least one portion of the inner surface of the inner package is permanently affixed, using affixing means, to a corresponding portion of the outer surface of the inner frame, wherein the at least one portion of the inner surface of the inner package is provided at a distance from the access opening of less than 30 percent of the distance from the opening to the bottom of the inner package.

The term “inner surface” is used throughout the specification to refer to the surface of a component of the assembled container that is facing towards the interior of the container, for example towards the consumer goods, when the container is in the closed position. Likewise, the term “outer surface” is used throughout the specification to refer to the surface of a component of the container that is facing towards the exterior of the container. For example, the inner frame comprises an outer surface that is facing the outer housing of the container and an inner surface that is facing the inner package of the container. It should be noted, that the inside or outside surface is not necessarily equivalent to a certain side of a blank used in assembly of the container. Depending on how the blank is folded around the consumer goods, areas that are on the same side of the container can either face towards the inside or the towards the outside of the container.

By providing affixing means to permanently affix a portion of the outer surface of the inner package to a corresponding portion of the inner surface of the inner frame, a container may be provided that provides a more securely sealed inner package since the combination of the inner frame and the affixing means provides a more structurally resilient inner package more able to resist the force required to form a seal between the adhesive label and the inner package. Therefore, advantageously, the partially releasably affixed adhesive label cooperates with the more structurally resilient inner package to form the improved seal between the adhesive label and the outer surface of the inner package. Thus, a container is provided with an improved quality of closing.

In a first preferred embodiment, the outer housing of the container comprises a box, and a lid hinged to the box along a hinge line extending across a rear wall of the container.

In this preferred embodiment, the adhesive label may be permanently affixed to the inner surface of the front wall of the lid such that upon opening the lid the adhesive label is peeled away to reveal the access opening. As such, when a user opens the lid of the container, the adhesive label is automatically opened to reveal the access opening, and when the user closes the lid, the adhesive label is automatically closed to reseal the access opening. By providing affixing means to improve the structural resilience of the inner package, an automatically opening container is provided with improved sealing.

As mentioned in the first aspect~~Preferably~~, the at least one portion of the inner surface of the inner package is provided at a distance from the access opening of less than about 30 percent of the distance from the opening to the bottom of the inner package. More preferably,

the at least one portion of the inner surface of the inner package is provided at a distance from the access opening of less than 20 percent of the distance from the opening to the bottom of the inner package. Yet more preferably, the at least one portion of the inner surface of the inner package is provided at a

CLAIMS:

1. A container for consumer goods, comprising:

an outer housing, comprising:

a box; and

a lid;

an inner package of consumer goods within the outer housing having an access opening through which consumer goods can be removed;

an inner frame within the inner package; and

an adhesive label covering the access opening of the inner package and extending beyond the periphery of the access opening of the inner package, the adhesive label being at least partially releasably affixed to an outer surface of the inner package by a releasable adhesive,

wherein, at least one portion of the inner surface of the inner package is permanently affixed, using affixing means, to a corresponding portion of the outer surface of the inner frame, wherein the at least one portion of the inner surface of the inner package is provided at a distance from the access opening of less than 30 percent of the distance from the opening to the bottom of the inner package.

2. A container according to claim 1, wherein the at least one portion of the inner surface of the inner package is provided at a distance from the access opening of ~~less than 30 percent of the distance from the opening to the bottom of the inner package, preferably~~ less than about 20 percent of the distance from the opening to the bottom of the inner package~~, more preferably less than about 10 percent~~.

3. A container according to claim 1, wherein the at least one portion of the inner surface of the inner package is provided at a distance from the access opening of less than about 10 percent of the distance from the opening to the bottom of the inner package.

~~3~~4. A container according to ~~claim 1 or 2~~any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the affixing means is elongate, and is oriented such that the major axis of the affixing means is in the transverse direction.

~~4~~5. A container according to any one of claims 1~~, 2 or 3~~ to 4, comprising a plurality of spaced apart affixing means.

~~5~~6. A container according to one any of claims 1 to ~~4~~5, wherein the inner frame is U-shaped and has a front wall and a pair of opposed side walls.

~~6~~7. A container according to claim ~~5~~6, wherein the front wall of the inner frame is provided adjacent the front wall of the inner package.

~~7~~8. A container according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein at least a portion of the outer surface of the rear wall of the inner package is permanently affixed to a corresponding portion of the inner surface of the rear wall of the box.

~~8~~9. A container according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein at least one portion of the inner surface of the inner package is permanently affixed using at least one of the following affixing means: hot melt adhesive; solvent based adhesive; water based adhesive; solvent-free adhesive; pressure-sensitive adhesive; conductive type sealing; and inductive type sealing.

~~9~~10. A container according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the affixing means is provided on an outer surface of a front wall of the inner frame.

~~10~~11. A container according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the affixing means is provided on an inner surface of a front wall of the inner package.

~~11~~12. A container according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein at least a portion of the outer surface of the front wall of the inner package is permanently affixed to a corresponding portion of the inner surface of the front wall of the box.

~~12~~13. A container according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the access opening of the inner package is defined by one or more lines of weakness in the inner package.

~~13~~14. A container according to claim ~~12~~13, wherein the adhesive label is permanently affixed to the portion of an outer surface of the inner package bounded by the one or more lines of weakness.

~~14~~15. A container according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the adhesive label is permanently affixed to the inner surface of the front wall of the lid such that upon opening the lid the adhesive label is peeled away to reveal the access opening.

~~15~~16. A container according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the consumer goods are smoking articles.