

CONTAINER, CLOSURE, AND PACKAGE

The present disclosure is directed to packages and, more particularly, containers, and closures for containers.

5 Background and Summary of the Disclosure

Container closures include crimpable closures, for example, securable to crown finishes of bottles. U.S. Patent 3,494,093 illustrates an example crimp-type closure. Container closures also include threadable closures, for example, securable to threaded finishes of bottles. U.S. Patents 2,789,719 and 4,337,678 illustrate examples of thread-type closures.

10 A general object of the present disclosure, in accordance with one aspect of the disclosure, is to provide a closure that is resealable to a container, is relatively comfortable to remove, and permits pressure in the container to be relieved before the closure is disengaged from the container, and to provide a container that has a crown finish that provides good "lip-feel" to one who consumes product directly from the container.

15 The present disclosure embodies a number of aspects that can be implemented separately from or in combination with each other.

A closure for a container having a neck with an external bead in accordance with one aspect of the disclosure includes an inner shell and an outer shell coupled to the inner shell. The inner shell includes an inner shell base wall having a central passage, and an annular skirt extending
20 axially from the base wall radially outward of the central passage and having an outer surface and at least one external thread segment projecting from the outer surface. The outer shell includes an outer shell base wall, a plug seal extending axially from the base wall through the central passage of the

inner shell base wall, and an annular outer skirt extending axially from the base wall radially outward of the plug seal and having at least one internal thread segment for threaded engagement with the at least one external thread segment of the inner shell.

In accordance with another aspect of the disclosure, there is provided a container that
5 includes a body, a shoulder extending from the body, and a neck extending from the shoulder. The neck includes an axial outward end surface, an inner annular sealing surface axially spaced from the axial outward end surface, an inner annular relief axially between the annular sealing surface and the axial outward end surface and having a larger diameter than that of the inner annular sealing surface, an outer annular bead axially between the shoulder and the axial outward end surface and axially
10 overlapping the inner annular relief, wherein the outer annular bead includes a radial outer surface, an axial outward surface, and an axial inward surface. The neck also includes an outer annular relief axially between the shoulder and the outer annular bead.

In accordance with a further aspect of the disclosure, there is provided a closure for a container having a mouth surrounded by an external bead. The closure includes an inner shell having
15 an annular skirt with external thread segments and a plurality of angularly spaced grip petals, and an outer shell having an annular skirt with internal thread segments for threaded engagement with the external thread segments on the inner shell such that an edge of the skirt on the outer shell engages the grip petals and hooks the grip petals over the external bead upon tightening of the outer shell over the inner shell.

20 In accordance with an additional aspect of the disclosure, there is provided a closure inner shell that includes an inner shell base wall having a central passage, and an annular skirt

extending axially from the base wall radially outward of the central passage and having an outer surface and at least one external thread segment projecting from the outer surface.

Brief Description of the Drawings

The disclosure, together with additional objects, features, advantages and aspects thereof, will be best understood from the following description, the appended claims and the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a fragmentary perspective view of a package in accordance with an illustrative embodiment of the present disclosure, illustrated with a closure according to an illustrative embodiment of the present disclosure that is applied to a container according to an illustrative embodiment of the present disclosure;

FIG. 2 is a fragmentary exploded perspective view of the package of FIG. 1, illustrating the closure exploded away from the container;

FIG. 3 is a fragmentary, perspective, cross-sectional view of the package illustrated in FIG. 2, taken along line 3-3 of FIG. 1;

FIG. 4 is an enlarged view of the package illustrated in FIG. 3;

FIG. 5 is a fragmentary perspective view of the package of FIG. 1, illustrated with the closure being removed from or applied to the container;

FIG. 6 is a fragmentary, perspective, cross-sectional view of the package illustrated in FIG. 5, taken along line 6-6 of FIG. 5; and

FIG. 7 is a fragmentary, exploded, perspective, cross-sectional view of the package of FIG. 1, illustrated with the closure removed from the container.

Detailed Description of Preferred Embodiments

FIG. 1 illustrates a package 10 including a container 12, and a closure 14 coupled to the container 12. The package 10 includes a longitudinal axis A along which the container 12 generally extends, also along which the closure 14 may be applied to and removed from the container 12, and about which a portion of the closure 14 may be rotated. In one embodiment, the package 10 may include a beverage package, and may be used to contain pressurized liquid, for example, carbonated beverages, like beer, soda, etc. Accordingly, the package 10 may be a closed beer bottle, closed soda bottle, or the like. In other embodiments, the package 10 may include any other suitable type of closed container for any suitable purpose. As used herein, directional words such as top, bottom, upper, upward, downward, lower, radial, circumferential, lateral, longitudinal, transverse, vertical, horizontal, and the like are employed by way of description and not necessarily limitation.

Referring now to FIGS. 2 and/or 3, the container 12 may be of one-piece integrally formed construction, preferably glass, plastic, or metal construction. (The term "integrally formed construction" does not exclude one-piece integrally molded layered glass constructions of the type disclosed for example in U.S. Patent 4,740,401, or one-piece glass or metal bottles to which other structure is added after the bottle-forming operation.) The container 12 may be fabricated in press-and-blow or blow-and-blow glass container manufacturing operations, in a plastic injection and/or blow molding operation, in a metal drawing operation, or in any other suitable manner. The container 12 includes a base (not shown) on which the container 12 may be supported, a body 16 extending axially from the base, a shoulder 18 extending radially and axially from the body 16, and a neck 20 extending axially from the shoulder 18. As used herein, the term axial includes oriented generally along a longitudinal axis of the closure, container, or package and may include but is not

limited to a direction that is strictly parallel to the axis. The neck 20 includes a lip or axial outward end surface 22 (FIG. 3), an outer annular bead 24 axially between the shoulder 18 and the axial outward end surface 22 and including a radial outer surface 26, an axial outward surface 28 that may be the same as or coplanar with the axial outward end surface 22 of the neck 20, an axial inward surface 30, and an outer annular reduced diameter portion or relief 32 axially between the shoulder 18 and the outer annular bead 24.

With reference to FIG. 3, the neck 20 also may include an inner annular sealing surface 34 axially spaced from the axial outward end surface 22, and an inner annular relief 36 axially between the inner annular sealing surface 34 and the axial outward end surface 22 and having a larger diameter than that of the inner annular sealing surface 34. The annular relief 36 may axially overlap the outer annular bead 24 and may include an annular surface 36a and a tapered surface 36b between the annular surface 36a and the sealing surface 34.

Referring to FIGS. 2 and/or 3, the container 12 also may include one or more reliefs 38 in the radial outer surface 26 of the outer annular bead 24 and axially extending through the axial outward surface 28 of the outer annular bead 24. The relief(s) 38 also may axially extend through the axial inward surface 30 of the bead 24. The neck 20 also may include a mouth 29 (FIG. 3) between the axial outward surface 22 and the inner annular relief 36. The bead 24 may be relatively tall for good "lip feel". For example, the axial height or length of the bead 24 may be at least 0.080" in axial length. In another embodiment, the relief 38 and the lug 58 could be reversed, such that the lug 58 could be carried on the container neck and the relief 38 could be carried by the closure shell. The axial outward surface 22, the bead 24, and the mouth 29 may be referred to as the "finish" of the

container 12. The finish also may include corresponding one or more interior portions of the neck 20, for example, the inner annular relief 36 and at least a portion of the sealing surface 34.

The closure 14 is a multi-piece closure and, in particular, may be a two-piece closure, for example, including only two shells. The closure 14 includes an inner shell 40, and an outer shell 42 coupled to the inner shell 40. The inner shell 40 secures directly to the container 12, and the outer shell 42 secures directly to the inner shell 40 and sealingly engages directly with the container 12. The inner and outer shells 40, 42 may be composed of any suitable plastic(s) and may be injection molded, compression molded, or produced in any other suitable manner.

The inner shell 40 includes an inner shell base wall 44 extending transversely with respect to the axis A having a central passage 46 with an inner diameter, and an annular skirt 48 extending axially from the base wall 44 radially outward of the central passage 46. As used herein, the term transverse may mean disposed at some angle with respect to a longitudinal axis of the closure, container, or package and along any direction intersecting the closure, container, or package, and may include but is not limited to a radial direction. The skirt 48 (FIG. 2) includes an upper or first axial end 50 at the base wall 44, a lower or second axial end 52, and inner and outer surfaces 54, 56 extending therebetween. The skirt 48 also includes one or more internal lugs 58 (FIG. 2) projecting from the inner surface 54 for registration in the corresponding reliefs 38 (FIG. 2) of the container 12 to radially restrain the inner shell 40 on the container 12. The skirt 48 further includes one or more external thread segments 60 projecting from the outer surface 56. As used herein, the term thread segment includes whole, partial, multiple, and/or an interrupted thread and/or thread segment.

The inner shell 40 also includes a plurality of petals 62 extending from the annular skirt 48, for example from the axially lower end 52, for gripping a corresponding portion of the container 12. The petals 62 are angularly or circumferentially spaced from one another, are circumferentially adjacent to one another with circumferential spaces 63 therebetween, and extend axially and radially outwardly in a free state of the inner shell 40. The petals 62 may include two or more petals, for example, four, six, eight, ten, twelve petals, or any other suitable quantity of petals. The petals 62 may include adjacent circumferential side surfaces 64 (FIG. 2), radially inner and outer surfaces 66, 68, and frustoconical surfaces 70 (FIG. 3) extending between the axially lower end 52 of the inner shell annular skirt 48 and the radially outer surfaces 68. The skirt 48 also may include radially inner incurvate surfaces 72 adjacent the axially lower end 52 of the skirt 48 and establishing a thinned wall 74 connecting the petals 62 to the lower end 52 of the skirt 48, and a radially inward facing shoulder 76 and an axially outward facing shoulder 78. The axially outward facing shoulder 78 may be tapered from the radially inward surface 66 upward to the radially inward facing shoulder 76. The shoulders 78 of the petals 62 engage the axial inward surface 30 of the outer annular bead 24 to retain the closure 14 on the container 12. The shell 40 may be molded so that the petals 62 extend axially and radially outwardly from the annular skirt 48 in a rest or free state, for example, as shown in FIG. 2. Accordingly, the petals 62 may be flexible radially inwardly and may have memory in that they resiliently return radially outwardly to their molded rest state.

The outer shell 42 includes an outer shell base wall 80, an annular inner skirt 82 extending axially from the base wall 80 through the central passage 46 of the inner shell 40 base wall 44 to retain the inner shell 40 to the outer shell 42, and an annular outer skirt 84 extending axially from the base wall 80 radially outward of the inner skirt 82 and having one or more internal thread

segments 86 for threaded engagement with the external thread segment(s) 60 of the inner shell 40. The annular inner skirt 82 also may serve as an annular seal wall or plug seal for sliding contact or engagement with the annular sealing surface 34 of the container neck 20 when the closure 14 is applied to the container 12. The inner skirt 82 includes an annular wall 88 having an outer surface 90 with an outer diameter less than the inner diameter of the central passage 46. The inner skirt 82 also includes an annular enlargement 92 extending radially outwardly from the annular wall 88 and having an outer surface 94 with an outer diameter greater than the inner diameter of the central passage 46. The base wall 44 of the inner shell 40 is axially retained between the outer shell base wall 80 and the annular enlargement 92, which may be an annular seal.

The container 12 may be sealed by the closure 14 by engagement of the plug seal of the outer shell 42 with the inner annular sealing surface 34 of the container neck 20. The container 12 also may be sealed by the closure 14 by engagement of the base wall 44 of the inner shell 40 with the lip 22 of the container neck 20, and/or by engagement of the inner surface 58 of the annular skirt 48 of the inner shell 40 with the outer surface 26 of the annular bead 24 of the container neck 20.

As best shown in FIG. 4, the inner skirt 82 further may include a frustoconical or tapered surface 95 that may extend radially inwardly from the outer surface 94 and that may intersect an axial end surface 93 of the skirt 82. The skirt 82 also may include one or more vent channels or reliefs 96, for example, in the outer surface 94, to cooperate with the inner annular relief 36 of the container neck 20 to establish a pressure relief or vent path when the closure 14 is being removed from the container 12. The reliefs 96 also may intersect the tapered surface 95 wherein axially lower portions of the reliefs 96 are axially open and axially upper portions of the reliefs 96 are closed by the outer surface 94 of the annular enlargement 92. The outer skirt 84 of the outer shell 42 includes

an axially lower end or edge 98 and a radially inner surface 99 adjacent to the edge 98 to engage the petals 62 of the inner shell 40 and fold or hook the petals 62 over the container neck external bead 24 when the closure 14 is being applied to the container 12 such that the outer shell 42 is being tightened to the inner shell 40. The edge 98 may axially engage the tapers 70 to gradually fold the
5 petals 62 into engagement with the container bead 24.

In use, the closure 14 may be assembled or preassembled and then applied to the container 12. For example, the annular inner skirt 82 of the outer shell 42 may be resilient and interference fit through the central passage 46 of the base wall 44 of the inner shell 40 so as to assemble the inner shell 40 to the outer shell 42. Then, the assembled closure 14 may be located
10 over the container neck 20 wherein the annular inner skirt 82 of the outer shell 42 is inserted into the mouth 29 of the container neck 20, the petals 62 are located around the container neck 20, and the internal lugs 58 of the inner shell 40 are located in the corresponding reliefs 38 in the container neck 20. Thereafter, the outer shell 42 may be rotated relative to the inner shell 40 so that the internal threads 86 of the outer shell 42 threadingly engage the external threads 60 of the inner shell 40.
15 Next, rotation of the outer shell 42 continues such that the annular outer skirt 84 of the outer shell 42 engages the petals 62 to fold or hook the petals 62 over the external bead 24 of the container neck 20 upon tightening of the outer shell 42 to the inner shell 40. Accordingly, the closure 14 is fastened and sealed to the container 12. More particularly, the outer shell 42 fastens to the inner shell 40 to cause fastening of the inner shell 40 to the container 12 while the inner skirt 82 of the outer shell 42
20 seals to the container 12.

Also in use, the closure 14 may be removed from the container 12. For example the outer shell 42 may be rotated to threadingly disengage the internal thread segments 86 of the outer

shell 42 from the external thread segments 60 of the inner shell 40. As the outer shell 42 is unscrewed from the inner shell 40, the inner skirt 82 slides axially along the sealing surface 34 of the container 12 and the relief(s) 96 in the inner skirt 82 axially overlap with the inner annular relief 36 of the container neck 20 at a desired spacing between the shells 40, 42 and thereby cooperate to establish a vent path to vent the container 12 to atmosphere before the petals 62 of the inner shell 40 completely disengage from the container neck bead 24. Accordingly, there may be some lost motion (axially) as the outer shell 42 moves axially relative to the container 12 but the inner shell 40 initially remains axially stationary with respect to the container 12. As shown in FIGS. 5 and 6, as the outer shell 42 continues to be unscrewed from the inner skirt 40, the outer skirt 84 of the outer shell 42 moves away from the petals 62 to allow the resilient petals 62 to resiliently unfold or return to their free state in which they extend axially and radially outwardly from the annular skirt 48 of the inner shell 40 and thereby release from the container 12. The inner shell lugs 58 cooperate with the reliefs 38 in the container bead 24 to prevent the inner skirt 40 from rotating relative to the container 12 as the outer shell 42 is unscrewed from the inner shell 40. As also shown in FIG. 6, the annular inner skirt 82 disengages from the inner sealing surface 34 of the container neck 20. Accordingly, the closure 14 can be pulled away from the container 12 as shown in FIG. 7, wherein a pulling force exerted on the outer shell 42 causes the inner shell 40 to be pulled away from the container 12 by way of the coupling between the outer shell 42 and the inner shell 40. Thereafter, the closure 14 may be reapplied and resealed to the container 12.

Accordingly, the package 10 includes a container neck without threads, but includes a closure that operates in a familiar screw-on, screw-off manner.

There thus has been disclosed a package, container, and closure, that fully satisfy all of the objects and aims previously set forth. The disclosure has been presented in conjunction with several illustrative embodiments, and additional modifications and variations have been discussed. Other modifications and variations readily will suggest themselves to persons of ordinary skill in the
5 art in view of the foregoing discussion.

Claims

1.

A container (12) that includes,

5 a body (16);

a shoulder (18) extending from the body; and

a neck (20) extending from the shoulder and including:

an axial outward end surface (22),

an inner annular sealing surface (34) axially spaced from the axial outward

10 end surface,

an inner annular relief (36) axially between the annular sealing surface and the axial outward end surface and having a larger diameter than that of the inner annular sealing surface,

an outer annular bead (24) axially between the shoulder and the axial outward end surface and axially overlapping the inner annular relief, wherein the outer annular bead includes

15 a radial outer surface (26), an axial outward surface (28), and an axial inward surface (30), and

an outer annular relief (32) axially between the shoulder and the outer annular bead.

2.

A package (10) that includes the container set forth in claim 1, and a multiple-piece closure (14) coupled to the container and including:

an inner shell (40) including an inner shell base wall (44) having a central passage (46), and an annular skirt (48) extending axially from the base wall radially outward of the central passage and having an outer surface (56) and at least one external thread segment (60) projecting from the outer surface; and

an outer shell (42) including an outer shell base wall (80), a plug seal (82) extending axially from the base wall through the central passage of the inner shell base wall to contact the annular sealing surface of the container neck when the closure is applied to the container, and an annular outer skirt (84) extending axially from the base wall radially outward of the plug seal and having at least one internal thread segment (86) for threaded engagement with the at least one external thread segment of the inner shell.

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3.

The package set forth in claim 2 wherein the plug seal includes at least one vent relief (96) that cooperates with the inner annular relief of the container to establish a vent path when the closure is being removed from the container.

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4.

The package set forth in claim 2 wherein the inner shell also includes a plurality of petals (62) extending from an axially lower end (52) of the annular skirt and having radially inwardly and axially outwardly facing shoulders (76, 78), wherein when the closure is applied to the container, the outer skirt engages the petals of the inner shell and moves the petals over the container neck outer annular bead such that the shoulders of the petals engage the axial inward surface of the outer annular bead to retain the closure on the container.

5.

The package set forth in claim 4 wherein the container includes at least one relief (38) in the radial outer surface of the outer annular bead and axially extending through at least the axial outward surface of the outer annular bead, and the annular skirt of the inner shell includes an inner surface (54) with at least one lug (58) projecting from the inner surface and residing in the at least one relief to radially restrain the inner shell on the container.

6.

The package set forth in claim 2 wherein the container is sealed by the closure by engagement of the plug seal of the outer shell with the inner annular sealing surface of the container neck, and by at least one of engagement of the base wall of the inner shell with the axial outward end surface of the container neck or engagement of an inner surface of the annular skirt of the inner shell with the outer surface of the outer annular bead of the container neck.

7.

A closure inner shell (40) that includes an inner shell base wall (44) having a central passage (46), and an annular skirt (48) extending axially from the base wall radially outward of the central passage and having an outer surface (56) and at least one external thread segment (60) projecting from the outer surface.

8.

A closure that includes the closure inner shell of claim 7, and a closure outer shell (42) including an outer shell base wall (80), a plug seal (82) extending axially from the base wall through the central passage of the inner shell base wall, and an annular outer skirt (84) extending axially from the base wall radially outward of the plug seal and having at least one internal thread segment (86) for threaded engagement with the at least one external thread segment of the inner shell.

9.

The closure of claim 8 wherein the closure inner shell also includes a plurality of petals (62) extending from an axially lower end (52) of the annular skirt and having radially inwardly and axially outwardly facing shoulders (76, 78).

10.

The closure set forth in claim 8, wherein the central passage has an inner diameter, and the plug seal includes an annular wall (88) having a wall outer surface (90) with a wall outer diameter less than the central passage inner diameter, and the plug seal also includes an annular seal (92) extending radially outwardly from the annular wall and having a seal outer surface (94) with a seal outer diameter greater than the inner diameter of the central passage such that the base wall of the inner shell is axially retained between the outer shell base wall and the annular seal.

11.

The closure set forth in claim 8 wherein the plug seal also includes at least one vent relief (96).

12.

The closure set forth in claim 7 wherein the inner shell also includes a plurality of petals (62) extending from the annular skirt, and the outer skirt of the outer shell engages the petals of the inner shell and moves the petals over an external bead (24) of a neck (20) of a container (12) when the closure is being applied to the container.

13.

The closure set forth in claim 12 wherein the annular skirt of the inner shell includes an axially lower end (52) from which the petals extend axially and radially outwardly in a free state of the inner shell.

14.

The closure set forth in claim 8 wherein the annular skirt of the inner shell includes an inner surface (54) with at least one lug (58) projecting from the inner surface.

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15.

A closure (14) for a container (12) having a mouth (29) surrounded by an external bead (24), which includes:

an inner shell (40) having an annular skirt (48) with external thread segments (60) and a plurality of angularly spaced grip petals (62), and

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an outer shell (42) having an annular skirt (84) with internal thread segments (86) for threaded engagement with said external thread segments on said inner shell such that an edge (98) of said skirt on said outer shell engages said grip petals and hooks said grip petals over said external bead upon tightening of said outer shell over said inner shell.

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16.

The closure set forth in claim 15 wherein said external bead on said container has at least one radial recess (38) and said annular skirt of said inner shell has at least one internal lug (58) adapted to be received in said recess to prevent rotation of said inner shell around said lip.

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17.

The closure set forth in claim 16 wherein said outer shell has an annular seal wall (88) within said skirt for sliding engagement within the container mouth to seal the container.

18.

The closure set forth in claim 17 including at least one vent channel (96) in an outer surface (94) of said annular seal wall to vent the container to atmosphere before said petals disengage from said bead upon unthreading of said outer closure.

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19.

The closure set forth in claim 15 wherein the inner shell includes an opening (46) in the base wall and the outer shell includes an annular inner skirt (82) extending axially from the base wall radially within the annular outer skirt and through the opening in the base wall of the inner
10 shell.

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