



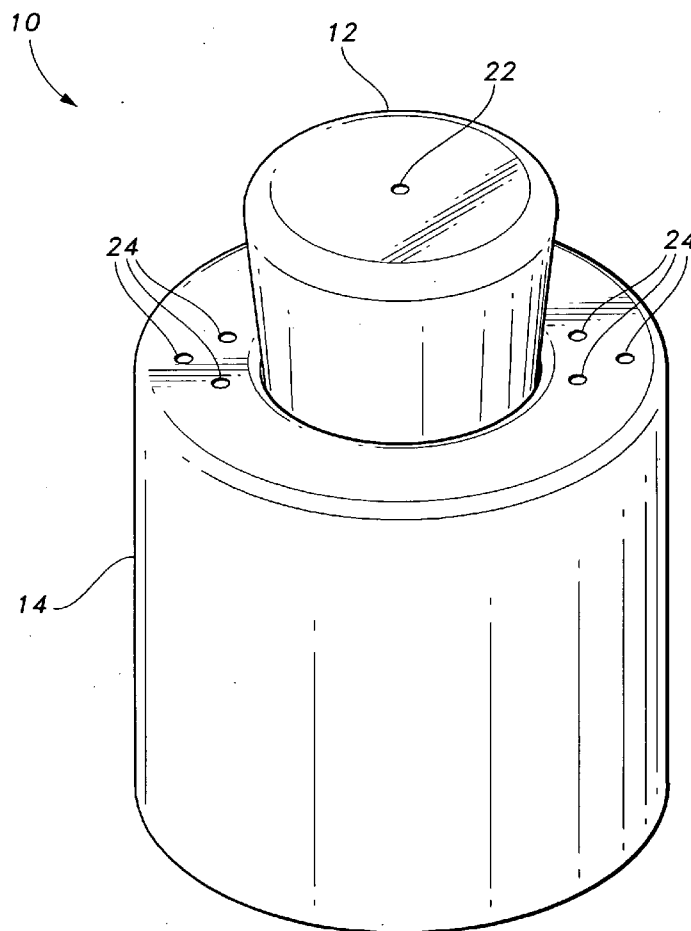
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(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Pietrosanto et al.(10) **Pub. No.: US 2006/0037979 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Feb. 23, 2006**(54) **NESTING CONDIMENT SHAKER
ASSEMBLY****Publication Classification**(51) **Int. Cl.****A47G 19/24** (2006.01)**B65D 47/00** (2006.01)(52) **U.S. Cl. 222/565**(76) Inventors: **Mark A. Pietrosanto**, Boynton Beach,
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Richard C. Litman**LITMAN LAW OFFICES, LTD.****P.O. Box 15035****Arlington, VA 22215 (US)**(57) **ABSTRACT**

The nesting condiment shaker assembly is an assembly that provides a convenient, space saving, and visually pleasing way of storing and dispensing dry condiments and seasonings, especially salt and pepper. The condiment shaker assembly includes either two or three pieces that can nest together for easy storage and decorative appeal when the condiment shakers are not in use. In the two-piece assembly, a larger condiment shaker contains a recess along its top surface that allows a smaller shaker to nest inside a portion of the body of the larger shaker. In the three-piece assembly, a base member contains a pair of recesses along its top surface and each recess allows a condiment shaker to nest inside a portion of the body of the base. The condiment shaker assemblies can be constructed to represent different decorative shapes and objects including cubes, cylinders, hearts, tetrahedrons, cruise ships, and fruits or vegetables.

(21) Appl. No.: **10/986,207**(22) Filed: **Nov. 12, 2004****Related U.S. Application Data**(60) Provisional application No. 60/602,658, filed on Aug.
19, 2004.

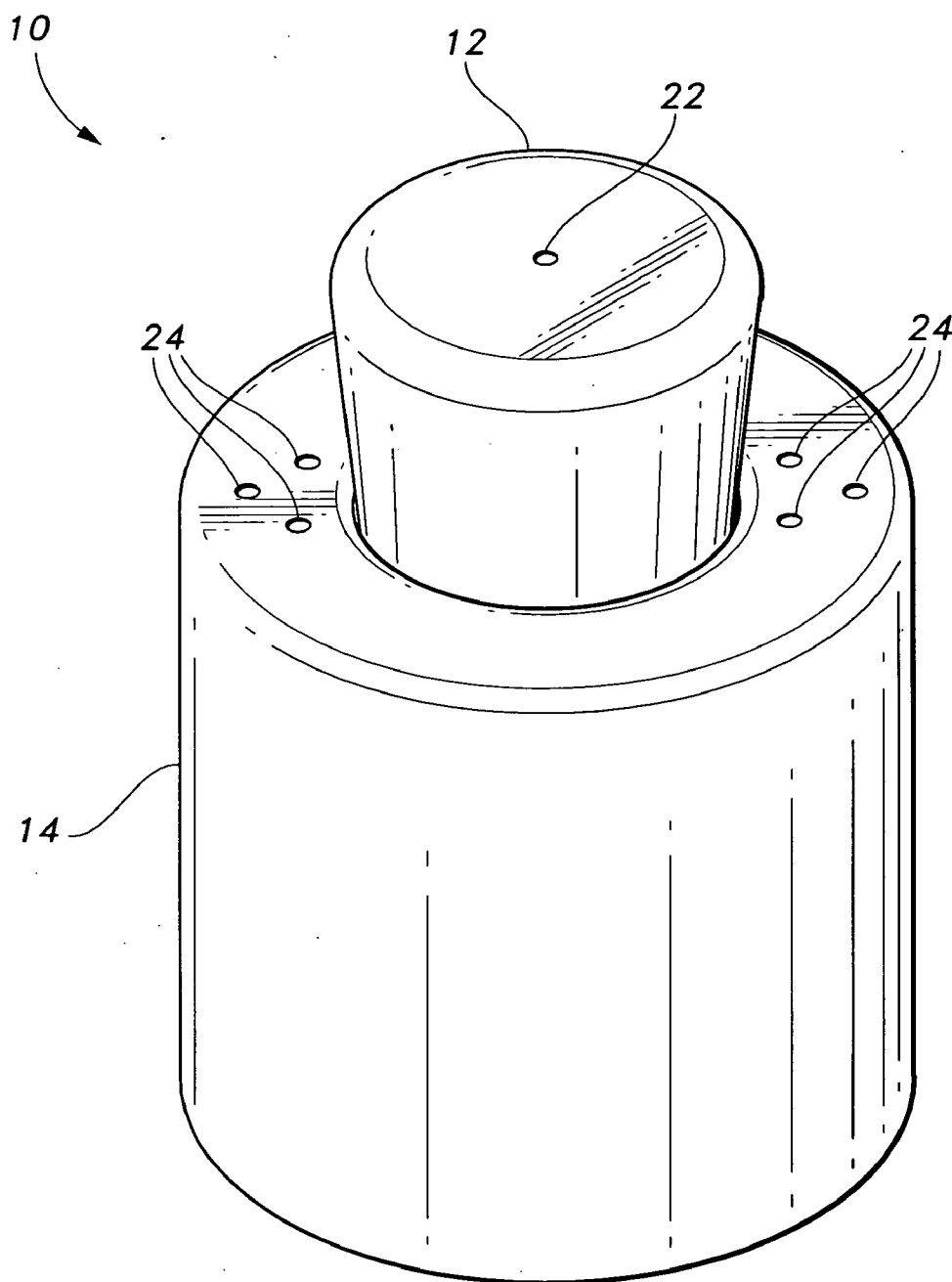


Fig. 1

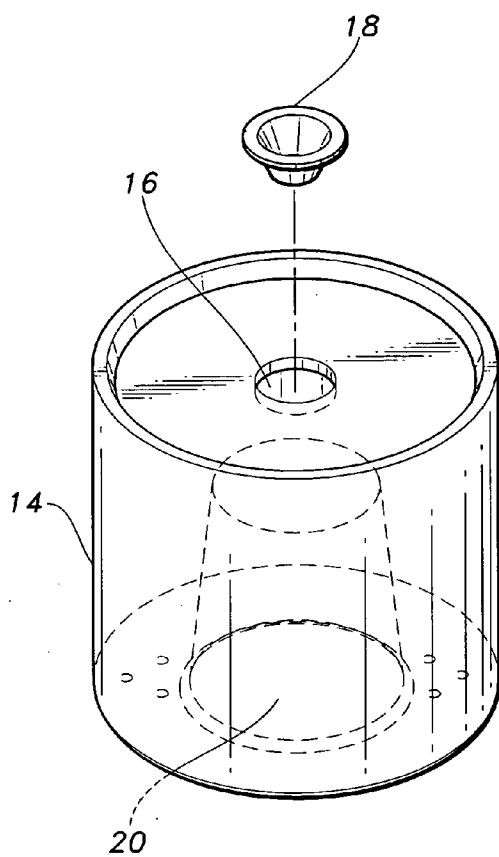


Fig. 2

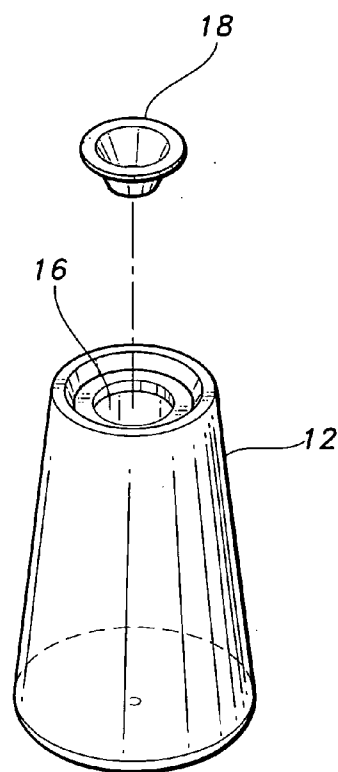


Fig. 3

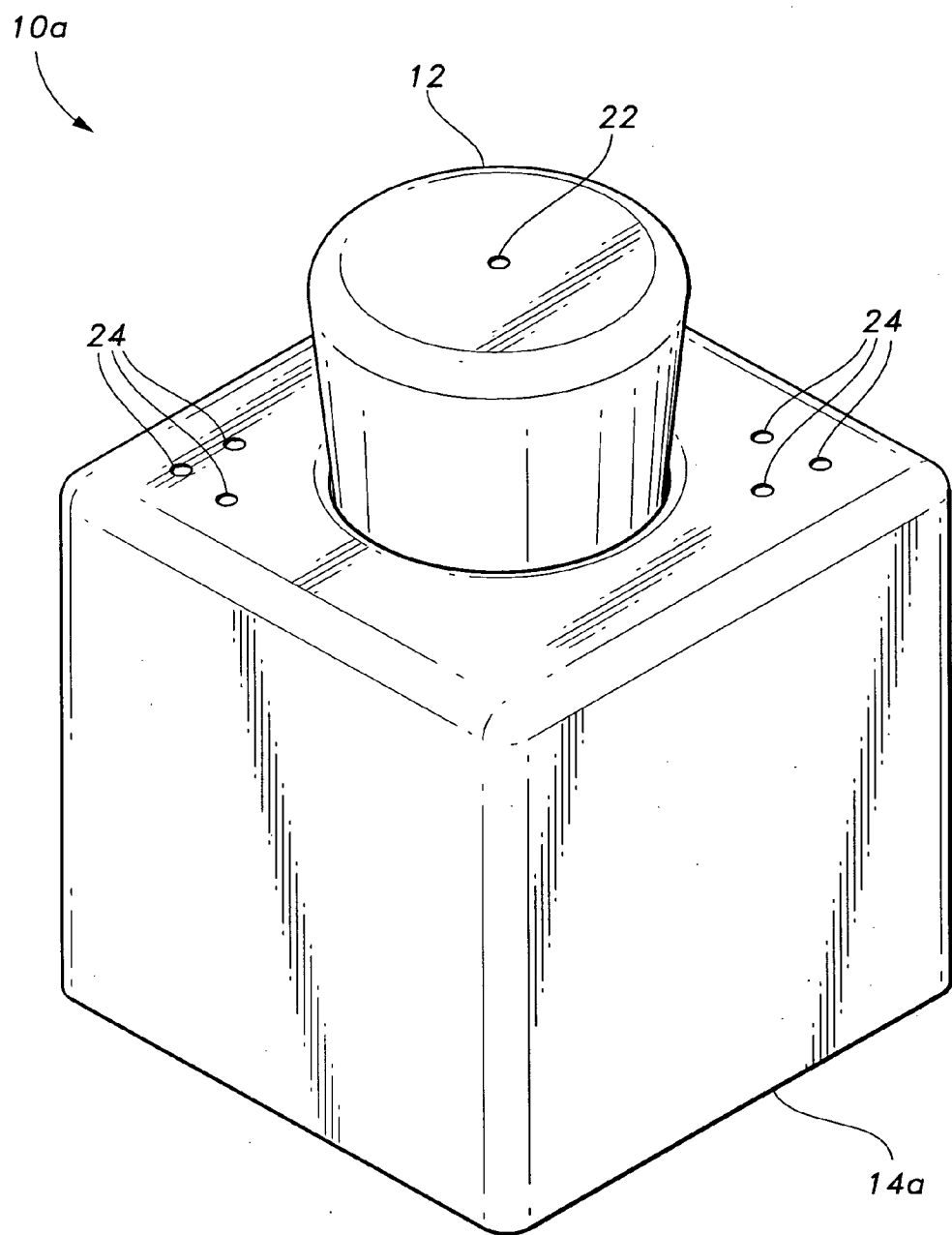


Fig. 4

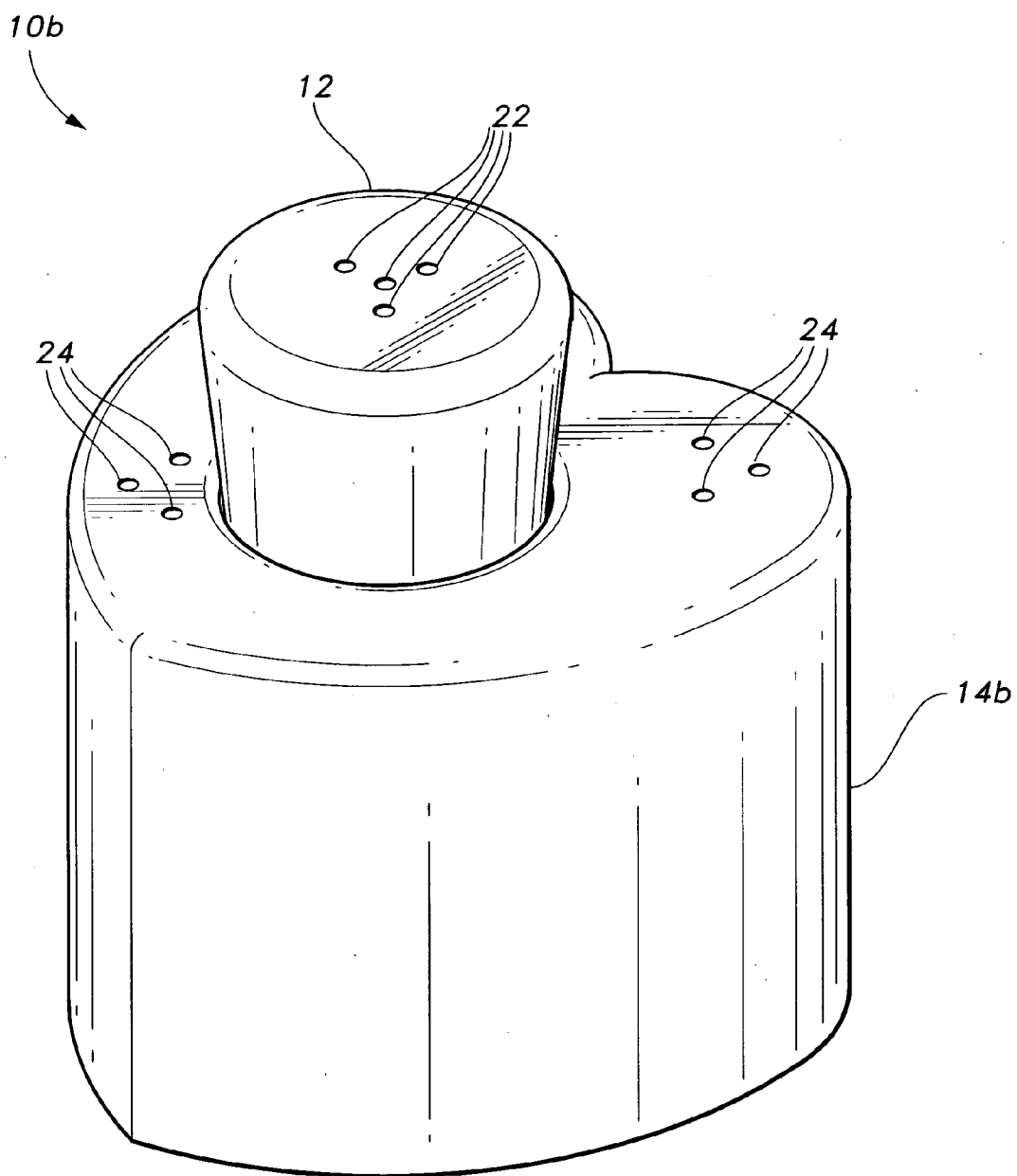


Fig. 5

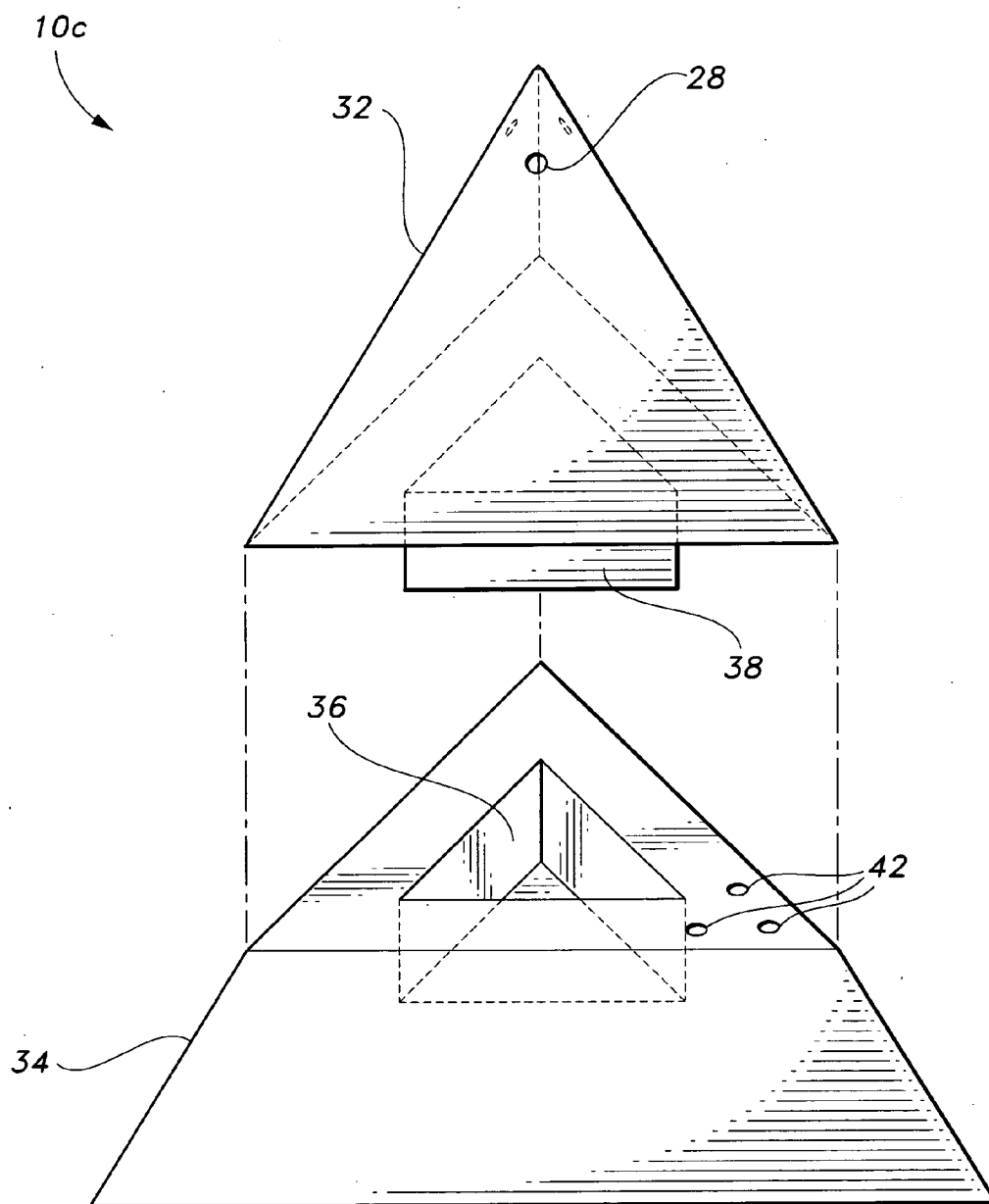


Fig. 6

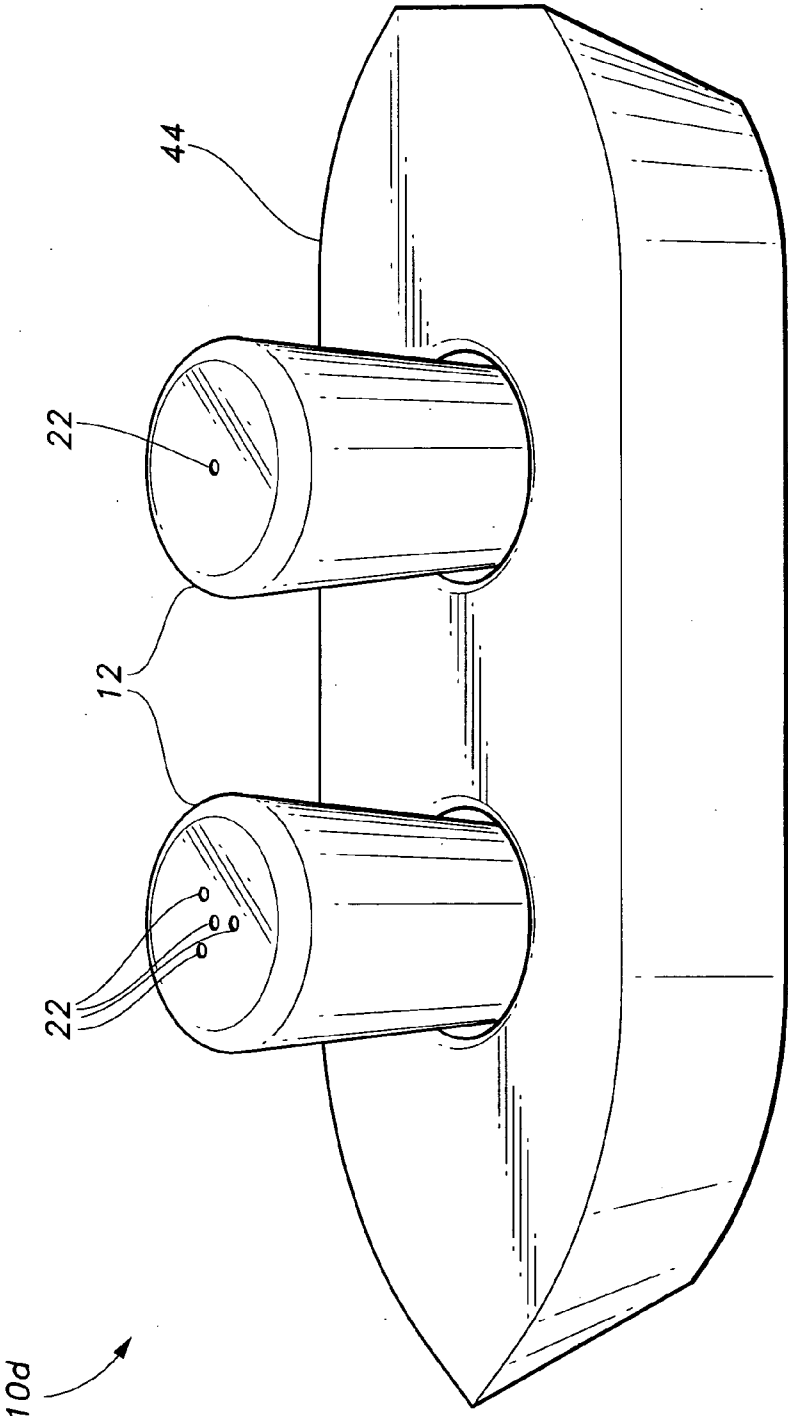


Fig. 7

NESTING CONDIMENT SHAKER ASSEMBLY

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 60/602,658, filed Aug. 19, 2004.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The present invention relates to condiment shakers, and more specifically, to salt and pepper shakers that are capable of nesting within one another or within a common holding base.

[0004] 2. Description of the Related Art

[0005] Condiment shakers are commonly used as a means for applying dry seasonings, including salt and pepper, to food. There is a need for a salt and pepper shaker assembly that is visually pleasing, practical to use, and space saving. It is desirable that the salt and pepper be contained in separate individual shakers, yet be designed such that one of the shakers is capable of being nested inside the other shaker while they are not in use. Alternatively, it would be desirable for both the salt shaker and the pepper shaker to be nested inside a common holding base while they are not in use.

[0006] U.S. Pat. No. 1,449,670, issued Mar. 27, 1923 to Hackenburg, describes a combination salt and pepper shaker. The shaker is a single article that contains a central barrel-shaped compartment and a surrounding annular compartment for holding salt and pepper. The barrel is rotatable, has a perforated top, and carries a perforated annular plate. The top of the shaker has a perforated top boss and a lower, perforated annular shelf. Rotation of the barrel selectively aligns the perforations in the top of the barrel with perforations in the boss to dispense a condiment from the central barrel compartment while blocking passage of the condiment in the annular compartment, or dispenses condiment from the annular compartment through aligned perforations in the annular plate and annular shelf while blocking the passage of condiment from the central barrel compartment.

[0007] U.S. Pat. No. 2,068,749, issued Jan. 26, 1937 to Douce, describes a combination salt and pepper shaker. The device is designed to accommodate and dispense both salt and pepper from a single container. The container provides for individual concentric compartments and has a rotatable cover that allows for dispensing either salt or pepper independent of one another through aligned perforations, similar to the Hackenburg device.

[0008] U.S. Pat. No. 2,578,538, issued Dec. 11, 1951 to Gray, describes a combination salt and pepper shaker. The main body of the device is of a hollow cylindrical form and contains concentrically arranged compartments for holding salt and pepper. A cap allows the salt and pepper to be dispensed through a series of apertures. U.S. Pat. No. 3,485,416, issued Dec. 23, 1969 to Fohrman, describes a combination salt and pepper shaker. The device is a unitary structure comprising containers arranged in a longitudinal alignment with respect to each other. The containers are connected by an end coupling that serves the dual purpose of connecting the containers together and closing the open

ends of the containers through which the salt and pepper is poured into the containers. The opposite ends of the containers are perforated for dispensing the salt and pepper.

[0009] U.S. Pat. No. 4,191,312, issued Mar. 4, 1980 to Shemtov, describes a multi-compartment condiment and spice dispenser. The dispenser includes a cylindrical body member having open topped vertical compartments. A cover is secured over the compartments and is perforated so that it may be turned to provide access to a selected compartment while covering the other compartments. U.S. Pat. No. 4,804, 113, issued Feb. 14, 1989 to Ciaccio, describes a salt and pepper shaker. The shaker comprises a two-chambered dispensing receptacle with a pair of closure assemblies molded inside. Each closure assembly includes a shaker top that is hinged to the receptacle.

[0010] A web page published on the bridalpeople.com website on the World Wide Web at least as of Aug. 9, 2004 shows nesting chrome heart salt and pepper shakers. The chrome finish salt and pepper shakers are shaped like hearts and the salt shaker nests closely within the pepper shaker. A web page published on the amazon.com website at least as of Aug. 9, 2004 shows a two-in-one stainless steel salt and pepper cylinder. The cylindrical pepper shaker nests within the larger cylindrical salt shaker and plastic covers on the bottom of both pop off for refilling the shakers.

[0011] Other salt and pepper shakers are described in U.S. Pat. No. 2,234,749, issued Mar. 11, 1941 to Doucette (combination salt and pepper shaker); U.S. Pat. No. 2,504,905, issued Apr. 18, 1950 to Toney (combined salt and pepper shaker); U.S. Pat. No. 2,685,397, issued Aug. 3, 1954 to Ellswood (salt and pepper shakers); U.S. Pat. No. 2,743,040, issued Apr. 24, 1956 to Pepper (combined salt and pepper shaker); U.S. Pat. No. 3,096,910, issued Jul. 9, 1963 to Pehr (combined salt and pepper dispenser); U.S. Pat. No. 3,157, 315, issued Nov. 17, 1964 to Bianco (combination salt and pepper shaker); U.S. Pat. No. 4,193,521, issued Mar. 18, 1980 to Bounds (dual condiment dispenser); U.S. Pat. No. 5,083,680, issued Jan. 28, 1992 to Plough Harold (dispenser for holding and selectively supplying one of two spices therein); and U.S. Pat. No. 5,145,119, issued Sep. 8, 1992 to Lowe (combined salt shaker and pepper mill).

[0012] None of the above inventions and patents, taken either singly or in combination, is seen to describe the instant invention as claimed. Thus, a nesting condiment shaker assembly solving the aforementioned problems is desired.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0013] The nesting condiment shaker assembly of the present invention provides a convenient, space saving, and visually pleasing way of storing and dispensing dry condiments and seasonings, especially salt and pepper. The condiment shaker assembly includes either two or three pieces that can nest together for easy storage and decorative appeal when the condiment shakers are not in use.

[0014] In the two-piece assembly, a larger condiment shaker contains a recess along its top surface that allows a smaller shaker to nest inside a portion of the body of the larger shaker. The smaller shaker nests inside the larger shaker so that a top portion of the smaller shaker is visible above the top surface of the larger shaker. The smaller

shaker can be constructed so that the body of the smaller shaker itself fits within the recess in the larger shaker, or the smaller shaker can have a downwardly extending flange that engages the recess in the larger shaker. Both shakers are equipped with discharge ports on the top surfaces for easy dispensing of the condiments contained inside. When needed for use, the smaller shaker is simply lifted from inside the larger shaker and both shakers can be used separately as traditional condiment shakers. Upon completion of use, the smaller shaker can be returned to its nested position for decorative and space saving reasons. Each shaker further contains an access hole located along its bottom surface. The access hole is used for refilling the shaker with the appropriate condiment and is sealed off using a rubber stopper.

[0015] In the three-piece assembly, a base member contains a pair of recesses along its top surface. Each recess allows a condiment shaker to nest inside a portion of the body of the base member so that a portion of each shaker is visible above the top surface of the base member. Both shakers are equipped with discharge ports on the top surfaces for easy dispensing of the condiments contained inside. When needed for use, the two shakers can simply be lifted from inside the base member and both shakers can be used separately as traditional condiment shakers. Upon completion of use, the shakers can be returned to their nested position for decorative and space saving reasons. Each shaker further contains an access hole located along its bottom surface. The access hole is used for refilling the shaker with the appropriate condiment and is sealed off using a rubber stopper.

[0016] The above-mentioned assemblies can be constructed to represent different decorative shapes and objects including, but not limited to, cubes, cylinders, hearts, tetrahedrons, cruise ships, and fruits or vegetables.

[0017] These and other features of the present invention will become readily apparent upon further review of the following specification and drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0018] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a first embodiment of a nesting condiment shaker assembly according to the present invention.

[0019] FIG. 2 is an exploded bottom perspective view of the outer container of the assembly of FIG. 1.

[0020] FIG. 3 is an exploded bottom perspective view of an inner container of the assembly of FIG. 1.

[0021] FIG. 4 is a perspective view of a second embodiment of a nesting condiment shaker assembly according to the present invention.

[0022] FIG. 5 is a perspective view of a third embodiment of a nesting condiment shaker assembly according to the present invention.

[0023] FIG. 6 is an exploded perspective view of a fourth embodiment of a nesting condiment shaker assembly according to the present invention.

[0024] FIG. 7 is a perspective view of a fifth embodiment of a nesting condiment shaker assembly according to the present invention.

[0025] Similar reference characters denote corresponding features consistently throughout the attached drawings.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0026] The present invention is a nesting condiment shaker assembly, of which a first embodiment is designated generally as **10** in the **FIGS. 1-3**. Nesting condiment shaker assembly **10** has an outer container **14** and inner container **12**. Outer container **14** is cylindrically shaped and has a top wall, bottom wall, and a sidewall defining an internal compartment and a tapered recess **20** extending downward from the top wall. Inner container **12** is also cylindrically shaped and has a top wall, a bottom wall, and a sidewall defining an internal compartment. Inner container **12** is designed to fit closely and removably within recess **20** of outer container **14**.

[0027] Inner container **12** and outer container **14** have discharge ports **22** and **24**, respectively, defined through their top walls, allowing inner container **12** and outer container **14** to be used as shakers for storing and dispensing dry condiments and seasonings in granular form, such as salt, pepper, and other aggregate spices. Inner container **12** and outer container **14** each have an aperture **16** through their bottom walls. Apertures **16** allow access to the internal compartment of inner container **12** and outer container **14** for the purpose of refilling them with a particular dry condiment or seasoning. Stoppers **18** are removable and are used to seal apertures **16** once refilling has taken place.

[0028] **FIGS. 4-6** show second, third and fourth embodiments of the assembly that have similar components, but vary only in the shape of their containers for decorative or aesthetic purposes. As shown in **FIG. 4**, nesting condiment shaker assembly **10a** has a cubic outer container **14a** with nesting inner container **12**. As shown in **FIG. 5**, nesting condiment shaker assembly **10b** has a heart-shaped outer container **14b** with nesting inner container **12**.

[0029] As shown in **FIG. 6**, nesting condiment shaker **10c** has an upper container **32** and a lower container **34** with polygonal shapes. Lower container **34** has a top wall, a bottom wall, and a series of sidewalls that define an internal compartment. Lower container has a recess **36** extending downward from the top wall. Upper container **32** has a series of sidewalls and a bottom wall defining an internal compartment. Upper container **32** has a flange **38** extending downward from its bottom wall. Flange **38** is designed to fit closely within recess **36** such that upper container **32** and lower container **34** can be placed together in a flush manner. Upper container **32** and lower container **34** have discharge ports **28** and **42**, respectively, through their walls, allowing upper container **32** and lower container **34** to be used as shakers for storing and dispensing dry condiments and seasonings in granular form.

[0030] As shown in **FIG. 7**, nesting condiment shaker assembly **10d** is an alternate embodiment of the present invention having base member **44** and two containers **12** nested therein. Base member **44** is a solid member with two recesses extending downward from its top surface. Containers **12** are cylindrically shaped and have a top and bottom wall defining an internal compartment. Containers **12** are designed to fit closely and removably within the recesses of base member **44**. Containers **12** have discharge ports **22**

through their top walls, allowing them to be used as shakers for storing and dispensing dry condiments and seasonings in granular form.

[0031] It is to be understood that the present invention is not limited to the embodiments described above, but encompasses any and all embodiments within the scope of the following

We claim:

1. A nesting condiment shaker assembly, comprising:
 - an outer container having a bottom wall, at least one sidewall, and a top wall, the outer container defining a first internal compartment, the top wall defining a recess therein and having at least one discharge port defined therethrough, the bottom wall having an aperture defined therein, the outer container having a first removable stopper sealing the aperture; and
 - an inner container having a bottom wall, at least one sidewall, and a top wall, the inner container defining a second internal compartment, the inner container having a shape complementary to the recess in the outer container and having a height greater than the depth of the recess so that a top portion of the second container is exposed above the top wall of the outer container, the top wall of the inner container having at least one discharge port defined therethrough, the bottom wall of the inner container having an aperture defined therein, the inner container having a second removable stopper sealing the aperture;
- whereby the outer and inner containers are each adapted for separately containing and dispensing a condiment, the inner container being nested in the recess defined in the outer container in order to save space.
2. The nesting condiment shaker assembly according to claim 1, wherein said first container is adapted for storing an aggregate spice, the at least one discharge port defined in said first container being dimensioned and configured for dispensing the aggregate spice.
3. The nesting condiment shaker assembly according to claim 1, wherein said second container is adapted for storing an aggregate spice, the at least one discharge port defined in said second container being dimensioned and configured for dispensing an aggregate spice.
4. The nesting condiment shaker assembly according to claim 1, wherein the recess in the first container is a tapered cylindrical bore.
5. The nesting condiment shaker assembly according to claim 1, wherein the first container is cubic in shape.
6. The nesting condiment shaker assembly according to claim 1, wherein the first container is cylindrical in shape.
7. The nesting condiment shaker assembly according to claim 1, wherein the first container is heart-shaped.
8. A nesting condiment shaker assembly, comprising:
 - a first container having a triangular-shaped bottom wall, three trapezoidal-shaped sidewalls, and a triangular-shaped top wall defining an internal compartment, and having a recess defined therein extending axially into the first container from the top wall, the top wall having at least one discharge port therethrough, the bottom wall of the first container having an aperture therethrough, the first container having a removable stopper sealing the aperture; and

- a second container having a triangular-shaped bottom wall and three triangular-shaped sidewalls defining an internal compartment, and having a flange further defining the internal compartment extending axially away from the bottom wall of the second container, the flange being shaped to fit closely within the recess in the first container so that the bottom wall of the second container rests flush against the top wall of the first container, each sidewall of the second container at least one discharge port therethrough, the bottom wall of the second container having an aperture therethrough, the second container having a removable stopper sealing the aperture.

9. The nesting condiment shaker assembly according to claim 8, wherein said first container is adapted for storing an aggregate spice, the at least one discharge port defined in said first container being dimensioned and configured for dispensing the aggregate spice.

10. The nesting condiment shaker assembly according to claim 8, wherein said second container is adapted for storing an aggregate spice, the at least one discharge port defined in said second container being dimensioned and configured for dispensing an aggregate spice.

11. A nesting condiment shaker assembly, comprising:

- a solid base member having a bottom surface, at least one side surface, and a top surface, and the base member having first and second recesses defined therein; and

- a first container and a second container, each of the containers having a bottom wall, at least one sidewall, and a top wall defining an internal compartment, the containers having a height greater than the depth of the recesses and a shape complementary to the recesses, the containers being removably disposed in the recesses with a top portion of the containers exposed above the top surface of the base member, the containers having at least one discharge port defined therein, the bottom wall of each of the containers having an aperture defined therein, each of the containers having a removable stopper sealing the aperture in the bottom wall.

12. The nesting condiment shaker assembly according to claim 11, wherein the solid base member has a shape selected from the group consisting of a boat and a cruise ship.

13. The nesting condiment shaker assembly according to claim 11, wherein the first recess in the solid base member is a tapered cylindrical bore.

14. The nesting condiment shaker assembly according to claim 11, wherein the second recess in the solid base member is a tapered cylindrical bore.

15. The nesting condiment shaker assembly according to claim 11, wherein said first container is adapted for storing an aggregate spice, the at least one discharge port defined in said first container being dimensioned and configured for dispensing the aggregate spice.

16. The nesting condiment shaker assembly according to claim 11, wherein said second container is adapted for storing an aggregate spice, the at least one discharge port defined in said second container being dimensioned and configured for dispensing an aggregate spice.