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(54) **Multi-cup vessel for ice-creams**

(57) A multi-cup vessel (1) for ice-creams is described, comprising at least two mutually separated cups (3, 5) adapted to contain different types and amounts of products; such cups (3, 5) are mutually connected

through at least one, rigid or flexible, junction line (7); moreover, at least one of the cups (3, 5) is adapted to also operate as handle or gripping member for transporting the vessel (1).

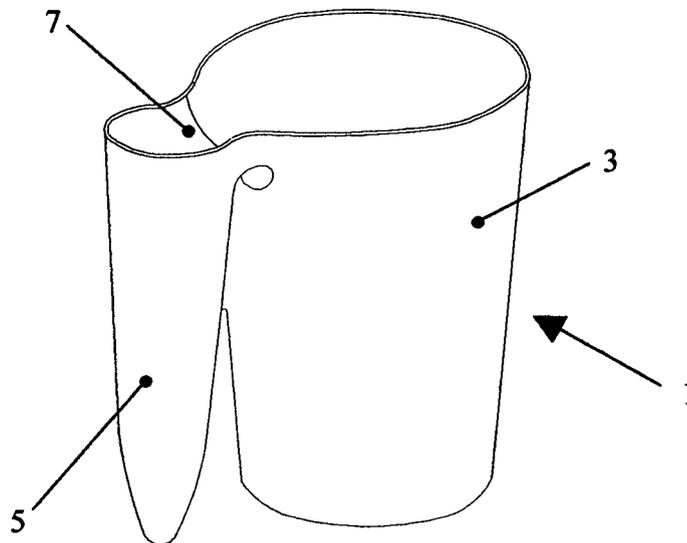


FIG. 1

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Description

[0001] The present invention refers to a multi-cup vessel, equipped with at least two cups and adapted in particular to contain ice-creams.

[0002] Various types of vessels are known in the art for transporting, also ice-creams, divided into compartments in order to keep their contents separated.

[0003] In the field of vessels for yoghurts to be eaten by the end user, vessels are known that are equipped with two cups, one of which contains yoghurt, while the other one contains cereals or other foods to be mixed with yoghurt upon their consumption. In the field of ice-creams, instead, and in particular of vessels for an end user to consume ice-creams, no solutions of this type are known.

[0004] Instead, so far the cups of specialty ice-creams, both for ice-cream manufacturers and for consumers, had constraints for their proposal and use.

[0005] In fact, for ice-cream manufacturers:

- it was complicated to propose them without having tables
- they required a great deal of preparing work
- they often were difficult to communicate.

[0006] These problems are serious, given the chance of increasing, with these products, the mean value of incomes of ice-cream parlours.

[0007] The consumer, on the other hand, was often constrained to consume his cups in an ice-cream parlour and was limited by proposals defined beforehand in his desire to "experiment".

[0008] The Applicant of the present invention has tried to overcome these obstacles and to free the desire of "eating" an ice-cream, designing a new mode for preparing and offering specialty cups that is:

- simple, quick, earning and easy to propose for ice-cream manufacturers
- new, self-satisfactory and amusing for the end consumer.

[0009] The present invention, in particular, is based on some major concepts, namely:

- the proposal of rich specialties in their appearance and visual enjoyment, but simple to be prepared
- the advised use of chocolate mixtures with inclusions in addition to toppings and grains, able to give consistency to tastes and self-gratification to consumers
- the chance for a consumer to be free in his choice of ingredients of his own specialty
- the realisation of a new form that is able not only to accept in an innovative way what is described above, but also to allow an easy consumption outside the ice-cream parlour.

[0010] Therefore, object of the present invention is solving the above prior art problems, providing a multi-cup vessel for ice-creams, that allows supplying the end user with ice-creams that are able to be mixed with various topping food for ice-creams.

[0011] A further object of the present invention is providing a vessel as stated above in which one of the cups is further adapted to operate as handle or gripping member for transporting such vessel.

[0012] The above and other objects and advantages of the invention, as will appear from the following description, are obtained with a multi-cup vessel as claimed in claim 1. Preferred embodiments and non-trivial variations of the present invention are the subject matter of the dependent claims.

[0013] The present invention will be better described by some preferred embodiments thereof, provided as a non-limiting example, with reference to the enclosed drawings, in which:

- Figure 1 is a perspective view of a possible embodiment of a two-cup vessel according to the present invention;
- Figure 2 is a side view of the vessel of Fig. 1; and
- Figure 3 is a top view of the vessel of Fig. 1.

[0014] With reference to the Figures, a preferred embodiment of the multi-cup vessel of the present invention is shown and described. It will be immediately obvious that numerous variations and modifications (for example related to shape, sizes and parts with equivalent functionality) can be made to the described vessel without departing from the scope of the invention as appears from the enclosed claims.

[0015] The multi-cup vessel 1 of the present invention is adapted to contain products in general, but can be applied in particular and preferably to the field of ice-creams.

[0016] In its most common embodiment, it comprises two cups 3, 5 (but other arrangements with a greater number of cups are obviously possible), mutually separated and adapted to contain different types and amounts of products.

[0017] In the embodiment shown, one of the cups, designated with reference 3, has a greater capacity and is aimed to contain the real ice-cream, while the other cup, designated with reference 5, is adapted to contain various types of food, such as toppings for ice-cream, additives, etc. Moreover, the smaller cup 5 is adapted to operate as handle or gripping member for a user, providing the vessel 1 with an appearance of cup as shown in the Figures.

[0018] Such cups 3, 5 are mutually joined along at least one junction line 7 made of flexible material; such junction line 7 can be rigid (meaning that the two cups 3, 5 remain mutually separate and the products contained therein are collected by the consumer and possibly mixed through external means, such as for example the spoons that will

be mentioned below), or can be adapted to be bent in order to allow pouring the contents of cup (handle) 5 inside cup 3.

[0019] It is obviously possible to make such junction line 7 also of a type that can be broken, in order to be able to possibly mutually detach the two cups 3, 5 once having poured their contents; it will then be possible to dispose of the smaller cup (handle) 5 and use the bigger cup 3 as common cup or glass for ice-cream.

[0020] Moreover, the multi-cup vessel 1 of the present invention can be equipped with at least one spoon adapted both to collect ice-cream and topping separately, and to mix ice-cream and topping after having poured them in a single cup (for example 3).

[0021] Still more, in order to make its contents more evident and aesthetically pleasing, the vessel 1 can be made of transparent material, preferably plastics.

[0022] Currently preferred capacities for two embodiments of the vessel 1 are, in one case, 120 ml for cup 3 and 20 ml for cup 5, and in another case, 440 ml for cup 3 and 40 ml for cup 5.

[0023] With the described arrangements, thereby, some major functions are performed, such as:

- allowing an easy transport and a comfortable consumption of ice-creams even outside an ice-cream parlour
- providing new and original solutions for inserting solid topping elements (such as for example grains)
- avoiding the direct contact between hand and cup during its transport.

[0024] Nowadays, there is a strong consumer interest in self-gratification, because the act of consuming does not satisfy only primary needs, but more and more affects the personal well-being area.

[0025] In this environment, the interest of consumers is directed towards small dessert in glasses, ideal to renew the removal of ice-creams but also valid as impulse consumption times linked to a tasty pause or a pleasant snack. Absolutely innovative ice-cream recipes and vessel shapes have thereby been created.

[0026] In particular, the proposed recipes have been devised both for creamy mousse, and for layered ice-cream. Both proposals, completed with sauces and solids, offer a range of very interesting chromatisms and tastes for the consumer.

[0027] The interest of consumers towards small cakes in glasses have not so far produced any real innovation in used vessels, so that often they were objects aimed for other uses.

[0028] The vessel 1 of the present invention, instead, is an innovation also applied to desserts in glasses, in its arrangement with greater capacity.

[0029] In this application, the vessel 1, preferably made of transparent material, gives the maximum value to the exposure of prepared desserts in a shop window. Moreover, it is distinguished due to the presence of the

"vessel" handle 5 that, in addition to characterise its shape, allows:

- being filled with toppings, creating new chromatisms inside the windows
- facilitating the cup consumption when there is an impulse consumption
- avoiding the direct contact between hand and cup when eating (particularly unpleasant in case of desserts made of ice-cream).

[0030] Some preferred embodiments of the present invention have been shown and described: obviously, the skilled people in the art will immediately realise that numerous variations and modifications can be performed, functionally equivalent to the previous ones, that fall within the scope of the invention as pointed out in the enclosed claims.

Claims

1. Multi-cup vessel (1) for ice-creams, **characterised in that** it comprises at least two mutually separated cups (3, 5) adapted to contain different types and amounts of products, said cups (3, 5) being mutually connected through at least one junction line (7), at least one of said cups (3, 5) being adapted to also operate as handle or gripping member for transporting said vessel (1).
2. Multi-cup vessel (1) according to claim 1, **characterised in that** said junction line (7) is rigid and said at least two cups (3, 5) and the contained products are kept mutually separated.
3. Multi-cup vessel (1) according to claim 1, **characterised in that** said junction line (7) is flexible, said at least two cups (3, 5) being adapted to be bent along said junction line (7) in order to pour the products contained in one (5) of said cups (3, 5) inside the other one (3) of said cups (3, 5).
4. Multi-cup vessel (1) according to any one of the previous claims, **characterised in that** one (3) of said cups (3, 5) has a much greater capacity than the other one (5) of said cups (3, 5).
5. Multi-cup vessel (1) according to claim 4, **characterised in that** said cup (3) with greater capacity is adapted to contain ice-cream and said cup (3) with smaller capacity is adapted to contain topping food for ice-cream.
6. Multi-cup vessel (1) according to claim 3, **characterised in that** said cups (3, 5) are mutually joined in a detachable way along said junction line (7).

7. Multi-cup vessel (1) according to any one of the previous claims, **characterised in that** it is further equipped with at least one spoon adapted to mix ice-cream and topping after having poured them in a single cup (3). 5
8. Multi-cup vessel (1) according to any one of the previous claims, **characterised in that** it is made of transparent material. 10
9. Multi-cup vessel (1) according to any one of the previous claims, **characterised in that** said cup (3) has a capacity of 120 ml and said cup (5) has a capacity of 20 ml. 15
10. Multi-cup vessel (1) according to any one of claims 1 to 8, **characterised in that** said cup (3) has a capacity of 440 ml and said cup (5) has a capacity of 40 ml. 20

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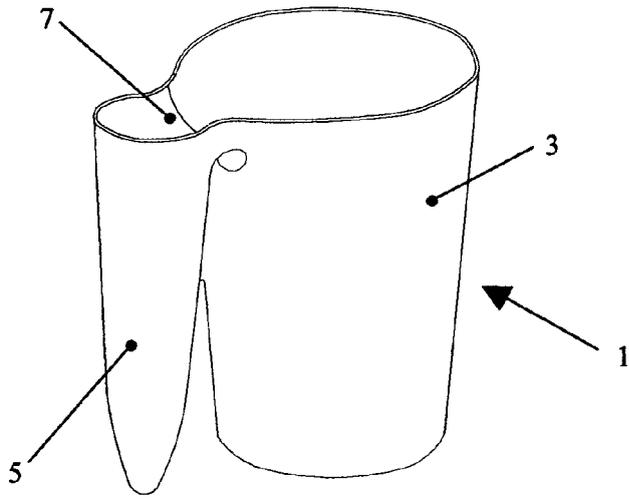


FIG. 1

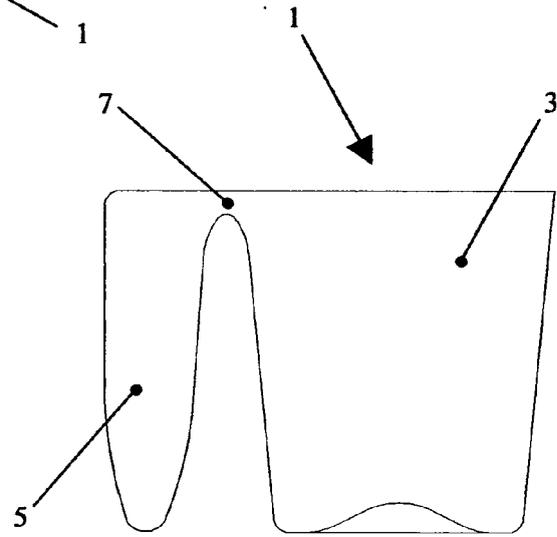


FIG. 2

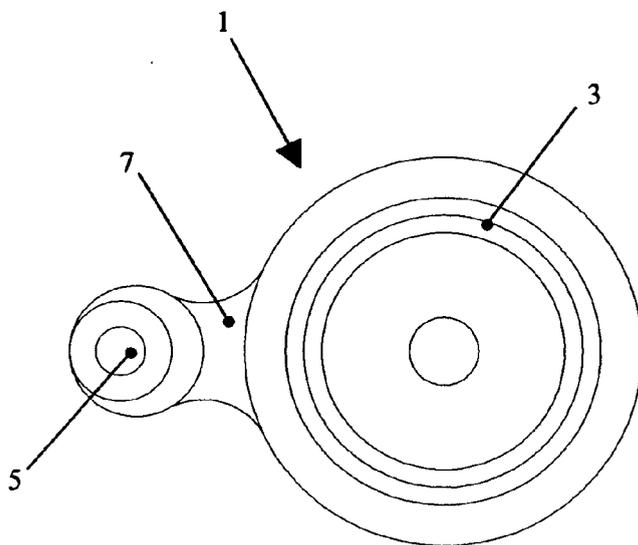


FIG. 3



DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
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X	US 6 412 653 B1 (WATERHOUSE PETER JOHN [NZ]) 2 July 2002 (2002-07-02) * column 4, line 5 - line 16 * * column 5, line 54 - line 61; figures 1,2 * -----	1,3-10	INV. B65D81/32 A47G19/22
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			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC)
			B65D
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
The Hague		12 February 2008	Bridault, Alain
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS			
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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12-02-2008

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For more details about this annex : see Official Journal of the European Patent Office, No. 12/82