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A container for food products

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ABSTRACT

A container for food products comprising a containment body (2) having a base wall (6), a side wall (4) and a mouth (8) which can be closed by a closure element, characterized in that it comprises a first dividing partition (10) which is integral with the containment body (2), which extends from the base wall (6) to the mouth periphery (8) and which is connected to the side wall of the containment body in such a manner as to define a first containment chamber (12) and a second containment chamber (14), and comprising at least a second dividing partition (16) which is integral with the containment body (2), which extends from the base wall (6) to the mouth periphery (8) and which is connected to the first dividing partition (10) and the side wall (4) of the containment body (2) so as to subdivide one of the first and second chambers (14) into two adjacent compartments (18, 20), and wherein one of those compartments (20) has an auxiliary base wall (22) which is integral with the containment body (2) and which is offset with respect to the base wall (6) of the containment body (2).

(Figure 1)

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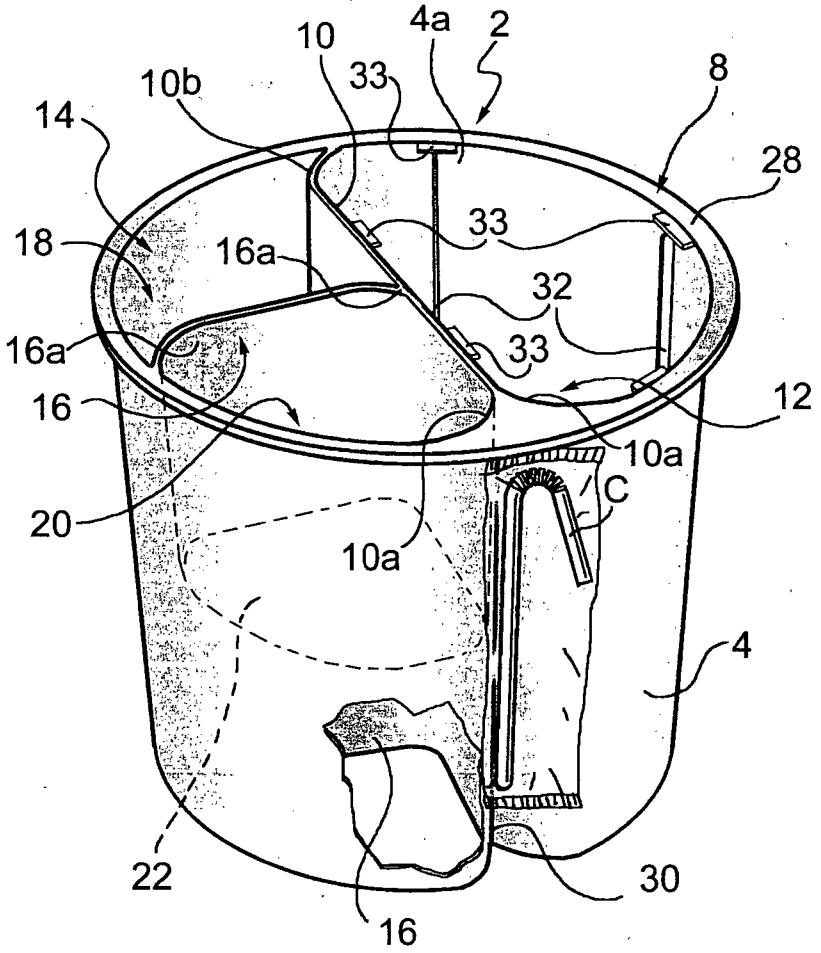
Fig.1



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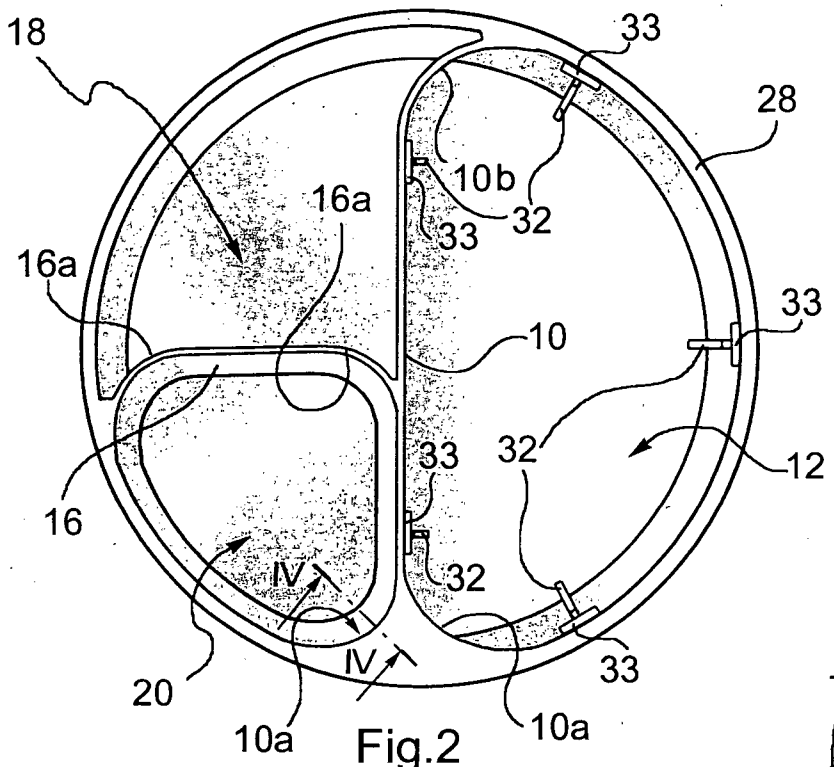

Fig.2

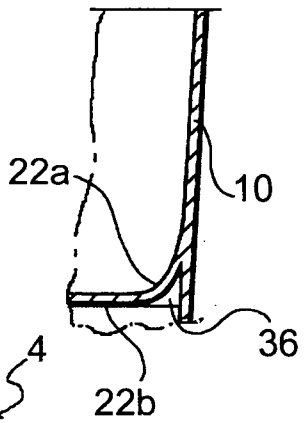

Fig.4

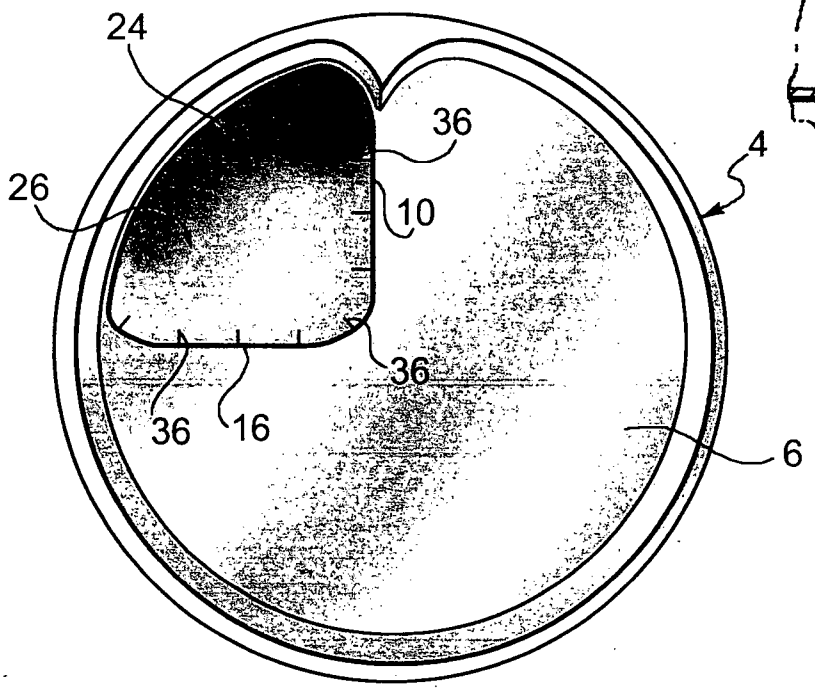

Fig.3

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Invention Title:

A CONTAINER FOR FOOD PRODUCTS

Our Ref : 736833
POF Code: 1249/174411

The following statement is a full description of this invention, including the best method of performing it known to applicant(s):

DESCRIPTION

The present invention relates to a container for food products, in particular intended for packaging a plurality of food products of different types which can be eaten together, or which can be consumed in combination or sequence.

In particular, the invention relates to a container which can be used to effect packaging of several food products that complement one another both from the organoleptic point of view and from the nutritional point of view, and which prevents undesirable mixing of various foodstuffs before and during consumption.

There are known, for example, packagings for food products which comprise in combination a liquid foodstuff, such as a beverage, a solid foodstuff, for example, batons of chocolate or a bakery product, such as bread sticks, and a cream-like foodstuff which can be eaten with the solid foodstuff.

Taking into consideration the different types of food product and the physical characteristics and the proportioning thereof inside the packaging, these packagings comprise a main container having a plurality of compartments, wherein at least one of the compartments is defined by an auxiliary container which is constituted by an insert positioned inside the main container. The auxiliary container, which can itself define one or more compartments, is used in order to provide a containment space which can be adjusted according to the proportioning of the product provided therein, independently of the volume of the main container.

The present invention provides a novel container for the

packaging of a combination of a plurality of food products, particularly of the above-mentioned type, whose production is advantageous and economical.

The subject-matter of the invention is a container for food products as defined in the appended claims.

Other advantages and features of the container according to the invention will become clear from the following detailed description which is given with reference to the appended drawings which are provided purely by way of non-limiting example and in which:

- Figure 1 is a perspective view of a container according to the invention,
- Figure 2 is a top view of the container of Figure 1,
- Figure 3 is a view from below of the container of Figure 1 and
- Figure 4 is a view sectioned along plane IV-IV of Figure 2.

With reference to the drawings, a container according to the invention comprises a containment body which is generally designated 2, which is generally of cupped form, preferably of cylindrical or frustoconical form, which has a preferably circular or elliptical cross-section and a side wall 4, a base wall 6 and an upper mouth type opening 8.

In particular, it relates to a containment body which has an integral (monobloc) structure, which is constituted by a plastics material, preferably suitable for contact with foodstuffs, such as polypropylene, and which can be produced by means of injection moulding techniques.

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A transverse partition designated 10 is integral with the body 2 and subdivides the internal space of the containment body 2 into two chambers, designated 12 and 14, respectively. The transverse partition 10, which is preferably a diametrical partition in one configuration of the containment body having a circular cross-section, extends vertically from the base wall 6 up to the periphery of the mouth 8 and is preferably connected to the side wall 4 of the containment body by means of arcuate or rounded wall portions 10a and 10b.

A second transverse partition 16, which is also integral with the containment body, extends from an intermediate region of the transverse partition 10 to the side wall 4 and is connected to them, preferably by means of arcuate wall portions 16a. The above-mentioned transverse partition 16 extends vertically from the mouth profile 8, or from a region adjacent to the mouth profile, down to the base wall 6 of the containment body so as to subdivide the chamber 14 into two adjacent chambers or compartments 18 and 20.

The compartment 20 has a base wall 22 which is illustrated with a dashed line in the drawing of Figure 1, which is connected to and integral with the partitions 16 and 10 and to the side wall 4 and which is offset with respect to the base wall 6 of the containment body or spaced apart from the plane of the base wall 6.

As illustrated in the sectioned drawing of Figure 4, the base wall 22 of the compartment 20 is preferably connected to the side wall 4 of the container and to the partitions 16 and 10 by means of base wall portions 22a having an arcuate sectional profile in a vertical plane, in order to make it easier for a consumer to remove a cream-like food substance

which - as indicated in greater detail below - is generally intended to be introduced into the compartment 20.

The central region 22b of the base wall 22 is generally planar but can instead have a given concavity directed upwards.

The arcuate wall portion 22a of the base wall is preferably further connected to the side wall 4 and to the dividing partitions 10 and 16 by means of a plurality of reinforcement ribs 36.

The base wall 6 has, in a position facing the base wall 22, an opening 24 so that the base wall 22 of the compartment or chamber 20, the side wall 4 of the container, the wall of the dividing partition 10 and the partition 16 define an auxiliary chamber 26 which is open towards the bottom, or at the base of the containment body.

The mouth 8 of the containment body preferably has a radial flange 28, with which there can be associated - by adhesive bonding or welding - a closure strip (not illustrated) which is generally of metal material and/or plastics material, for example, in the form of multi-layer laminar material, which is usually produced in such a manner as to be selectively pierceable, over the entire extent thereof or at least at a predetermined region, for example, by means of a straw C which is provided with a pointed end.

In the preferred embodiment illustrated in the drawings, the side wall 4 of the containment body 2 has an indentation or recess 30 having - in cross-section of the container - a cusp-like profile, or a profile defined by arcuate portions 10a of the wall 4 which converge in a cusp-like manner,

wherein there can be accommodated and fixed, for example, by means of an adhesive, a straw C which is arranged vertically in that indentation in a suitable film-like wrapper below the radial flange 28.

As indicated above, the container is suitable for packaging food products which have different consistencies and which are able to be consumed in combination, in particular a beverage, a solid food product and a food product having a cream-like consistency. In particular, the chamber 12, which preferably takes up approximately half of the volume of the body 2, is intended to receive a beverage, such as, for example, a fruit juice, a soft drink, a syrup or a tea-based beverage.

Particularly when it is necessary for the beverage to be packaged under sterile conditions, that beverage, instead of being introduced directly into the chamber 12, can be contained in an auxiliary container, for example, of thermoformed plastics material, which can be inserted in the chamber 12 and which preferably has a shape substantially complementary to the containment space of that chamber. To that end, it is preferable to use an auxiliary container which has a relatively flexible wall and which is provided with a radial flange which extends round the mouth periphery thereof. In order to secure an auxiliary container (not illustrated) of this type, there can be inserted in the chamber 12 (inside the chamber itself) engagement guides 32, which are constituted by way of example by vertical rib-like elements and which are associated with suitable internal projections 33 (which are formed at the top of the transverse partition 10 and the side wall 4a in the region of the mouth 8) which can engage in a restrained manner the upper annular periphery or

radial flange of the auxiliary container in the chamber 12. This auxiliary container can naturally itself have a closure strip which can be pierced by means of a straw and which is associated with or welded to the mouth periphery thereof.

The compartment or chamber 18 is generally intended to receive a solid food product, such as, for example, bread sticks or chocolate batons, but also a food product in granular or particle form, such as cereal puffs, pieces of hazelnuts, peanuts, almonds, pistachio nuts or the like.

The compartment or chamber 20 is generally intended to receive a food product in the form of a cream which can be combined, in organoleptic terms, with the solid food product. For this purpose, the cross-section of the chamber 20 - as indicated above - has a generally triangular shape with rounded corners 10a and 16a which facilitates the removal of the cream-like food substance by means of a spoon or spatula or by using the above-mentioned solid food product, which is constituted in this case by a foodstuff baton.

As previously indicated, the monobloc container can be produced by plastics material being injection-moulded in such a manner that the production thereof does not require further assembly operations.

The chamber 26, which is open at the base of the container, constitutes an auxiliary containment space, which can receive an accessory, such as, for example, a spatula or a plaything, for example, a so-called surprise gift. In that case, it is intended that another closure element or a cover, which can be disengaged by hand and which allows access to the chamber 26 and the removal of the above-mentioned accessory, can be

associated with the base wall of the container.

In that manner, the removal of the accessory - carried out from the bottom of the container - is effected independently of the opening of the container, for example, by removal of the closure strip which is associated with the mouth 8 and which is necessary for the conservation of the food substances. This results in a higher level of hygiene for the packaging.

The packaging according to the invention is thereby suitable for a type of consumption which can be substantially defined as "eating and drinking", with the consumer having the possibility of simultaneously or substantially simultaneously consuming different food substances and - optionally - having access to an accessory or surprise which is accommodated in the container before or after the consumption of the food substances, and in any case independently of the consumption of those food substances.

Naturally, the principle of the invention remaining the same, the forms of embodiment and details of the invention may be varied widely with respect to those described and illustrated, without thereby departing from the scope of the present invention, as defined by the appended claims.

CLAIMS

1. A container for food products comprising a containment body (2) having a base wall (6), a side wall (4) and a mouth (8) adapted to be closed by a closure element, characterized in that it comprises a first dividing partition (10) which is integral with the containment body (2), which extends from the base wall (6) to the mouth periphery (8) and which is connected to the side wall (4) of the containment body by means of arcuate wall portions (10a, 10b) in such a manner as to define a first containment chamber (12) and a second containment chamber (14), and comprising at least a second dividing partition (16) which is integral with the containment body (2), which extends from the base wall (6) to the mouth periphery (8) and which is connected to the first dividing partition (10) and the side wall (4) of the containment body (2) so as to subdivide one of the first and second chambers (14) into two adjacent compartments (18, 20), and wherein one of those compartments (20) has an auxiliary base wall (22) which is integral with the containment body (2) and which is offset with respect to the base wall (6) of the containment body (2), and in that the side wall (4) of the containment body (2) has at least one indentation (30) which is defined by the arcuate wall portions (10a), and extends from the base wall (6) up to the region of the mouth (8) of the container and which has a cusp-like profile in cross-section of the container.

2. A container according to claim 1, characterized in that the base wall (6) of the containment body (2) has, in a position facing the auxiliary base wall (22), an opening (24) in such a manner that an auxiliary chamber (26) open towards the base of the container is defined in the containment body (2).

3. A container according to claims 1 and 2, characterized in that the second dividing partition (16) is laterally connected to an intermediate region of the first dividing partition (10) and to the side wall (4) of the containment body (2) by means of arcuate wall portions (16a).

4. A container according to any one of claims 1 to 3, characterized in that a straw (C) or similar accessory is accommodated in that indentation (30).

5. A container according to any one of claims 1 to 4, characterized in that the mouth (8) of the container has a radial flange (28), with which a closure strip can be associated.

6. A container according to claim 2, characterized in that a closure element which is suitable for closing the opening (24) of the base wall (6) of the container is associated with the base wall (6) of the container.

7. A container according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that it has an integral structure which can be produced by a plastics material being injection-moulded.

8. A container according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the auxiliary base wall (22) of the compartment (20) is connected to the side wall (4) of the container and to the first dividing partition (11) and second dividing partition (16) by means of a base wall portion (22a) having an arcuate profile.

9. A container according to claim 8, characterized in that the base wall portion (22a) having an arcuate profile is further connected to the side wall (4) and to the dividing par-

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titions (10, 16) by means of a plurality of reinforcement ribs (36).

10. A container according to any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that the side wall (4a) and the first dividing partition (10) comprise, at the face thereof directed towards the interior of the first containment chamber (12), engagement means (32, 33) which can secure an auxiliary container accommodated in that first chamber.

11. A container according to claim 10, characterized in that the engagement means (32, 33) can engage a flange of the mouth of the auxiliary container.

12. A packaging for food products including a container according to any one of claims 1 to 11 and further comprising a liquid food substance which is accommodated in the containment chamber (12), a solid food substance accommodated in one of the compartments (18) and a cream-like food substance which is accommodated in the other of those compartments (20).

13. A packaging according to claim 12, characterized in that it comprises an auxiliary container which is inserted in the containment chamber (12), which contains the liquid food substance and which has a shape substantially complementary to the space of that containment chamber.

14. A packaging according to claim 13, characterized in that the side wall (4a) of the containment body (2) and/or the first dividing partition (10) has/have engagement means (32) (33) which can engage the upper wall or a radial flange of the mouth of the auxiliary container.

DATED: 20 January 2005

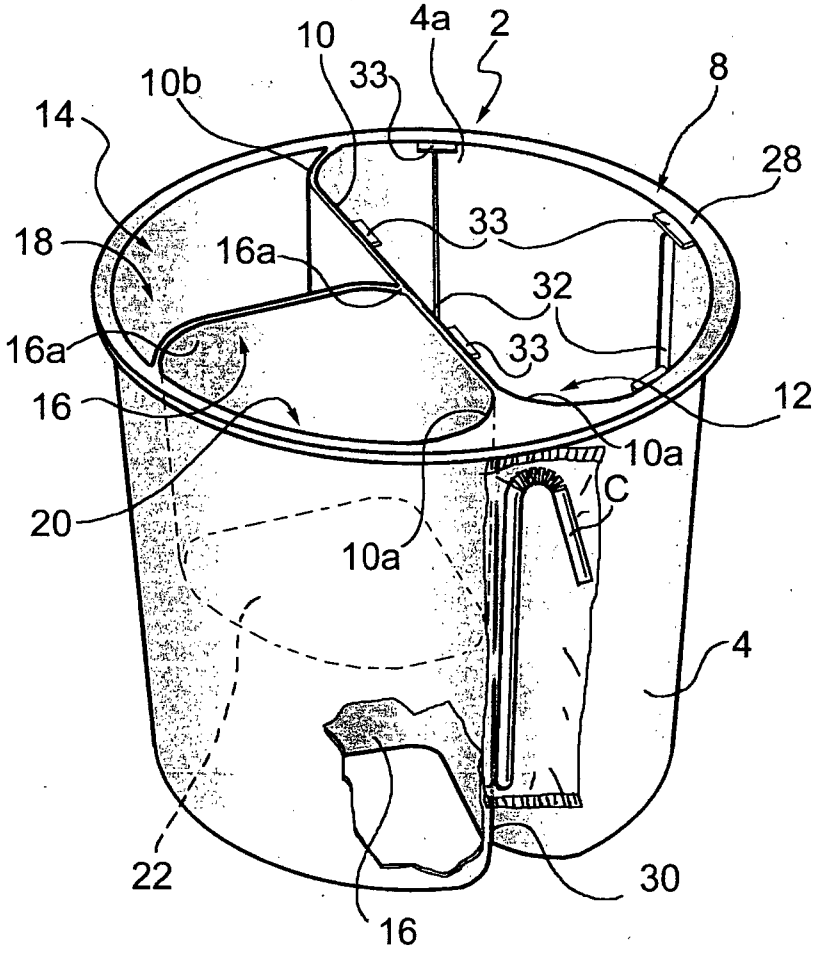
PHILLIPS ORMONDE & FITZPATRICK

Attorneys for:

SOREMARTEC S.A.

20 Jan 2005 2005200235

Fig.1



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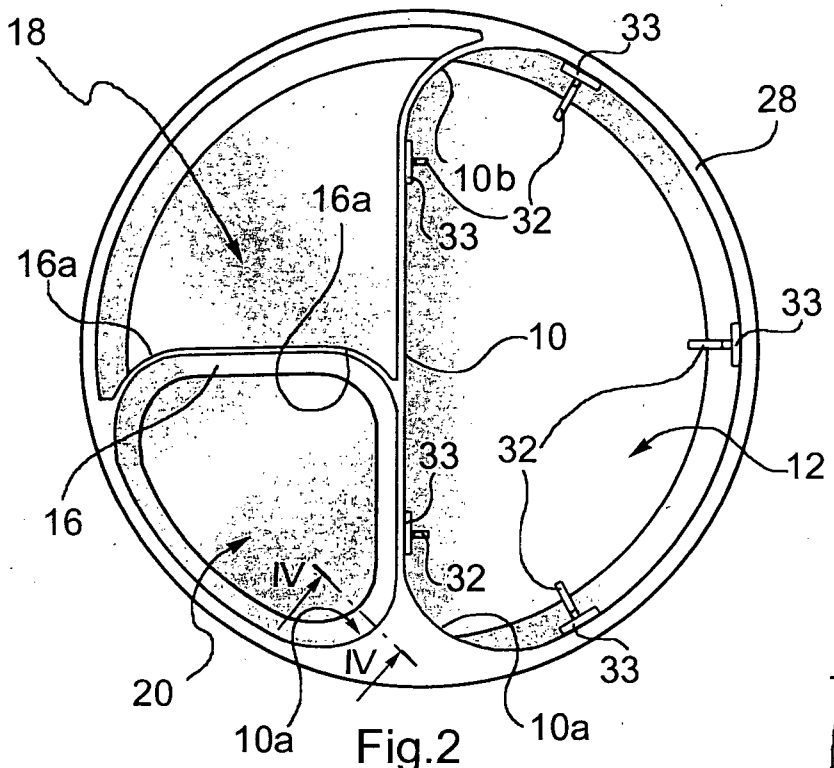

Fig.2

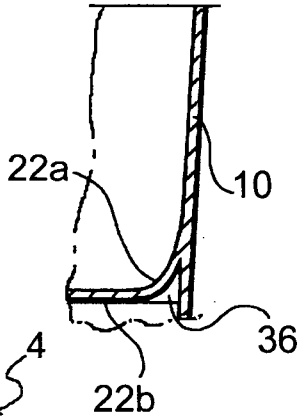

Fig.4

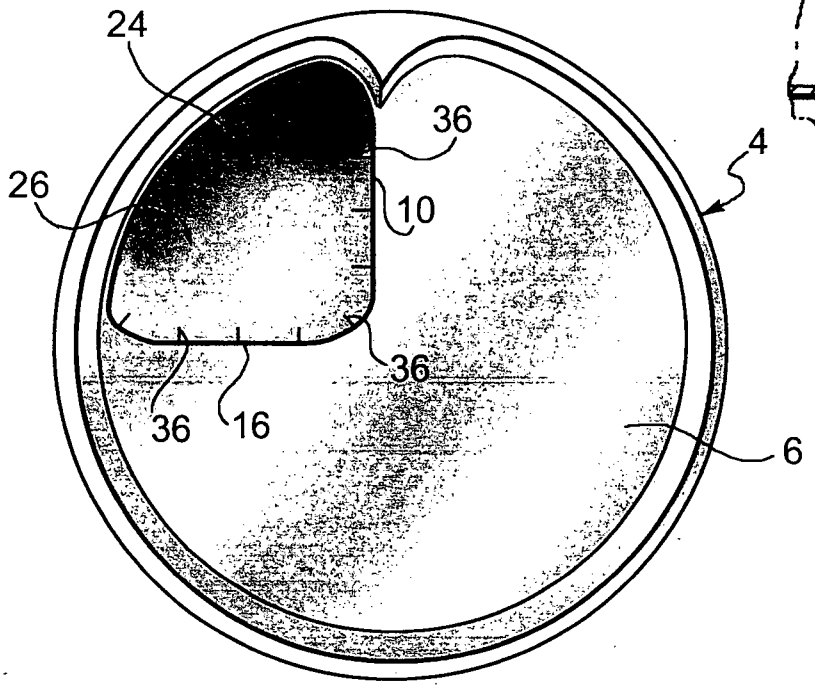

Fig.3