

WING SHAPED BEVERAGE CAN PULL TAB

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention generally relates to pull tabs on beverage containers. More particularly, the invention relates to a wide format can pull tab with “wings” wide enough to accommodate marketing messages or logos on both its upper and lower surfaces.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The use of pull tabs on containers of various kinds, particularly, beverage cans is well known in the art. The earliest beverage can pull tabs were of the type that detached from the can end when actuated and had to be discarded before imbibing the contents of the can. There were multiple problems associated with these ring tabs as they were predominantly known and described in U.S. Pat. No. 3,349,949 to Cudzik. The rings tabs once detached from the can had a tendency to fall back into the can after detachment creating a potential choking and injury hazard to the person drinking the contents of the can. In addition, the detached tabs when discarded on the ground could cause severe cuts to a person stepping on the sharp edges of the tab.

[0003] The pull out ring tabs were subsequently replaced by the stay on pull tabs which were constructed to stay attached to the can end after actuation to avoid the hazards associated with the detachable ring tabs. An example of such a stay on pull tab is described in U.S. Pat. No. 3,967,752. The stay on pull tabs on beverage and other cans in the market today generally have the same design and construction with minor variations. A majority of them have an elongated, rectangular shape with curvilinear lift and nose ends with the nose end extending over the frangible can top seal which is broken by lifting the lift end and exerting downward pressure on the seal through the nose end. A central fastening tongue and hinge at the nose end allows for the securement of the pull tab to the central rivet of the can. This central rivet acts as a fulcrum and lever providing the nose end of the

pull tab sufficient downward pressure to break the frangible seal to open the can while at the same time allowing the tab to remain attached to the nose end of the can after the seal is broken.

[0004] Marketing of products by placing advertisements on the surfaces of a variety of objects, including beverage cans, apparel and other items has been in vogue for decades. Placing advertisements on articles and objects that are commonly used by the consumer has the potential to reach the maximum number of consumers and the related benefit of an uptick in sales for the advertised products. The worldwide popularity of beverages, both canned and bottled provides an excellent opportunity for marketing products through the strategic placement of advertisements on these beverage cans and bottles. However, the placement of advertisements and other promotional offers on the side of a can is not sufficiently noticeable and therefore of limited appeal to marketers.

[0005] Advertisements, promotions and logos printed on the underside of bottle caps have met with limited success primarily because the bottle caps are usually discarded as soon as they are removed from the bottle neck and scarce attention is paid to reading the printed material placed on the inside of the bottle cap. In addition, the sharp edges of the traditional bottle caps discourage their storage in a garment pocket. On the other hand, beverage can ends provide an ideal vehicle for marketing through placement of an advertisement, logo, and informational or promotional material on the pull tab itself, which is appealing to marketers as the consumer must look at the top of the can to actuate the pull tab, virtually guaranteeing exposure to the message on the pull tab

[0006] A drawback with the current can pull tabs is their small shape and size which does not permit the placement of any meaningful printed, etched or cutout designs on them. The pull tab of the present invention through its unique wing-shaped design and construction overcomes the deficiency in the prior art for a can pull tab that is capable of providing a large enough surface area for the placement of advertisements, logos, or promotional offers and related material.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] The present invention is a wide format wing shaped can pull tab. Through its unique design, structure and highly visible placement on the top of the can, the wing pull tab of the invention envisions the common utilitarian can pull tab as a vehicle and launching pad for meaningful promotion of consumer products by providing an expanded surface for placement of advertisements, logos, informational messaging and promotional material to reach the masses.

[0008] In an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the can pull tab of the invention is a seamless wing shaped pull tab with a pair of wings on either side with their broadest sides spanning the top surface of the beverage can at one end of the can's circumference. In this embodiment of the invention, the broadest sides of the wing tab lies parallel to the outer rim of the can end but sufficiently inset from the can rim so it does not impede can stacking.

[0009] In the exemplary embodiment of the invention, a U shaped curved indent in the center between the two wings of the wing tab is raised a few millimeters from the surface of the can end to form the lift end of the wing tab with sufficient space to accommodate a forefinger or middle finger to lift the tab and minimizes the discomfort and broken nails experienced with the traditional can pull tabs. The subtle upward curvature of the indent on the lift end also eliminates the need for the use of a can opening device to open the can. An additional advantage of the curvature at the lift end of the tab is that when a person drinks directly from the can, the septum that separates the nostrils fits into the curvature and minimizes the angle at which a person must tilt their head backward to pour the beverage into their mouth. In this embodiment, the wing tab has a nose end that lies directly across from the lift end of the tab and is situated over the frangible seal of the can.

[0010] In the exemplary embodiment of the present invention, the wide wing span of the wing tab allows for the printing of information in the form of advertisements, logos, website addresses, motivational messages, contest codes/rules, graphic designs and other such information for dissemination to the consumer and the public in general. In this embodiment of the invention, the wing tab, depending on the particular can end on which it is affixed, offers an area roughly 40-45mm wide by 20-25mm high for logos or messages on both the top and bottom surfaces of the tab. In this embodiment of the invention, laser cutouts or etchings may also be placed on the wingspan of the tab.

[0011] In yet another embodiment of the present invention, the wing tab can typically be dislocated from the can with 3 repeated motions front to back in order to fatigue the aluminum along the axial lines or the fastening tongue that connects it to the central rivet. The wing tab then easily separates from the container and can be saved to preserve the advertisements, logos, or other messages for later review or to redeem the tab for a prize associated with the advertisement or logo. In this embodiment of the wing tab, the compact size of the tab with its smooth edges is appealing to consumers and retailers because of the ease with which it can be inserted into a garment pocket or stored in the retailer's cash register.

[0012] In all embodiments of the wing tab of the present invention, the outer edge of the wing tab is recessed approximately 4-6mm from the outer edge of the can rim so that the tab does not interfere with the stacking of the cans.

[0013] In the summary of the invention thus provided and in the specification in general, an embodiment is an example or implementation of the invention as conceptualized and therefore the various references to "an exemplary embodiment," "an embodiment," "yet another embodiment" or "related embodiment" do not necessarily all relate to the same embodiment of the invention. Rather, these references to the various embodiments mean that a particular structure, feature, or characteristic described in connection with an embodiment is included in at least some embodiments, but not necessarily all embodiments of the invention. For further clarity, although various features of the invention may be described in the context of a single embodiment, the features may also be provided separately or in any suitable combination. Conversely, although the invention may be described herein in the context of separate embodiments for clarity, the invention may also be implemented in a single embodiment.

[0014] In general, the features and advantages of the various embodiments of the invention as described in the summary of the invention will be further appreciated and become obvious to one skilled in the art when viewed in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, detailed description of the invention and the appended claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0015] **FIG. 1** is a plan view of the wing tab of the present invention.

[0016] **FIG. 2** is a perspective view of the wing tab of the present invention as it would be disposed on the beverage can end.

[0017] **FIG. 3** is a perspective view of an exemplary embodiment of the wing tab depicting the shape and size of the tab and its potential to accommodate information, art or logos on its surface.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0018] The present invention is an improvement over the can pull tabs in the prior art. The can pull tab of the present invention has a wide wing-shaped design resembling the general shape of a bat with outstretched wings. The seamless construction of the wings is aesthetically pleasing and ergonomically practical in its use as a can pull tab. The wide surface area of the tab permits the printing and display of advertisements, marketing messages, logos and other promotional material both on the top and bottom surfaces of the tab.

[0019] Referring now to the figures, more particularly, **FIG. 1** a plan view of the wing pull tab **10** outside a can is shown to illustrate its general wing-shaped design and the critical functional parts that differentiate the tab from can pull tabs in the prior art. In this figure, the seamless wing construction of the wing pull tab **10** can be seen comprised of a right wing **10A** and a left wing **10B** with a middle U-shaped curved indent **10C** representing the lift end disposed in the center of the total wingspan of the wing tab **10**. The lift end **10C** is raised within a few millimeters from the can surface to allow for the insertion of a finger of any size and actuate the nose end **10D** of the tab to exert downward pressure on the frangible can end seal to open the can to consume the beverage contained in it. The curvilinear U-shaped lift end **10C** is also designed to fit over the septum of the nose to permit a person to drink directly from the can without tilting their head back to pour the beverage into their mouth. In this figure of the wing pull tab **10** a fastening tongue and hinge **10E** is disposed

centrally within the nose end **10D** for the securement of the wing pull tab **10** to the central rivet of the can.

[0020] **FIG. 2** is a perspective view of the wing pull tab **10** disposed over the can **20** and attached to the central rivet on the can end surface **20A** through the central fastening tongue and hinge **10E** of wing tab **10**. The perspective view of this figure depicts the disposition of the wing tab **10** in a manner that leaves sufficient space between the outermost edges of the tab wings **10A** and **10B** and the outer edge of the can **20** rim to allow for the stacking of the cans. The wing pull tab **10** is also disposed in a manner that leaves sufficient space between the lift end **10C** of wing tab **10** and the can **20** rim to permit the insertion of a finger through the elevated curved lift end **10C** to start the actuation process through the nose end **10D** and break the frangible can seal **20B**.

[0021] **FIG. 3** is a perspective view of an exemplary embodiment of the wing pull tab **10** and its disposition over the can **20** end. The figure illustrates a realistic depiction of the manner in which a marketing message is printed over the wide wingspan of the wing pull tab of the present invention. The figure shows the size, breadth and positioning of the wing pull tab with its wings **10A** and **10B** and lift end tab **10C**, nose end **10D** and central fastening hinge **10E** over can **20**. In this figure, the frangible can seal **20B** is depicted as having been broken exposing the hole in the can end with the wing pull tab still attached to the can mouth. The wing pull tab can be removed either before or after the beverage is consumed and stored in a pocket for redemption of prizes or to save the marketing message.

[0022] The foregoing description of the present invention through its figures and the various embodiments should not be construed to limit the scope of the invention. It should be understood and obvious to one skilled in the arts that the embodiments of the invention thus described may be further modified without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as set forth in the claims that follow.

CLAIMS

What is claimed;

1. A can pull tab, said can pull tab comprising:
 - a wing shaped can pull tab structure with two wing parts disposed on either side of the said wing shaped can pull tab structure;
 - a U shaped lift end disposed at the midpoint on the broadest side of the said wing shaped can pull tab structure between the said two wing parts;
 - a semicircular nose end on the wing shaped can pull tab structure disposed directly across from the said U shaped lift end extending over the frangible can seal; and
 - a central fastening tongue and hinge structure disposed over the central can rivet to hold the wing shaped can pull tab structure pivotally and securely over the mouth of a can.
2. The can pull tab of claim 1 wherein the can pull tab is a beverage can pull tab.
3. The can pull tab of claim 1 wherein the U shaped lift end is raised within a few millimeters from the can end surface to allow for the insertion of a finger of any size and actuate the semi circular nose end to exert downward pressure on the frangible can end seal to open the can.
4. The can pull tab of claim 1 wherein the wing shaped can pull tab structure is constructed seamlessly from sturdy material such as aluminum, plastic or an alloy.
5. The can pull tab of claim 1 wherein the wing shaped can pull tab structure with the two wing parts provides a large surface to accommodate advertisements, marketing messages, promotional contest messages, logos, slogans, graphic designs etchings etc., both on the surface and underside of the wing shaped can pull tab structure.
6. The can pull tab of claim 1 wherein the large size of the wing shaped can pull tab structure prevents it from dropping into the beverage can and causing a choking and injury hazard.
7. The can pull tab of claim 1 wherein the wing shaped can pull tab structure can be detached from the can and stored in a cash register or transported in a pocket without injury because of its smooth rounded edges and compactness.

8. The can pull tab of claim 1 wherein the U shaped lift end of the wing shaped can pull tab structure is designed to accommodate the nose septa to enable a person to drink directly from the can with minimal backward tilt of the head.
9. The can pull tab of claim 1 wherein the outermost edges of the wing parts of the wing shaped can pull tab structure are sufficiently recessed from the outer edge of the can rim to leave sufficient space to allow for can stacking.
10. A system for displaying advertisements, marketing messages, slogans, logos, graphics and other messages on can pull tabs, the system comprising:
 - a wing shaped can pull tab structure with two wing parts disposed on either side of the wing shaped can pull tab structure;
 - placement of information, art or logos on both the surface and underside of the wing shaped can pull tab structure; and
 - placement of the wing shaped can pull tab structure pivotally and securely over the mouth of a beverage can.