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(72) Inventor: **Celli, Goffredo**
47852 Coriano Rimini (IT)

(74) Representative: **Lanzoni, Luciano**
c/o BUGNION S.p.A.
Via A. Valentini, 11/15
47900 Rimini (IT)

(71) Applicant: **CELLI S.p.A.**
47852 Coriano (Rimini) (IT)

(54) A drink dispensing column with variable configuration

(57) A column for dispensing drinks, having such a shape as to have at least two different display configurations, when observed from a same viewpoint, but according to at least two corresponding and different ori-

entations in space assumed by said column (1), comprising means (12, 21) for stably connecting at least one device (11) for dispensing the drink, on at least two different areas (111, 122) corresponding to and compatible with two different orientations of the column (1).

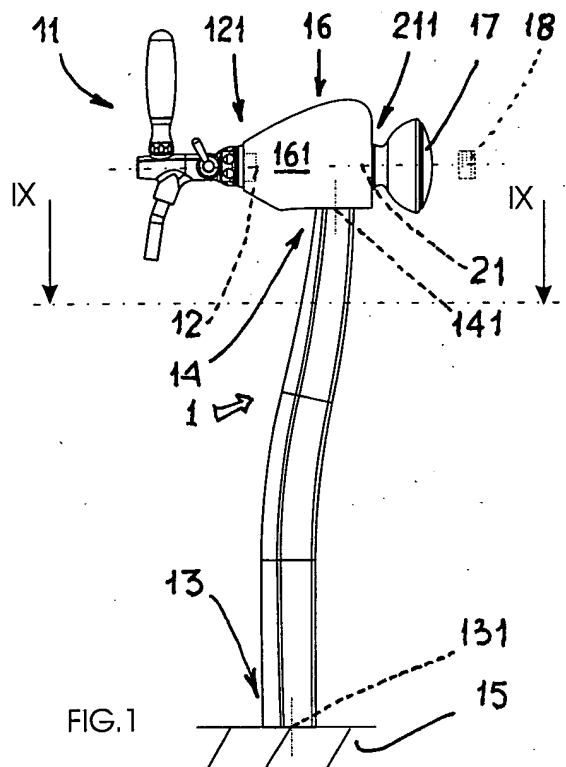


FIG. 1

Description

[0001] The present invention relates to a drink dispensing column with variable configuration.

[0002] It is well known that drink dispensing columns all have more or less appreciable aesthetics, dictated by their particular chosen shape.

[0003] All such columns, which are supported over a bar counter, always have a single, well determined display configuration which is invariable, both from the users' side and from the opposite side, i.e. from the internal part of the bar counter, where the bar operator commonly works.

[0004] The tap or drink dispensing device is obviously applied to the column on one and only one part oriented towards the bar counter operator, whilst from the opposite side, oriented towards the user, is visible the so-called frontal and the actual display part, where are usually present sign bearing devices, which identify the type and/or brand of the drink and/or the manufacturer of the column itself.

[0005] The object of the present invention is to overcome the aforesaid drawbacks.

[0006] The column of the invention allows a selection among multiple display configurations, both on the users' side and, in parallel, on the opposite side. All this with very few contrivances, which thus keep the manufacturing cost limited and also allow the different possible mountings, directly and easily on site, with no need for specific technical personnel. The operator will thereby have available different and varied options for the aesthetic displays of his/her column, practically for the cost of one.

[0007] These objects and others besides, which shall become more readily apparent from the description that follows, are achieved, in accordance with the present invention, by a column as set out in the appended claims.

[0008] The invention is described in greater detail hereafter, in an example of a preferred embodiment thereof, with the aid of drawings, in which:

- Figures 1 through 8 show as many different configurations deriving from a different orientation and assembly of the essential components of a same drink dispensing column;
- Figure 9 is a view according to the section line IX-IX of Figure 1;
- Figures 10, 11 and 12 respectively show a lateral view, a first perspective view from a determined first direction and a second perspective view from a second direction opposite the first, of a second type of drink dispensing column according to the invention, which incorporates a support, shaped according to a summit head bilaterally provided with means for indifferently connecting a dispensing device or a tap.

[0009] With reference to Figures 1 and 2, the number (1) designates the column of the invention.

[0010] It is readily apparent that said column (1) has such a shape as to have at least two different display configurations, when observed from a same viewpoint, but according to at least two corresponding and different orientations in space assumed by said column (1). To obtain this, it is also necessary to provide at least two identical means (12, 21) for stably connecting at least one same device (11) for dispensing the drinks, on at least two different areas (121, 211) corresponding to and compatible with two different orientations of the column (1).

[0011] In a first embodiment, as Figures 10, 11 and 12 clearly show, the column (1) has at least a second different display configuration, simply when rotated by a predetermined angle relative to the first basic display configuration (in this case with a rotation by a flat angle).

[0012] In a second embodiment, the column (1) has, with respect to a first basic display configuration, at least a second different display configuration, simply when it is turned over (Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4, compared with Figures 5, 6, 7, 8).

[0013] In this case, its two ends (13) and (14) can, in theory, both be readied directly to receive the identical means (12) and (12) for the stable connection of at least a same device (11) for dispensing the drink (such as a tap), where each of said identical means (12) and (21) is also functionally and alternatively able to constitute the means for stably connecting the column (1) to its underlying support counter (15).

[0014] Preferably, however, the column (1) of the aforesaid type, able to be turned over, at its ends (13) and (14) has corresponding second means (131, 141) for stable connection, each capable of connecting indifferently at least one same support (16) with its own contour, whereat are instead directly positioned said two identical means (12, 21) for the stable connection of a same dispensing device (11). In this case, each of said second means (131) and (141) is functionally and alternatively able to constitute means for stably connecting the column (1) to its own underlying support counter (15), as Figures 1 through 8 clearly show.

[0015] Hence, the two identical connecting means (12) or (21), when they are destined to connect a dispensing device (11), can do so directly, but also indirectly. Except in cases in which the column (1) itself directly supports the dispensing device (11) (usually one or more taps) in one of the selected positions, such as atop the column (if the column can be turned over) over, as shown in Figure 9, where the dashed lines indicate the possible alternative bilateral locations of the device (11) itself (possibly with the aid of joining accessories (20)), the column (1) preferably comprises the support (16), in correspondence with which are positioned the identical means (12, 21) for stable connection.

[0016] In particular, the contour of said support could, by itself, determine the at least two different display con-

figurations of the column (1). In any case, it is preferable that said support (16) be modelled differently from the shape of the column (1) and so shaped that it, too, has at least two different display configurations, when observed from a same viewpoint, but according to two corresponding and different orientations in space assumed thereby. It could also be incorporated in the column (1), as shown in Figures 11, 12 and 13, or removably applicable to the column (1). In the first case, if the support (16) were simply shaped in substantially symmetrical fashion (and hence not shaped in such a way as to have at least two different display configurations), then the different display configuration would necessarily be the function of the column (1) alone, as shown in Figures 11 and 12. Again in the first case, if the support were instead so shaped as to have at least two different display configurations, then its different contour alone could provide the different configurations of the column (1) which, in this case, could also be shaped symmetrically. [0017] In the second case, instead, the possible display configurations are multiplied, if the column (1) and also the support (16) are shaped differently at least on the two opposite fronts.

[0018] As Figures 1 through 8 show, four different configurations of the column could be obtained, orienting the column on a front or on the opposite one, rotated by a flat angle, with the support (16) oriented in a first direction thereof (Figures 1 and 2) or in a second opposite direction thereof (Figures 3 and 4). Four other possible different configurations would be obtained by turning the column (1) over and performing the same operations described above (Figures 5-8).

[0019] In all illustrated examples, except the one shown in dashed lines in Figure 9, all the supports (16) are constituted by a summit head (161), positioned atop the column (1).

[0020] As shown in Figures 1 through 8, each of the stable connection means (12, 21) is indifferently able to connect a dispensing device (11), or any accessory (17), such as a sign holder element, which comprises attachment elements that are perfectly equivalent to those provided on the device (11).

[0021] Also provided is an element (18) for hiding the identical stable connection means (12, 21), at the side where no dispensing device (11) or accessory is connected. Obviously, it too comprises perfectly equivalent attachment elements.

[0022] Obviously, it would also be possible, where aesthetics and space allow it, to apply a corresponding dispensing device (11) (usually one or more taps) in each of the identical stable connection means (12, 21).

[0023] The illustrated solutions, therefore, provides a very versatile column (1), particular in many aspects. The invention thus conceived can be subject to modifications and variants, without thereby departing from the scope of the invention that characterises it in the claims that follow.

Claims

1. A column for dispensing drinks with variable configuration, **characterised in that** it has such a shape as to have at least two different display configurations, when observed from a same viewpoint, but according to at least two corresponding and **characterised in that** it comprises at least two identical means (12, 21) for stably connecting at least one same device (11) for dispensing the drinks, on at least two different areas (121, 211) corresponding to and compatible with two different orientations of the column (1), each of said identical stable connection means (12, 21) being indifferently at least able to connect, alternatively, with any accessory (17), such as a sign holder element.
2. A column as claimed in claim 1, **characterised in that** it has, with respect to a first basic display configuration, at least a second different display configuration, simply when rotated by a predetermined angle relative to the first basic display configuration.
3. A column as claimed in claim 1 or 2, of the type comprising means for stably connecting the column (1) to its own support counter (15), **characterised in that** it has, with respect to a first basic display configuration, at least a second different display configuration, simply when turned over, its two ends (13) and (14) being apt to house respectively the identical means (12) and (21) for stably connecting at least one same device (11) for dispensing the drink, each of said identical means (12) and (21) being also functionally and alternatively able to constitute said means for stably connecting the column (1) to its own underlying support counter (15).
4. A column as claimed in claim 1 or 2, of the type comprising means for stably connecting the column (1) to its own support counter (15), **characterised in that** it has, with respect to a first basic display configuration, at least a second different display configuration, simply when turned over, its two ends (13) and (14) providing corresponding second stable connection means (131, 141), each indifferently able to connect at least a same support (16) with its own contour, in correspondence with which are directly positioned said at least two identical means (12, 21) for the stable connection of a same dispensing device (11) each of the second means (131) and (141) being also functionally and alternatively able to constitute said means for stably connecting the column (1) to its own underlying support counter (15).
5. A column as claimed in claim 1 or 2, **characterised in that** it comprises a support (16), with its own contour, whereat are directly positioned said stable

connection means (12, 21).

6. A column as claimed in claim 4 or 5, **characterised in that** the contour of said support (16) alone determines the at least two different display configurations of the column (1). 5
7. A column as claimed in claim 4 or 5, **characterised in that** said support (16) is modelled differently from the contour of the column (1) and so shaped that it also has at least two different display configurations, when observed from a same viewpoint, but according to at least two corresponding and different orientations in space assumed thereby. 10
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8. A column as claimed in any of the previous claims from 4 through 7, **characterised in that** said support (16) is incorporated in the column (1).
9. A column as claimed in any of the previous claims from 4 through 7, **characterised in that** said support (16) is removably applicable to the column (1). 20
10. A column as claimed in any of the previous claims from 4 through 9, **characterised in that** said support (16) is a summit head (161), positioned atop the column (1). 25
11. A column as claimed in any of the previous claims, **characterised in that** it comprises at least one element (18) for hiding the identical stable connection means (12, 21), at the side where no dispensing device (11) or accessory (17) is connected. 30

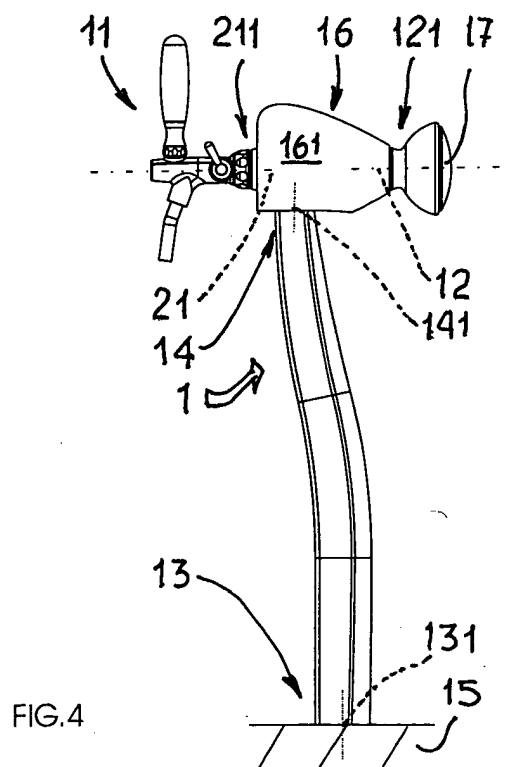
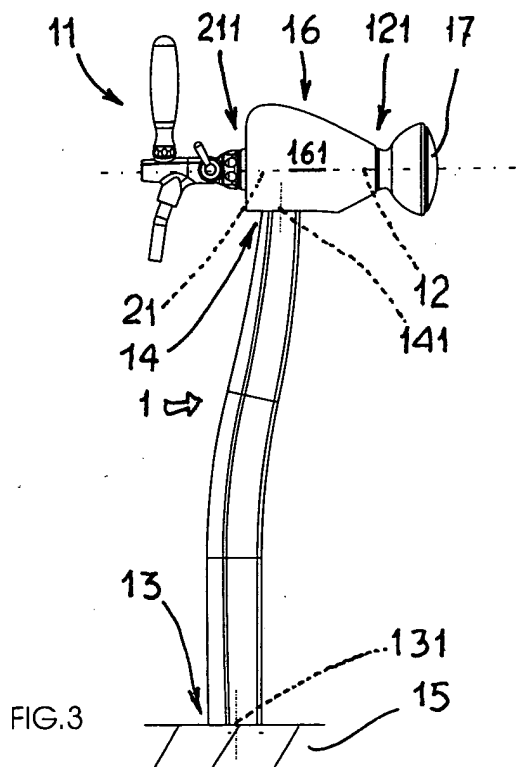
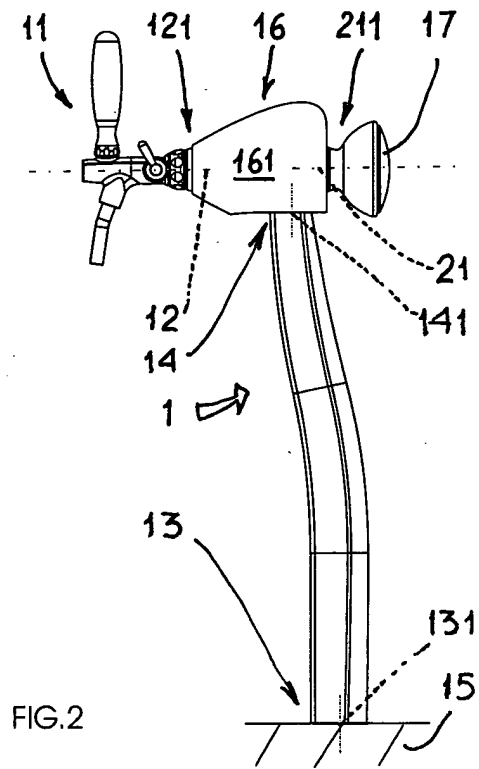
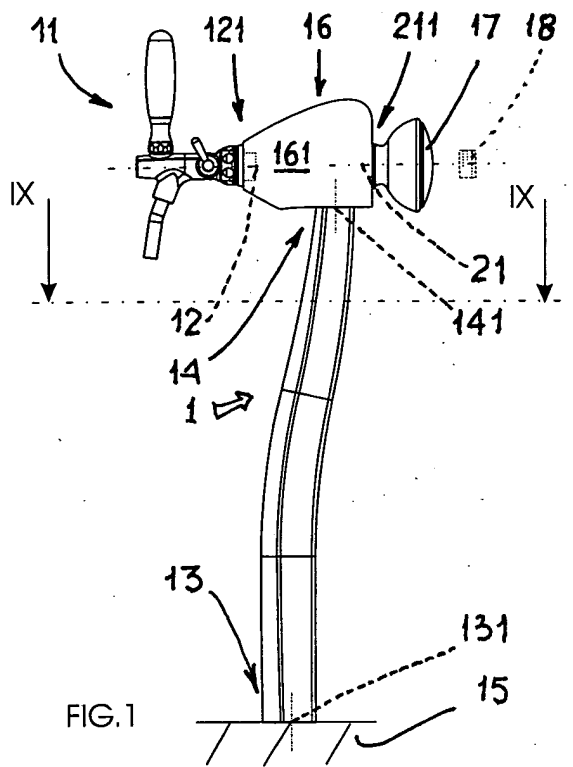
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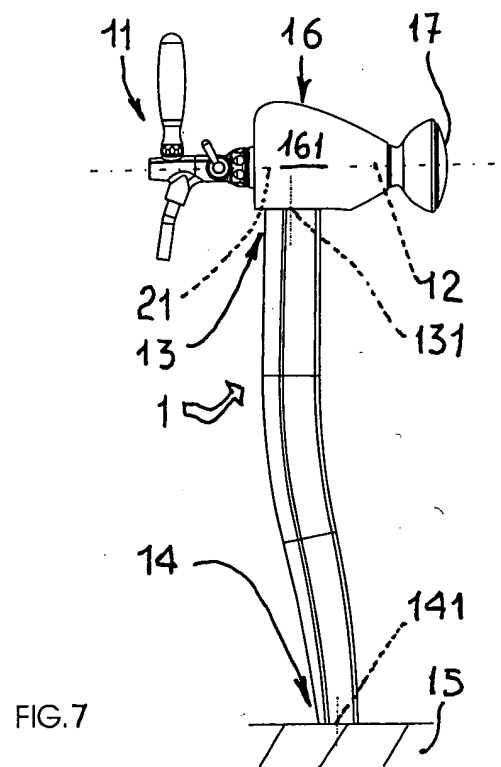
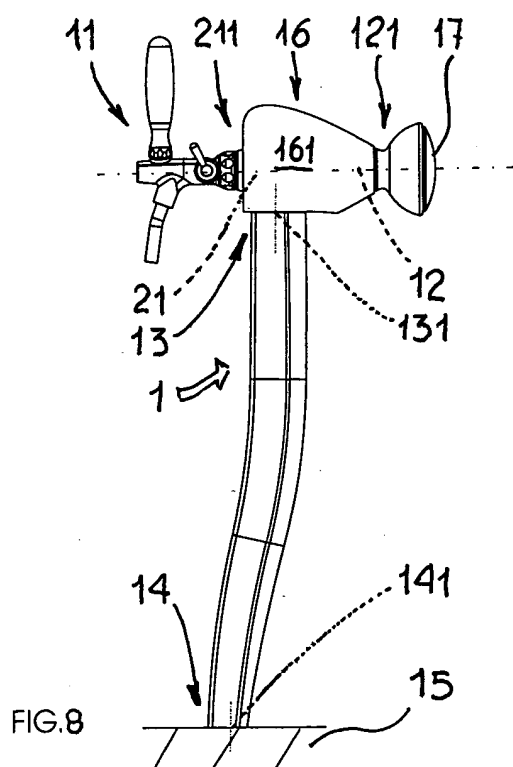
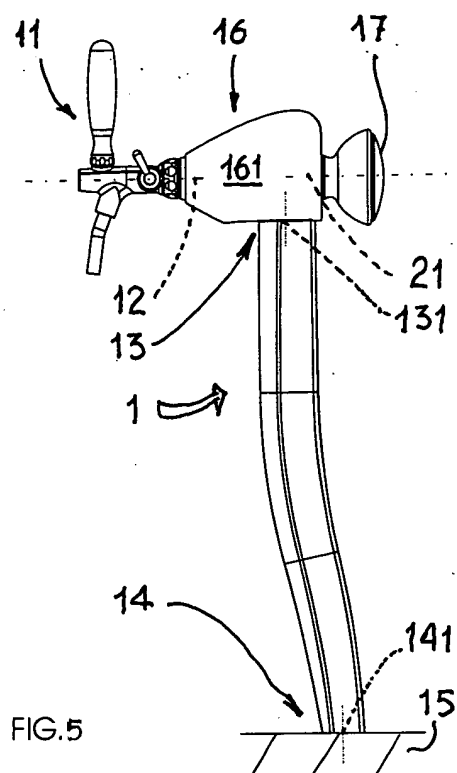
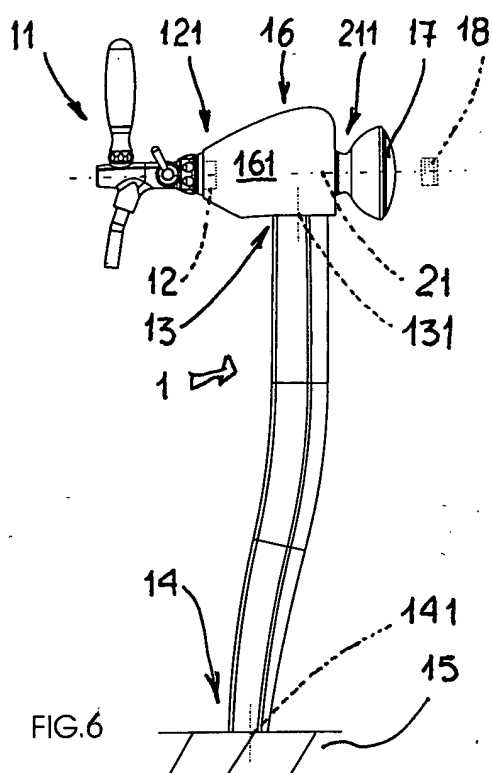
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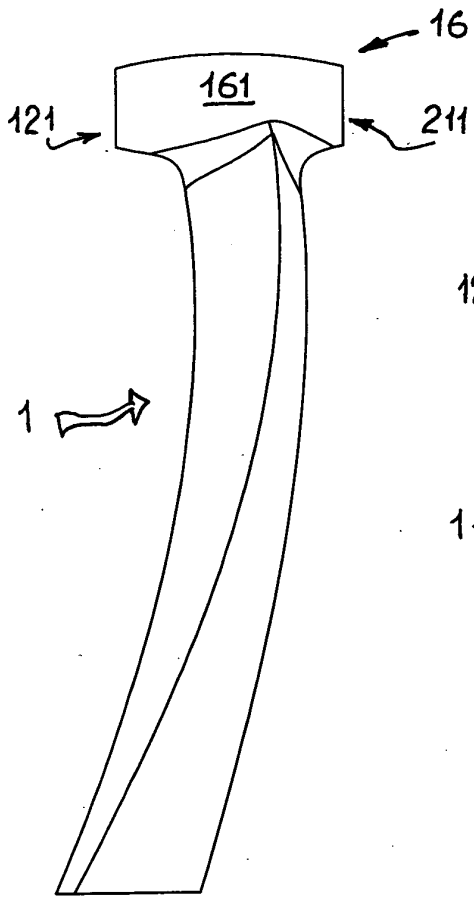


FIG. 10

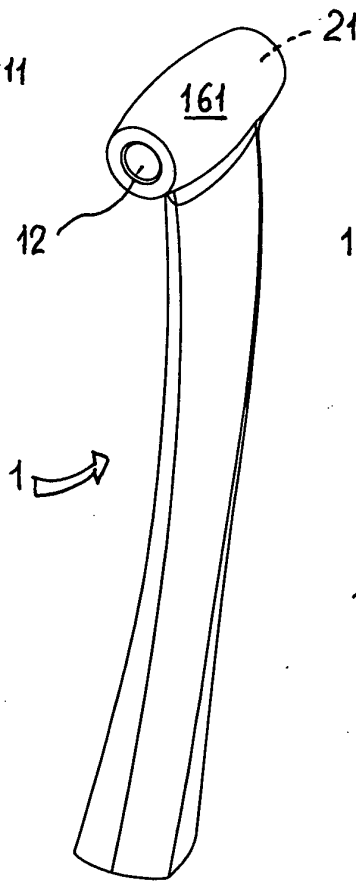


FIG. 11

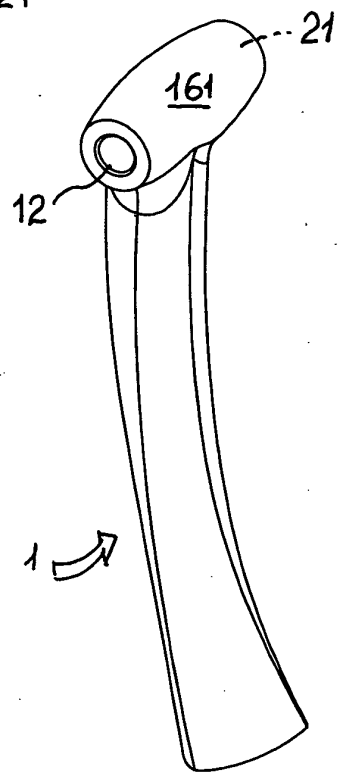


FIG. 12

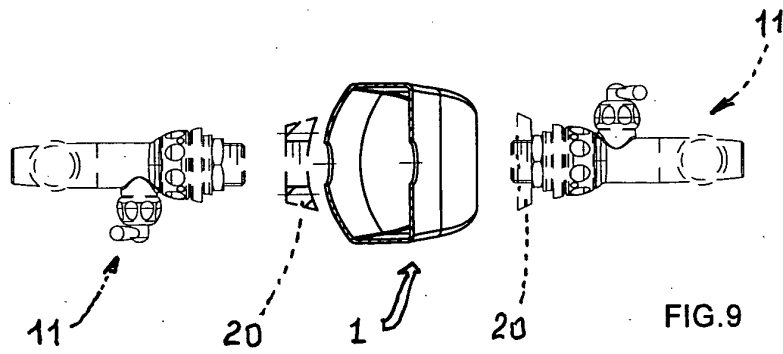


FIG. 9



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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 04 42 5146

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			B67D
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search Munich		Date of completion of the search 22 July 2004	Examiner Müller, C
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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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EP 04 42 5146

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