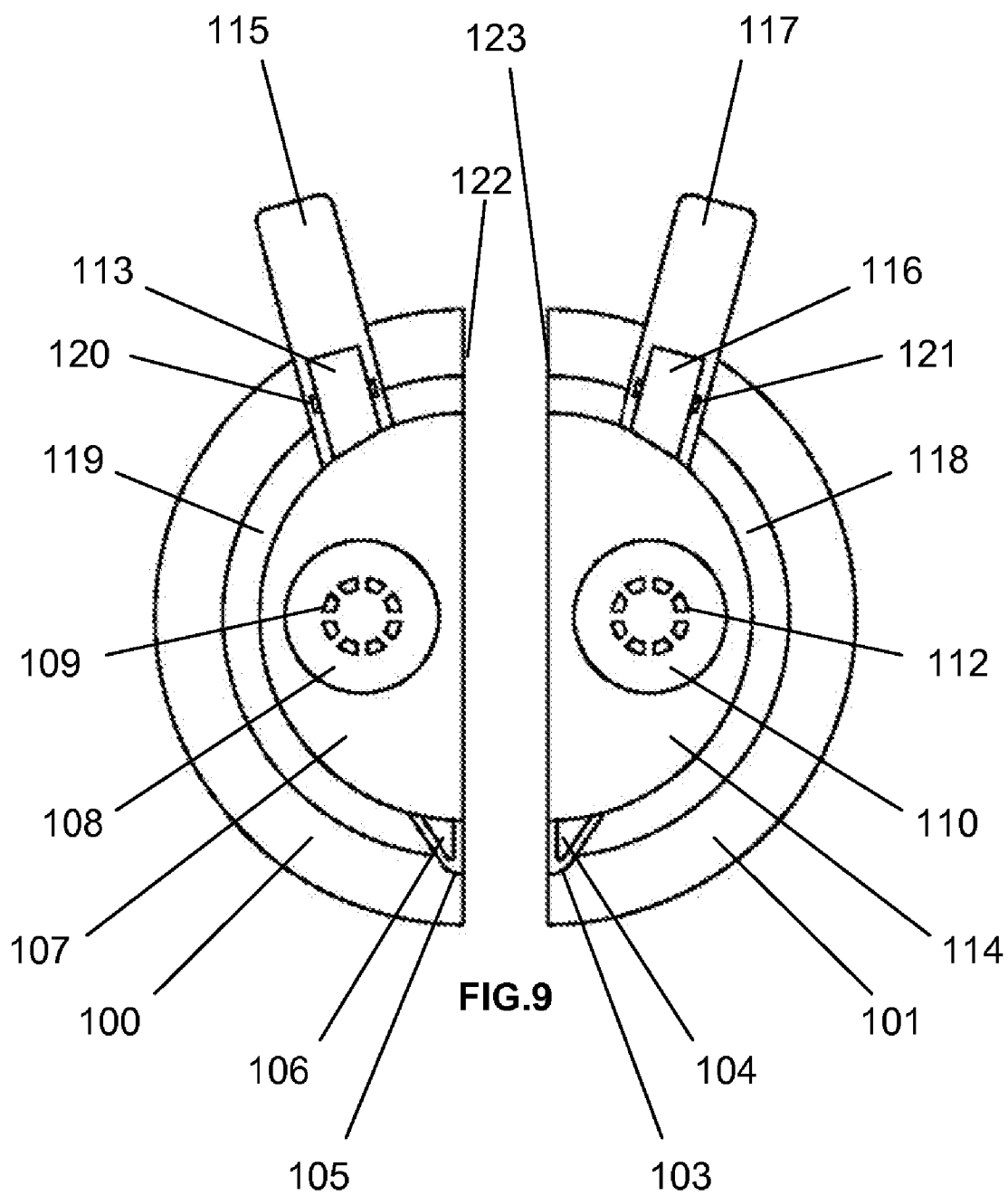


FIG. 8



SEPARABLE BEVERAGE CONTAINERS**CROSS-REFERENCES TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

[0001] Not Applicable

STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

[0002] Not Applicable

THE NAMES OF THE PARTIES TO A JOINT RESEARCH AGREEMENT

[0003] Not Applicable

INCORPORATION-BY-REFERENCE OF MATERIAL SUBMITTED ON A COMPACT DISC

[0004] Not Applicable

SEQUENCE LISTING

[0005] Not Applicable

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0006] 1. Field of the Invention

[0007] The present invention relates to apparatus for holding brewed beverages and, more specifically, to apparatus that are capable of holding different brews of beverages, such as coffee, tea, or hot chocolate, in separable containers that, when brought together, appear to be a larger, single container.

[0008] 2. Description of the Related Art

[0009] Many varieties of multiple coffee makers exist that are capable of simultaneously producing different brews of coffee. Often they hold each brew of coffee in separate, stand-alone coffee pots. These makers usually have side-by-side or front-back coffee pot configurations that make them much larger and more expensive to manufacture than single pot coffee makers. To keep the coffee in all the pots of a multiple maker at the proper temperature after brewing, a separate heating element is required for each pot. Alternatively, a single, large heating element can be used that extends underneath all of the pots. Both of these designs are inefficient and waste material and energy. Because of the separate pot configuration, contemporary multiple coffee makers require substantially more space for operation, energy, and fabrication materials than makers using a single pot design.

[0010] If consumers wish to simultaneously brew different strengths, types, or flavors of coffee they must choose between purchasing one or more single pot coffee makers, or purchasing a larger, more expensive twin or multiple pot maker. Both options have their disadvantages in terms of cost, energy requirements, and size. There is a need for a more compact apparatus that can combine the multiple pot benefit of being able to hold and keep warm different brews of coffee with the size and efficiency advantages of a single pot design. The present invention addresses those concerns by holding multiple brews of coffee, or other brewed beverages, without the need for separate, stand-alone pots. Through the advantages of the present invention, coffee maker manufacturers could reduce their material costs, reduce the space needed for

the operation of their makers, and create a smaller, more efficient multiple pot coffee maker.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0011] It is thus an object of the present invention to provide containers that hold and keep separate different brews of coffee or other brewed beverages.

[0012] It is another object of the present invention to provide containers that can be brought together to create the appearance of a larger beverage container.

[0013] In one exemplary embodiment of the present invention, separable beverage containers comprise a plurality of containers that can be joined to form the appearance of a larger, single pot. Each individual container includes a mating side that is shaped in such a way as to allow it to join with other containers and an opening to allow for brewed coffee to enter the container. A handle and a pouring spout are affixed in such a manner as to not interfere with the joining of the individual containers.

[0014] The mating sides of each container can be in constant contact with each other while the containers are on the coffee maker or not in use. This provides an advantage over traditional multiple pot coffee makers by decreasing the overall space needed in the coffee maker to house the individual containers. Another advantage of the present invention is that it allows for a reduction in the size or number of heating elements required to keep the coffee at the proper temperature. All of the advantages of the present invention combine to lessen the energy and material requirements of multiple pot coffee makers utilizing an embodiment of the invention. By reducing the energy and material requirements of multiple pot coffee makers, they will be less expensive to manufacture and operate than previous such makers.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWING(S)

[0015] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of an exemplary embodiment of containers incorporating features of the present invention;

[0016] FIG. 2 is a front elevation view of the containers shown in FIG. 1;

[0017] FIG. 3 is a handle side elevation view of the containers shown in FIG. 1;

[0018] FIG. 4 is a right side elevation view of the containers shown in FIG. 1;

[0019] FIG. 5 is a left side elevation view of the containers shown in FIG. 1;

[0020] FIG. 6 is a top plan view of the containers shown in FIG. 1;

[0021] FIG. 7 is a bottom plan view of the containers shown in FIG. 1;

[0022] FIG. 8 is a perspective view of the containers shown in FIG. 1 after the containers have been separated;

[0023] FIG. 9 is a top plan view of the containers shown in FIG. 1 after the containers have been separated.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0024] In the following detailed description, reference is made to the accompanying drawings that show, by way of illustration, specific embodiments in which the invention may be practiced. These embodiments are described in sufficient detail to enable those skilled in the art to practice the invention. It is to be understood that the various embodiments of the

invention, although different, are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Furthermore, a particular feature, structure, or characteristic described herein in connection with one embodiment may be implemented within other embodiments without departing from the scope of the invention. In addition, it is to be understood that the location or arrangement of individual elements within each disclosed embodiment may be modified without departing from the scope of the invention. The following detailed description is, therefore, not to be taken in a limiting sense, and the scope of the present invention is defined only by the appended claims, appropriately interpreted, along with the full range of equivalents to which the claims are entitled. In the drawings, like numerals refer to the same or similar functionality throughout the several views.

[0025] The word “exemplary” is used herein to mean “serving as an example, instance, or illustration.” Any embodiment described herein as “exemplary” is not necessarily to be construed as preferred or advantageous over other embodiments. Likewise, the terms “embodiment(s) of the invention”, “alternative embodiment(s)”, and “exemplary embodiment(s)” do not require that all embodiments of the method, system and apparatus include the discussed feature, advantage or mode of operation.

[0026] The following description of the preferred embodiment is merely exemplary in nature and is in no way intended to limit the invention, its application, or uses. It should be pointed out that the positions chosen for the purposes of the description, such as top, bottom, side, etc., relate to the drawing specifically being described and can be transposed in terms of meaning to a new position when another position is being described.

[0027] Referring to FIGS. 1 through 7, that will be discussed together, there is shown an exemplary embodiment of separable beverage containers incorporating features of the present invention. In the shown embodiment, a left container **101** and a right container **100** are displayed that, when situated together, give the visual appearance of a larger, single container. Each individual container contacts the other along a side that forms the midpoint **102** in the appearance of a larger container. The containers can be shaped in mirror-images of each other, or can be shaped in non-mirror-image forms. In the embodiment shown, the left container **101** and right container **100** generally comprise a left container handle **117**, a right container handle **115**, a left lid **114**, a right lid **107**, a left pour spout **103**, and a right pour spout **105**. The left container handle **117** and right container handle **115** are affixed to the left and right containers by a left attachment area **118** and right attachment area **119**. The attachment areas can be constructed of the same or different materials as the bodies of the containers. In an alternative exemplary embodiment, the left container handle **117** and the right container handle **115** can be attached directly to the body of the respective left container **101** or right container **100**.

[0028] The containers could be used together or separately in any suitable type of brewing device and could be adapted to hold any brewed beverage such as coffee, tea, or hot chocolate. Brewed beverages enter the left container **101** and right container **100** through left lid openings **112** and right lid openings **109** that are located in a left lid inset **110** and a right lid inset **108**. The insets lessen the chance liquid will inadvertently spill outside of the containers during normal brewing activities.

[0029] In the embodiment shown, the left lid **114** and right lid **107** can be opened to provide access to the container reservoirs by pressing the left thumb lever **116** or right thumb lever **113**. The left thumb lever **116** is attached near the top of the left container handle **117** by a left hinge **121** and the right thumb lever **113** is attached near the top of the right container handle **115** by a right hinge **120**. Opening the container lids allows individuals doing the brewing to clean the reservoirs of the containers or to place items such as tea bags inside the containers. In an alternative exemplary embodiment, the left lid **114** and right lid **107** may be affixed to the body of the respective container by snug-fit instead of a hinge.

[0030] Referring to FIGS. 8 and 9, that will be discussed together, there is shown the exemplary embodiment of separable beverage containers from FIGS. 1 through 7, displayed after separation, that incorporate features of the present invention. When separated, the left container **101** and right container **100** serve individually as traditional brewed beverage containers. The containers are gripped by their respective handles and beverage is poured from the left container pour spout opening **104** or the right container pour spout opening **106**. When not in use, the containers can be stored together to maintain a single container appearance, or can be stored separately.

[0031] In FIGS. 8 and 9 there can be seen an exemplary left mating surface **123** and an exemplary right mating surface **122** that contact each other when the containers are brought together. This exemplary embodiment of the present invention displays the mating surfaces as symmetrical and planar, but the surfaces can be asymmetrical, curved, or otherwise shaped in a manner that accommodates mating of both containers into the appearance of a larger container. These surfaces can be constructed of material analogous to that used in the construction of the bodies of the containers or of non-analogous materials different from the rest of the containers.

[0032] It should be understood that the foregoing description is only illustrative of the invention. Various alternatives and modifications can be devised by those skilled in the art without departing from the invention. Accordingly, the present invention is intended to embrace all such alternatives, modifications, or variances which fall within the scope of the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A plurality of separable beverage containers that can be joined together to form the appearance of a larger beverage container, each separable container having a body defining the shape of the individual container, the body comprising: an opening to receive a beverage, a mating side shaped to allow for joining with other separable containers, and an exterior side that does not come into contact with other separable containers when the separable containers are joined to form the appearance of a larger beverage container.

2. The beverage containers of claim 1, wherein the mating sides are of uniform shape.

3. The beverage containers of claim 1, wherein the mating or exterior sides are made from an insulating material.

4. The beverage containers of claim 1, wherein each body further comprises a handle affixed to an attachment area or directly to each body.

5. The beverage containers of claim 1, wherein each body further comprises a handle molded as part of each body.

6. The beverage containers of claim 1, wherein each body further comprises a pouring spout.

7. The beverage containers of claim 1, wherein each body further comprises a lid.

8. The beverage containers of claim 7, wherein the lid is affixed to each body by snug-fit.

9. The beverage containers of claim 7, wherein the lid is affixed to each body by a hinge.

10. Two beverage containers that are mirror-images of each other and can be joined to form the appearance of a larger coffee carafe, each individual container having a body defining the shape of the individual container, the body comprising: an opening at the top of the body that receives beverage, a mating side that comes into contact with the mating side of the other container when joined to form the appearance of a larger, round coffee carafe, and an exterior side that is shaped to resemble one half of a larger, round coffee carafe.

11. The beverage containers of claim 10, wherein the mating sides are of uniform shape.

12. The beverage containers of claim 10, wherein the mating or exterior sides are made from an insulating material.

13. The beverage containers of claim 10, wherein each body further comprises a lid.

14. The beverage containers of claim 10, wherein each body further comprises a pouring spout.

15. The beverage containers of claim 10, wherein each body further comprises a handle.

16. The beverage containers of claim 13, wherein the lid is affixed to each body by snug-fit.

17. The beverage containers of claim 13, wherein the lid is affixed to each body by a hinge.

18. The beverage containers of claim 15, wherein the handle is affixed to an attachment area or directly to each body.

19. The beverage containers of claim 15, wherein the handle is molded as part of each body.

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