CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A beverage dispenser, comprising:

a dispensing shelf configured to support installation of one or more ready to drink beverage containers for gravity fed beverage dispensing;

a thermal regulant storage area adapted to store a thermal regulant that regulates the temperature of beverage contents of the one or more beverage containers through natural convection;

a thermally insulated beverage compartment that encloses the thermal regulant storage area and at least a portion of the dispensing shelf configured to support installation of one or more ready to drink beverage containers; and

a pre-regulating compartment positioned below the thermally insulated beverage compartment and adapted to store one or more pre-mixed beverage containers therein, wherein the dispensing shelf comprises an opening above the pre-regulating compartment to facilitate fluid communication between the pre-regulating compartment and the thermally insulated beverage compartment.

2. The beverage dispenser of claim 1, wherein the dispensing shelf comprises:

a beverage container mount on an upper side of the dispensing shelf; and

a dispenser assembly on a lower side of the dispensing shelf.

3. The beverage dispenser of claim 2, wherein the dispensing shelf comprises an aperture adapted to facilitate installation of the beverage container mount and the dispenser assembly to the dispensing shelf.

4. The beverage dispenser of claim 1, wherein the thermally insulated beverage compartment encloses an upper side of the dispensing shelf.

5. The beverage dispenser of claim 1, wherein the dispensing shelf comprises a slanted surface that slopes towards the opening.

6. The beverage dispenser of claim 1, wherein the pre-regulating compartment comprises an aperture at an intermediate position along a rear surface of the pre-regulating compartment.

7. The beverage dispenser of claim 1, wherein the pre-regulating compartment is a drawer or is accessed through a door.

8. The beverage dispenser of claim 1, further comprising a modular beverage container storage compartment.

9. The beverage dispenser of claim 1, further comprising a front door, a top access door or both.

10. The beverage dispenser of claim 1, wherein the thermal regulant storage area is fixed within the thermally insulated beverage compartment.

11. The beverage dispenser of claim 1, wherein the thermal regulant storage area is removable from the beverage dispenser.

12. The beverage dispenser of claim 11, wherein the thermal regulant storage area is one of a tray, a drawer, or a package.

13. The beverage dispenser of claim 1, wherein the thermal regulant storage area is perforated.

14. The beverage dispenser of claim 2, wherein the thermal regulant storage area surrounds at least a portion of the dispenser assembly.

15. A beverage dispenser, comprising:

a thermal regulant storage area adapted to store a thermal regulant;

a thermally insulated beverage compartment that encloses the thermal regulant storage area and is configured to support installation of one or more ready to drink beverage containers for gravity fed beverage dispensing, wherein the ambient temperature in the thermally insulated beverage compartment is regulated through natural convection; and

a pre-regulating compartment positioned below the thermally insulated beverage compartment and adapted to store one or more pre-mixed beverage containers therein, wherein the thermally insulated beverage compartment comprises an opening above the pre-regulating compartment to facilitate fluid communication between the pre-regulating compartment and the thermally insulated beverage compartment.

16. A temperature controlled beverage dispenser, comprising:

a temperature controlled beverage storage compartment;

a dispensing shelf attached to the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment and configured to form a base of the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment, the dispensing shelf comprising:

one or more apertures configured to enable a pre-mixed beverage to be dispensed therethrough; and

a pre-mixed beverage container mount configured to engage the apertures, support a pre-mixed beverage container, and to enable the gravity-fed dispensing of a pre-mixed beverage from the pre-mixed beverage container;

a thermal regulating unit disposed in thermal communication with the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment and configured to regulate the temperature of the pre-mixed beverage container stored within the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment through natural convection; and

a pre-regulating compartment positioned below the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment and configured to store one or more pre-mixed beverage containers therein, wherein the dispensing shelf comprises an opening above the pre-regulating compartment to facilitate fluid communication between the pre-regulating compartment and the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment.

17. The temperature controlled beverage dispenser of claim 16, wherein the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment includes space for storing one or more additional pre-mixed beverage containers that are not in use.

18. The temperature controlled beverage dispenser of claim 16, wherein the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment, comprises:

a thermally insulated frame having an exterior shell;

an insulating material enclosed by the exterior shell; and

a hinged front door that provides access to the interior of the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment.

19. The temperature controlled beverage dispenser of claim 16, further comprising a dispenser assembly disposed on a lower side of the dispensing shelf, wherein the one of more apertures formed within the dispensing shelf are adapted to attach the pre-mixed beverage container mount and the dispensing assembly to the dispensing shelf.

20. The temperature controlled beverage dispenser of claim 16, wherein the exterior shell includes one or more slanted surfaces.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A temperature controlled beverage dispenser, comprising:

an enclosed, temperature controlled beverage storage compartment, including:

a thermally insulated frame having an exterior shell;

an insulating material enclosed by the exterior shell; and

a hinged front door that provides access to the interior of the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment;

a dispensing shelf attached to and forming a base of the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment, the dispensing shelf including:

one or more apertures formed within the dispensing shelf, the one or more apertures configured to enable a pre-mixed beverage to be dispensed therethrough; and

a pre-mixed beverage container mount configured to engage the one or more apertures formed within the dispensing shelf, the pre-mixed beverage container mount configured to support one or more pre-mixed beverage containers stored within the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment, and further configured to enable the gravity-fed dispensing of a pre-mixed beverage from the one or more pre-mixed beverage containers; and

a thermal regulating unit disposed in thermal communication with the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment, the thermal regulating unit configured to regulate the temperature of the one or more pre-mixed beverage containers stored within the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment.

2. The temperature controlled beverage dispenser of claim 1, wherein the pre-mixed beverage container mount is disposed on an upper side of the dispensing shelf.

3. The temperature controlled beverage dispenser of claim 2, further comprising:

a dispenser assembly disposed on a lower side of the dispensing shelf, wherein the dispenser assembly is configured to engage the one or more apertures.

4. The temperature controlled beverage dispenser of claim 3, wherein the one of more apertures formed within the dispensing shelf are adapted to attach the pre-mixed beverage container mount and the dispensing assembly to the dispensing shelf.

5. The temperature controlled beverage dispenser of claim 3, wherein the thermal regulating unit surrounds at least a portion of the dispenser assembly.

6. The temperature controlled beverage dispenser of claim 1, wherein:

the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment encloses the thermal regulating unit and at least a portion of the dispensing shelf.

7. The temperature controlled beverage dispenser of claim 6, wherein the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment encloses an upper side of the dispensing shelf.

8. The temperature controlled beverage dispenser of claim 1, further comprising a modular beverage container storage compartment.

9. The temperature controlled beverage dispenser of claim 1, wherein the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment includes space for storing one or more additional pre-mixed beverage containers that are not in use.

10. The temperature controlled beverage dispenser of claim 1, wherein the exterior shell includes one or more slanted surfaces.

11. The temperature controlled beverage dispenser of claim 1, wherein the exterior shell includes one or more handles.

12. The temperature controlled beverage dispenser of claim 11, wherein the one or more handles are integrally formed as part of the exterior shell.

13. A temperature controlled beverage dispenser, comprising:

a temperature controlled beverage storage compartment;

a dispensing shelf attached to the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment, the dispensing shelf configured to form a base of the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment

and including:

an aperture formed within the dispensing shelf, the aperture configured to enable a pre-mixed beverage to be dispensed therethrough; and

a pre-mixed beverage container mount configured to engage the aperture, the pre-mixed beverage container mount configured to support a pre-mixed beverage container, and further configured to enable the gravity-fed dispensing of a pre-mixed beverage from the pre-mixed beverage container; and

a thermal regulating unit disposed in thermal communication with the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment, the thermal regulating unit configured to regulate the temperature of a pre-mixed beverage container stored within the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment.

14. The temperature controlled beverage dispenser of claim 13, wherein the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment encloses at least a portion of the dispensing shelf.

15. The temperature controlled beverage dispenser of claim 13, wherein the thermal regulating unit is removable from the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment.

16. The temperature controlled beverage dispenser of claim 13, wherein the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment includes space for storing one or more additional pre-mixed beverage containers that are not in use.

17. The temperature controlled beverage dispenser of claim 13, wherein the thermal regulating unit surrounds at least a portion of the dispenser assembly.

18. A temperature controlled beverage dispenser, comprising:

an enclosed, temperature controlled beverage storage compartment;

a dispensing shelf arranged to be adjacent the bottom of the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment, the dispensing shelf including:

an aperture formed within the dispensing shelf, the aperture configured to enable a pre-mixed beverage to be dispensed therethrough; and

a pre-mixed beverage container mount disposed on an upper side of the dispensing shelf and configured to engage the aperture, the pre-mixed beverage container mount configured to support a pre-mixed beverage container and enable the gravity-fed dispensing of a pre-mixed beverage from the pre-mixed beverage container; and

a dispenser assembly disposed on a lower side of the dispensing shelf, and configured to attach to the dispensing shelf, wherein the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment encloses the thermal regulating unit and at least a portion of the dispensing shelf.

19. The temperature controlled beverage dispenser of claim 19, wherein the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment, includes:

a thermally insulated frame having an exterior shell;

an insulating material enclosed by the exterior shell; and

a hinged front door that provides access to the interior of the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment.

20. The temperature controlled beverage dispenser of claim 19, further comprising a thermal regulating unit disposed in thermal communication with the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment, the thermal regulating unit configured to regulate the temperature of a pre-mixed beverage container stored within the temperature controlled beverage storage compartment.