

IMPROVED THREE-PIECE CONTAINER ASSEMBLY

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application claims priority to, the benefit under 35 U.S.C. § 119 of, and
5 incorporates by reference herein in its entirety U.S. Provisional Patent Application No.
62/810,709, filed February 26, 2019, and entitled “TWO PIECE CONTAINER.”

This application is related to and hereby incorporates by reference the following
U.S. and international (PCT) patent applications:

International (PCT) Patent Application No. _____, entitled
10 “CONTAINER AND SEAL ASSEMBLY,” filed on February 26, 2020;
U.S. Design Patent Application No. _____, entitled “CONTAINER,”
filed on February 26, 2020;
U.S. Design Patent Application No. _____, entitled “CONTAINER,”
filed on February 26, 2020;
15 U.S. Design Patent Application No. _____, entitled “CONTAINER
RING,” filed on February 26, 2020; and
U.S. Design Patent Application No. _____, entitled “CONTAINER
LID,” filed on February 26, 2020.

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TECHNICAL FIELD

The present disclosure relates generally to containers and container lids.

BACKGROUND

Containers are a widely used component in a variety of industries. Wholesalers,
25 merchants, and individuals use containers in a plethora of industries including, but not
limited to: manufacturing, agriculture, beverage, entertainment, health care, food
services, hospitality, fishing, retail, automotive, transportation, waste management, oil
and gas, education, and construction. The paint industry in particular, as a liquid-based
industry, heavily depends on containers for the majority of its packing, storing, and

shipping requirements. As such, improvements to paint and other liquid-carrying containers may account for significant cost savings to a company's bottom line.

As an initial matter, containers and lids can include inadequate sealing mechanisms that allow leakage and air intake. Further, in some applications, traditional containers tend to permit waste, as paint or other liquids often become trapped in various joints or seams of the container. Therefore, there is a long-felt but unresolved need for containers and lids, having a design that provides an improved sealing structure that provides a liquid-tight seal and limits the amount of product that may become trapped in various joints or seams of the container.

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BRIEF SUMMARY OF DISCLOSURE

Briefly described and according to one embodiment, aspects of the present disclosure relate generally to containers and container lids, and more particularly to containers including a separate container ring and associated container lids. The present disclosure discusses a novel and unique container that provides several improvements over existing, traditional containers in the paint and other liquid-based industries. In various embodiments, the containers discussed herein increase product retention and are lower cost than traditional containers for storing similar goods. In at least one embodiment, the present container includes a separate container ring, which, in combination with the container design, may substantially eliminate one or more seams within the container (e.g., the combination of the container and ring). In this embodiment (and others), the present container may prevent product stored therein from being trapped in the one or more eliminated seams. Substantially eliminating one or more content-trapping seams may preserve original color content of tinted paint (e.g., by preventing tinted/coloring from being trapped in the seam) and enable a consumer to pour all paint/content out of the container such that no paint/content is left trapped within a joint or seam. As will be understood, a design that allows a consumer/user to pour out all paint/content may make such a container easier and/or less expensive to recycle.

Additionally, in particular embodiments, and as will be discussed herein, the present container is manufactured from plastic, as opposed to traditional containers

manufactured from metal, such that production expenses may be decreased and container longevity may be increased.

According to a first aspect, the seal ring may include: A) an outer sidewall including: 1) an exterior outer sidewall surface including a substantially arcuate portion for interfacing with a corresponding semi-circular bead of a sidewall of a container in an attached configuration; 2) a top surface; 3) an upper portion outer surface substantially perpendicular to the top surface; and 4) a upper portion bottom surface substantially parallel to the top surface and perpendicular to the outer surface; B) a generally hook-shaped aperture including: 1) an aperture surface substantially parallel to the upper portion outer surface and intersecting with the upper portion bottom surface; and 2) an undercut surface substantially perpendicular to the aperture surface, wherein the undercut surface is configured to interface with a corresponding surface on the container in the attached configuration; C) an inner sidewall forming a seal structure for sealing an interior cavity of the container with a lid; and D) a floor connecting the inner sidewall and the outer sidewall.

According to a second aspect, the container may include the container of the first aspect or any other aspect, wherein the substantially arcuate portion of the exterior outer sidewall surface transitions to an exterior floor surface, the exterior floor surface substantially parallel to the upper portion outer surface.

According to a third aspect, the container may include the container of the second aspect or any other aspect, wherein the generally hook-shaped aperture and the substantially arcuate portion of the exterior outer sidewall surface seals the seal ring with the container in the attached configuration.

According to a fourth aspect, the container may include the container of the first aspect or any other aspect, wherein the floor slopes downwardly from the inner sidewall to the outer sidewall.

According to a fifth aspect, the container may include the container of the first aspect or any other aspect, wherein the top surface transitions to an interior outer sidewall surface via a vertical wall substantially perpendicular to the top surface.

According to a sixth aspect, the container may include the container of the fifth aspect or any other aspect, wherein the outer sidewall and the inner sidewall form a

generally u-shaped channel for receiving the lid for sealing the interior cavity of the container.

According to a seventh aspect, the container may include the container of the first aspect or any other aspect, wherein the inner sidewall includes: A) an inner seal surface;
5 B) a substantially flat outer seal surface; and C) a ring bead integrally formed with the inner seal surface and extending from the inner seal surface toward an interior outer sidewall surface for engaging with a corresponding structure on the lid.

According to an eighth aspect, the container may include the container of the seventh aspect or any other aspect, wherein the ring bead includes an upper ring bead
10 slope and a lower ring bead slope, the upper ring bead slope and lower ring bead slope culminating in a ring bead peak.

According to a ninth aspect, the container may include the container of the seventh aspect or any other aspect, wherein the inner seal surface and the substantially flat outer seal surface converge at a seal surface peak.

15 According to a tenth aspect, the container may include the container of the seventh aspect or any other aspect, wherein the substantially flat outer seal surface includes a seal ring notch for receiving a correspondingly shaped structure on a lid.

According to an eleventh aspect, the container may include the container of the tenth aspect or any other aspect, wherein the seal ring notch is positioned substantially
20 opposite the ring bead.

According to a twelfth aspect, the container may include the container of the eleventh aspect or any other aspect, wherein the seal ring notch is substantially triangular, rectangular, or rounded.

25 According to a thirteenth aspect, the container may include the container of the first aspect or any other aspect, wherein the seal ring is plastic.

According to a fourteenth aspect, the container may include a container body including a bottom and an external wall extending from the bottom and defining an interior cavity, the external wall: A) including an exterior wall surface; B) terminating in a container rim area including: 1) a latch surface extending outwardly from the exterior
30 wall surface; and 2) a semi-circular bead; and C) a seal ring attached to the container rim area and including: 1) an outer sidewall including: a) an exterior outer sidewall surface

comprising a substantially arcuate portion interfacing with the semi-circular bead of the container rim area; b) a top surface; c) an upper portion outer surface substantially perpendicular to the top surface; d) a upper portion bottom surface substantially parallel to the top surface and perpendicular to the outer surface; e) a generally hook-shaped aperture including: i) an aperture surface substantially parallel to the upper portion outer surface and intersecting with the upper portion bottom surface; and ii) an undercut surface substantially perpendicular to the aperture surface, wherein the undercut surface interfaces with the latch surface of the container rim area; 2) an inner sidewall forming a seal structure for sealing the interior cavity of the container body with a lid; and 3) a floor connecting the inner sidewall and the outer sidewall.

According to a fifteenth aspect, the container may include the container of the fourteenth aspect or any other aspect, wherein the substantially arcuate portion of the exterior outer sidewall surface transitions to an exterior floor surface, the exterior floor surface substantially parallel to the upper portion outer surface and to the exterior wall surface of the container body.

According to a sixteenth aspect, the container may include the container of the fifteenth aspect or any other aspect, wherein the generally hook-shaped aperture, the substantially arcuate portion of the exterior outer sidewall, and the exterior floor surface seals the seal ring with the container.

According to a seventeenth aspect, the container may include the container of the fourteenth aspect or any other aspect, wherein the floor slopes downwardly from the inner sidewall to the outer sidewall.

According to an eighteenth aspect, the container may include the container of the fourteenth aspect or any other aspect, wherein the top surface transitions to an interior outer sidewall surface via a vertical wall substantially perpendicular to the top surface.

According to a nineteenth aspect, the container may include the container of the fourteenth aspect or any other aspect, wherein the outer sidewall and the inner sidewall form a generally u-shaped channel for receiving the lid for sealing the interior cavity of the container body.

According to a twentieth aspect, the container may include the container of the fourteenth aspect or any other aspect, wherein the inner sidewall includes: A) an inner

seal surface; B) a substantially flat outer seal surface; and C) a ring bead integrally formed with the inner seal surface and extending from the inner seal surface toward an interior outer sidewall surface for engaging with a corresponding structure on the lid.

According to a twenty-first aspect, the container may include the container of the
5 twentieth aspect or any other aspect, wherein the ring bead includes an upper ring bead slope and a lower ring bead slope, the upper ring bead slope and lower ring bead slope culminating in a ring bead peak.

According to a twenty-second aspect, the container may include the container of
10 the twenty-first aspect or any other aspect, wherein the inner seal surface and the substantially flat outer seal surface converge at a seal surface peak.

According to a twenty-third aspect, the container may include the container of the
twenty-second aspect or any other aspect, wherein the substantially flat outer seal surface includes a seal ring notch for receiving a correspondingly shaped structure on the lid.

According to a twenty-fourth aspect, the container may include the container of
15 the twenty-third aspect or any other aspect, wherein the seal ring notch is positioned substantially opposite the ring bead.

According to a twenty-fifth aspect, the container may include the container of the
twenty-fourth aspect or any other aspect, wherein the seal ring notch is substantially triangular, rectangular, or rounded.

According to a twenty-sixth aspect, the container may include the container of the
20 fourteenth aspect or any other aspect, wherein the container body and the seal ring are plastic.

According to a twenty-seventh aspect, the container may include the container of
the fourteenth aspect or any other aspect, wherein the container includes the lid.

25 These and other aspects, features, and benefits of the claimed embodiment(s) will become apparent from the following detailed written description of the embodiments and aspects taken in conjunction with the following drawings, although variations and modifications thereto may be effected without departing from the spirit and scope of the novel concepts of the disclosure.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The accompanying drawings illustrate one or more embodiments and/or aspects of the disclosure and, together with the written description, serve to explain the principles of the disclosure. Wherever possible, the same reference numbers are used throughout
5 the drawings to refer to the same or like elements of an embodiment, and wherein:

FIG. 1 is an exploded view of an exemplary container and container ring, according to one embodiment of the present disclosure;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of an exemplary container, according to one embodiment of the present disclosure;

10 FIG. 3 is a perspective view of an exemplary container ring, according to one embodiment of the present disclosure;

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of an exemplary container ring and container in an attached configuration, according to one embodiment of the present disclosure;

15 FIG. 5 is a perspective view of an exemplary container ring, container and container lid in an attached configuration, according to one embodiment of the present disclosure;

FIG. 6 is a cross-sectional view of an exemplary container ring, container and container lid in an attached configuration, according to one embodiment of the present disclosure; and

20 FIG. 7 is a cross sectional view of an exemplary container stacked on top of a container, container ring, and container lid in an attached configuration, according to one embodiment of the present disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

25 For the purpose of promoting an understanding of the principles of the present disclosure, reference will now be made to the embodiments illustrated in the drawings and specific language will be used to describe the same. It will, nevertheless, be understood that no limitation of the scope of the disclosure is thereby intended; any alterations and further modifications of the described or illustrated embodiments, and any
30 further applications of the principles of the disclosure as illustrated therein are

contemplated as would normally occur to one skilled in the art to which the disclosure relates. All limitations of scope should be determined in accordance with, and as expressed in the claims.

Whether a term is capitalized is not considered definitive or limiting of the meaning of a term. As used in this document, a capitalized term shall have the same meaning as an uncapitalized term, unless the context of the usage specifically indicates that a more restrictive meaning for the capitalized term is intended. However, the capitalization or lack thereof within the remainder of this document is not intended to be necessarily limiting unless the context clearly indicates that such limitation is intended.

Overview

The above and further features of the disclosed exemplary container, container ring, and container lid will be recognized from the following detailed descriptions and drawings of particular embodiments. In various embodiments, a container with a rim is disclosed. In particular embodiments, the container includes a container body (e.g., external wall) that forms the outer casing of the container. In some embodiments, the container includes bail ear assemblies to provide a mechanism for attaching a handle to the container. According to at least one embodiment, the container includes a bottom panel to provide stability and support for the container as well as an encasing for material stored in the container. In particular embodiments, the container (e.g., the container rim) includes one or more seal surfaces to provide enhanced sealing properties when engaged with a container ring and sealed with a container lid.

In at least one embodiment, a container ring is disclosed for engaging with a container and container lid. In some embodiments, the container ring includes a u-shaped channel. In particular embodiments, the container ring includes one or more sidewalls including one or more seal surfaces for facilitating a liquid-tight seal when engaged with a container and/or container lid. In some embodiments, the container ring includes a ring bead for engaging with a corresponding structure on a container lid. In certain embodiments, the container ring includes an outer sidewall including a hook-shaped aperture for attaching to the container rim of a container. According to at least one embodiment, the container ring is circular in shape. In at least one embodiment, the container ring is square or rectangular in shape.

Furthermore, a container lid is disclosed for engaging with a container ring. In various embodiments, the container lid includes one or more seal surfaces to provide enhanced sealing properties when sealing a container (e.g., container ring). In particular embodiments, the container lid includes an undercut for engaging with a corresponding ring bead on a container ring to facilitate a liquid-tight seal. In one or more
5 embodiments, the container lid may be manufactured to fit any container shape (e.g., rectangular, ovoid, etc.). According to at least one embodiment, the container lid is circular in shape. In at least one embodiment, the container lid is square or rectangular in shape.

10 The container, container ring, and container lid discussed herein may be formed in any suitable way. In various embodiments, the container, container ring, and container lid are formed by injection molding. In particular embodiments, the container, container ring, and container lid are 3D printed or created via other additive manufacturing technique. In further embodiments, various components of the container, container ring,
15 and container lid are formed or created separately, and the various components of the container, container ring, and container lid are joined or otherwise suitably connected to form the container, container ring, and container lid. In one embodiment, the container, container ring, and/or container lid may each be one piece and unitary.

20 The container, container ring, and container lid may be formed from any suitable material or materials for storing or transporting such materials. In various embodiments, the container, container ring, and container lid are manufactured from metal or composite material. In particular embodiments, the container, container ring, and container lid are manufactured from plastic (e.g., Polyethylene, High-Density Polyethylene, etc.).

25 As will be understood by one of ordinary skill in the art, the container, container ring, and container lid discussed herein may be used for storing and sealing any variety of materials, including, but not limited to: paints, oils, food, consumer goods, construction materials, inks, chemicals, lubricants, adhesives, coatings, roofing mastics, driveway sealers, flavorings, sanitation supplies, building products, ice melt compounds, powders, pet food, and other such materials.

Exemplary Embodiments

Turning now to FIG. 1, an exploded view of an exemplary container 1100 and container ring 1000 are shown, according to one embodiment of the present disclosure.

5 In some embodiments, the container ring 1000 and the container 1100 are circular in shape and have a substantially similar radius. In various embodiments, the container ring 1000 and container 1100 may be rectangular or square in shape. In various embodiments, the container ring 1000 attaches to the container 1100 to facilitate a liquid-tight seal. In one or more embodiments, the container ring 1000 attaches to the container 1100 by
10 placing the bottom 1008 of the container ring 1000 snugly around the rim 1104 of the container 1100 (as further discussed herein). In certain embodiments, the container ring 1000 and the container are manufactured out of plastic (e.g., Polyethylene, Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET), High-Density Polyethylene (HDPE), Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC), Low-Density Polyethylene (LDPE), Polypropylene (PP), Polystyrene (PP), etc.).

15 In particular embodiments, the container ring 1000 may include various components to facilitate a seal with the container 1100. In at least one embodiment, and as will be further discussed herein, the container ring includes an inner sidewall 1004 and an outer sidewall 1016 connected by a floor 1020. In one or more embodiments, and as shown in FIG. 1, the distance between the inner sidewall 1004 and the outer sidewall
20 1016 may be any suitable distance (e.g., 0.8-1.2 cm, 4.8-5.2, cm, 9.8-10.2 cm, etc.). In some embodiments, and as will be further described herein, a container lid (e.g., a plug) includes corresponding sealing components, that may align and engage with the inner sidewall 1004 of the container ring 1000 to provide a liquid-tight seal when pressed together.

25 In one embodiment, and as shown in FIG. 1, the container 1100 includes a container body 1102. In particular embodiments, the container body 1102 includes an external wall 1110 to enclose the container 1100 and provide a solid base for stability. In some embodiments, the external wall 1110 may include graphical information (e.g., signage). In various embodiments, the container body 1102 terminates at an open end,
30 whereby the open end includes a container rim 1104 around its circumference. In certain

embodiments, and as will be further discussed herein, the container rim 1104 includes design features to facilitate a liquid-tight seal when engaged with a container ring 1000. Further, in various embodiments, the container 1100 includes a container bottom 1108 to provide stability and support for the container 1000 when resting on a surface.

5 FIG. 2 shows an exemplary container 1100, according to one embodiment of the present disclosure. In the embodiment shown in FIG. 2, plastic bail ears 1106 are included on the external wall 1110 of the container body 1102, such that a handle may be attached to the container 1100 to facilitate carrying or lifting of the container. In various embodiments, the bail ears 1106 may be circular, pentagonal, rectangular, or any suitable
10 shape. In particular embodiments, the bail ears 1106 may be affixed to the external wall 1110 of the container body 1102, or, in one or more embodiments, the bail ears 1106 may be an integral component of external wall 1110 of the container body 1102.

 FIG. 3 shows an exemplary container ring 1000, according to one embodiment of the present disclosure. In particular embodiments, and as shown in FIG. 3, a top surface
15 1026 of the outer sidewall 1016 is at a higher elevation than a top surface 1010 of the inner sidewall 1004 relative to the container ring floor 1020. In certain embodiments, the thickness of the inner sidewall 1004 is less than the thickness of the outer sidewall 1016. As will be further discussed herein, in some embodiments, the outer sidewall 1016 includes an aperture 1012 beneath the top surface 1026 to facilitate attachment of the
20 container ring 1000 to the rim of a container. In at least one embodiment, the outer sidewall 1016 extends upward at an angle greater than ninety degrees from the container ring floor 1020. In one or more embodiments, the inner sidewall 1004 has a smaller radius than the outer sidewall 1016, whereby the difference in radii is substantially equivalent to the width of the container ring floor 1020. In some embodiments, the width
25 of container floor 1020 and the angle of the outer sidewall 1026 generally prevent liquid from getting trapped in the container ring 1000. In at least one embodiment, the floor 1020 of the container ring 1000 includes a generally smooth surface.

 Turning now to FIG. 4, a perspective view of an exemplary container ring 1000 attached to an exemplary container 1100 is shown, according to one embodiment of the
30 present disclosure. In various embodiments, and as shown in FIG. 4, when the container ring 1000 is attached to the container 1100, the container rim 1104 of the container 1100

is substantially enveloped by the container ring 1000, such that an outer surface 1024 of the outer sidewall 1016 extends over the edge of the container rim 1104.

FIG. 5 shows an exemplary container ring 1000, container 1100, and container lid 500 in an attached configuration, according to one embodiment of the present disclosure.

5 In particular embodiments, and as will be discussed herein, various sealing components of the container lid 500 engage with the inner sidewall (not shown) of the container ring 1000 to facilitate a liquid-tight seal of the container 1100.

Now referring to FIG. 6, a cross-sectional view of an exemplary container ring, container 1101, and container lid 501 in an attached configuration is shown, according to one embodiment of the present disclosure. In various embodiments, the container 1101
10 includes an external wall 1110 with an outer surface 1122 and an inner surface 1112. In certain embodiments, the external wall 1110 of the container 1101 extends upward from the container bottom and transitions into a container rim 1104 at the upper end of the container 1101. In at least one embodiment, the container rim 1104 extends outward
15 from the outer surface 1122 of the external wall 1110 to form a latch surface 1032 for engaging with the container ring 1001, as will be further discussed herein. In certain embodiments, and as shown in FIG. 6, the upper portion 1116 of the inner surface 1112 of the external wall 1110 protrudes outwardly from the external wall 1110 and establishes a generally semi-circular bead 1118. In one or more embodiments, the bead 1118 may
20 have a radius less than 1 cm. In particular embodiments, the generally semi-circular bead 1118 transitions downward to an exterior floor surface 1034. In one or more embodiments, the exterior floor surface 1034 may be substantially parallel to the external wall 1110 of the container 1101.

In particular embodiments, the container ring 1001 includes a generally u-shaped
25 channel 1052. In the embodiment shown in FIG. 6, the u-shaped channel 1052 (from a cross-sectional perspective) includes two sidewalls 1004, 1016 connected by a floor 1020 that generally slopes from the inner sidewall 1004 downwardly to the outer sidewall 1016, whereby the outer sidewall 1016 and the floor 1020 form a substantially rounded connection 1018. In certain embodiments, the floor 1020 may slope at an angle between
30 forty-five and ninety degrees, preferably at an angle between forty-five and fifty degrees, relative to the outer sidewall 1016. In one or more embodiments, and as shown in FIG. 6,

the distance between the inner sidewall 1004 and the outer sidewall 1016 may be any suitable distance (e.g., 0.8-1.2 cm, 4.8-5.2, cm, 9.8-10.2 cm, etc.).

As will be further discussed below, the inner sidewall 1004 includes seal surfaces 1002, 1008, and integrally formed protrusions (e.g., ring bead 1014) of the container ring 1000. In particular embodiments, the seal surfaces 1002, 1008 of the inner sidewall 1004 converge at an upper portion of the container ring 1001 into a substantially trapezoidal peak (e.g., top surface 1010), which fits into a corresponding trapezoidal cavity 622 on the container lid 501. In certain embodiments, top surface 1010 (and the corresponding cavity on the container lid) may be substantially rectangular. In particular embodiments, top surface 1010 (and the corresponding cavity on the container lid) may be substantially rounded. In some embodiments, the inner sidewall 1004 may include a notch (not shown) on the seal surface 1008 for engaging with a corresponding notch on a container lid. In one embodiment, the seal surfaces 1002, 1008 may be composed of an elastomer. In another embodiment, the seal surfaces 1002, 1008 are composed of plastic. In various embodiments, and as shown in FIG. 6, the seal surfaces 1002, 1008 of the container ring 1001 are substantially flush against the seal surfaces 654, 656 of the container lid 501 (including the trapezoidal cavity 622), such that a liquid-tight seal is facilitated.

Continuing with the embodiment shown in FIG. 6, the inner sidewall 1004 includes a ring bead 1014 (or other suitable protrusion) that protrudes into the u-shaped channel 1052 of the container ring 1001. In various embodiments, the ring bead 1014 may be substantially trapezoidal or substantially rounded in shape. In one or more embodiments, the ring bead 1014 (e.g., protrusion) engages with a corresponding seal structure on the container lid 501, such that a liquid-tight seal between the container ring 1001 and the container lid 501 may be formed. For example, in particular embodiments, the ring bead 1014 engages with a corresponding undercut 518 on the container lid, and, in combination with the seal surfaces 1002, 1008, facilitates a liquid-tight seal between the container ring 1000 and the lid 501. As will be understood from discussions herein, the inner sidewall 1004 is received within a generally u-shaped channel of a container lid 501, and the seal surfaces 1002, 1008 and ring bead 1014 help create a seal between the inner sidewall 1004 and the container lid 501, thereby sealing an interior/storage area of the container.

Further continuing with the embodiment shown in FIG. 6, the outer sidewall 1016 includes various features for engaging with, and sealing a container 1101. In certain embodiments, the outer sidewall 1016 may be substantially concave. In particular embodiments, the outer sidewall 1016 includes an upper portion 1028 that includes an aperture 1012, such that the upper portion 1028 of the outer sidewall 1016 is substantially hook-shaped. In at least one embodiment, and as shown in FIG. 6, the aperture 1012 engages with the container rim 1104, whereby the bead 1118 on the upper portion 1116 of the inner surface 1112 of the external wall 1110 is flush against the outer sidewall 1016 of the container ring 1001, such that a liquid-tight seal is formed. In particular embodiments, the apex 1120 of the bead 1118 on the upper portion 1116 of the inner surface 1112 of the external wall 1110 makes contact with the outer sidewall 1016 of the container ring 1001. In these embodiments (and others), the exterior floor surface 1034 is flush against the inner surface 1112 or the external wall 1110 such that a liquid-tight seal is formed. In one or more embodiments, pressure exerted on the container lid 501 is transferred to the interface between the bead 1118 on the container 1101 and the hook and latch structure of the seal container ring 1001 and container 1101, such that sealing properties are increased.

In one or more embodiments, the upper portion 1028 of the outer sidewall 1016 includes a top surface 1026. In particular embodiments, the top surface 1026 is substantially flat and substantially parallel to the container bottom. In certain embodiments, the top surface 1026 transitions down to a secondary surface 1030 of the outer sidewall 1016 via a vertical wall 1022. In one or more embodiments, the top surface 1026 of the upper portion 1028 is at a higher elevation from the bottom of the container than the secondary surface 1030 of the outer sidewall 1016. In at least one embodiment, the secondary surface 1030 is substantially flat and substantially parallel to the container bottom.

In particular embodiments, the upper portion 1028 of the outer sidewall 1016 of the container ring 1001 includes a bottom surface 1027 that is substantially parallel to the top surface 1026. In some embodiments, the top surface 1026 and the bottom surface 1027 of the upper portion 1028 of the outer sidewall 1016 are integrally connected by an outer surface 1024 of the outer sidewall 1016. In some embodiments, the distance

between the top surface 1026 of the upper portion 1028 and the bottom surface 1027 of the upper portion 1028 may be less than 30 mm.

In at least one embodiment, the top surface 1026 of the upper portion 1028 of the outer sidewall 1016 is at a first distance from the bottom surface of the container ring 1001, and the top surface 1010 of the inner sidewall 1004 (e.g., the trapezoidal peak) is at a second distance from the bottom surface of the container ring 1001, where the first distance is greater than the second distance. In particular embodiments, the “tiered elevation” of the top surface 1026 of the outer sidewall 1016 and the top surface 1010 of the inner sidewall 1004 (e.g., the trapezoidal peak) may help increase stability and load distribution when two (or more) containers 1101 and container rings 1001 are stacked together (e.g., for shipping, without lids), as portions of the container bottom may match the tiered elevation of the sidewalls 1004, 1016 of the container ring 1001.

Turning now to FIG. 7, a cross sectional view of an exemplary container 1103 stacked on top of a container 1101, container ring 1001, and container lid 501 in an attached configuration is shown, according to one embodiment of the present disclosure. As shown in the present embodiment, a container bottom 301 sits on top of a container lid 501 engaged in a seal with a container ring 1001 attached to a container 1101. In various embodiments, the container bottom 301 includes legs 302, 304 to provide stability for the container 1103. In various embodiments, the upper leg 302 includes a base 324 and the lower leg 304 includes a base 322. In particular embodiments, the bases 322, 324 are substantially parallel to the container bottom and provide support when the container 1103 is rested on a surface.

In various embodiments, and as shown in FIG. 7, the substantially flat shape of the top surface 1026 of the outer sidewall 1016 provides a level surface for the base 324 of the upper leg 302 to rest upon. In these embodiments (and others), the lower leg 304 and the upper leg 302 may straddle the secondary surface 1030 of the outer sidewall 1016.

As discussed above, and shown in FIG. 7, the tiered elevation of the sidewalls 1004, 1016 of the container ring 1001 in combination with the vertical height of the lid 501, provides stability and load distribution when two (or more) containers 1101, 1103 with container rings 1001 attached are stacked together.

Conclusion

Accordingly, it will be readily understood by those persons skilled in the art that, in view of the above detailed description of the various embodiments and articles of the present disclosure, the present disclosure is susceptible of broad utility and application. Many methods, embodiments, and adaptations of the present disclosure other than those herein described, as well as many variations, modifications, and equivalent arrangements will be apparent from or reasonably suggested by the present disclosure and the above detailed description thereof, without departing from the substance or scope of the present disclosure. Accordingly, while the present disclosure is described herein in detail in relation to various embodiments, it is to be understood that this detailed description is only illustrative and exemplary of the present disclosure and is made for purposes of providing a full and enabling disclosure of the present disclosure. The detailed description set forth herein is not intended nor is to be construed to limit the present disclosure or otherwise to exclude any such other embodiments, adaptations, variations, modifications, and equivalent arrangements of the present disclosure. The scope of the present disclosure is defined solely by the claims appended hereto and the equivalents thereof.

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* * * * *

CLAIMS

1. A container comprising a container body comprising a bottom and an external wall extending from the bottom and defining an interior cavity, wherein the external wall comprises an exterior wall surface terminating in a container rim area,

(a) wherein the container rim area comprises:

a latch surface extending outwardly from the exterior wall surface; and

a semi-circular bead; and

a seal ring attached to the container rim area and comprising:

an outer sidewall comprising:

an exterior outer sidewall surface comprising a substantially arcuate portion interfacing with the semi-circular bead of the container rim area;

a top surface;

an upper portion outer surface substantially perpendicular to the top surface;

an upper portion bottom surface substantially parallel to the top surface and perpendicular to the upper portion outer surface; and

a generally hook-shaped aperture comprising:

an aperture surface substantially parallel to the upper portion outer surface and intersecting with the upper portion bottom surface; and

an undercut surface substantially perpendicular to the aperture surface, wherein the undercut surface interfaces with the latch surface of the container rim area;

an inner sidewall forming a seal structure for sealing the interior cavity of the container body with a lid; and

a floor connecting the inner sidewall and the outer sidewall; and

(b) wherein the top surface of the outer sidewall includes a substantially flat shape configured to provide a level surface for a separate container to rest without contact between the separate container and the lid of the container when the separate container is stacked on top of the container.

2. The container of claim 1:

(a) wherein the bottom of the container includes an upper leg with an upper base and a lower leg with a lower base;

(b) wherein the upper base is configured to provide support when the container is stacked on top of the separate container; and

(c) wherein the lower base is substantially parallel to the bottom of the container and is configured to provide support when the container rests on a surface other than the separate container.

3. The container of claim 1, wherein the substantially arcuate portion of the exterior outer sidewall surface transitions to an exterior floor surface, the exterior floor surface substantially parallel to the upper portion outer surface and to the exterior wall surface of the container body.

4. The container of claim 3, wherein the generally hook-shaped aperture, the substantially arcuate portion of the exterior outer sidewall, and the exterior floor surface seals the seal ring with the container.

5. The container of claim 1, wherein the floor slopes downwardly from the inner sidewall to the outer sidewall.

6. The container of claim 1, wherein the top surface transitions to an interior outer sidewall surface via a vertical wall substantially perpendicular to the top surface.

7. The container of claim 1, wherein the outer sidewall and the inner sidewall form a generally u-shaped channel for receiving the lid for sealing the interior cavity of the container body.

8. The container of claim 1, wherein the inner sidewall comprises:

an inner seal surface;

a substantially flat outer seal surface; and

a ring bead integrally formed with the inner seal surface and extending from the inner seal surface toward an interior outer sidewall surface for engaging with a corresponding structure on the lid.

9. The container of claim 8, wherein the ring bead comprises an upper ring bead slope and a lower ring bead slope, the upper ring bead slope and lower ring bead slope culminating in a ring bead peak.
10. The container of claim 9, wherein the inner seal surface and the substantially flat outer seal surface converge at a seal surface peak.
11. The container of claim 1, wherein the container body and the seal ring are plastic.
12. The container of claim 1, wherein the container comprises the lid.