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(54) **STRIPED GLASS AND METHOD FOR PREVENTING CONDENSATION**

(76) Inventor: **Vincent P. Tippmann SR.**, Fort Wayne, IN (US)

Correspondence Address:
BIRCH STEWART KOLASCH & BIRCH
PO BOX 747
FALLS CHURCH, VA 22040-0747 (US)

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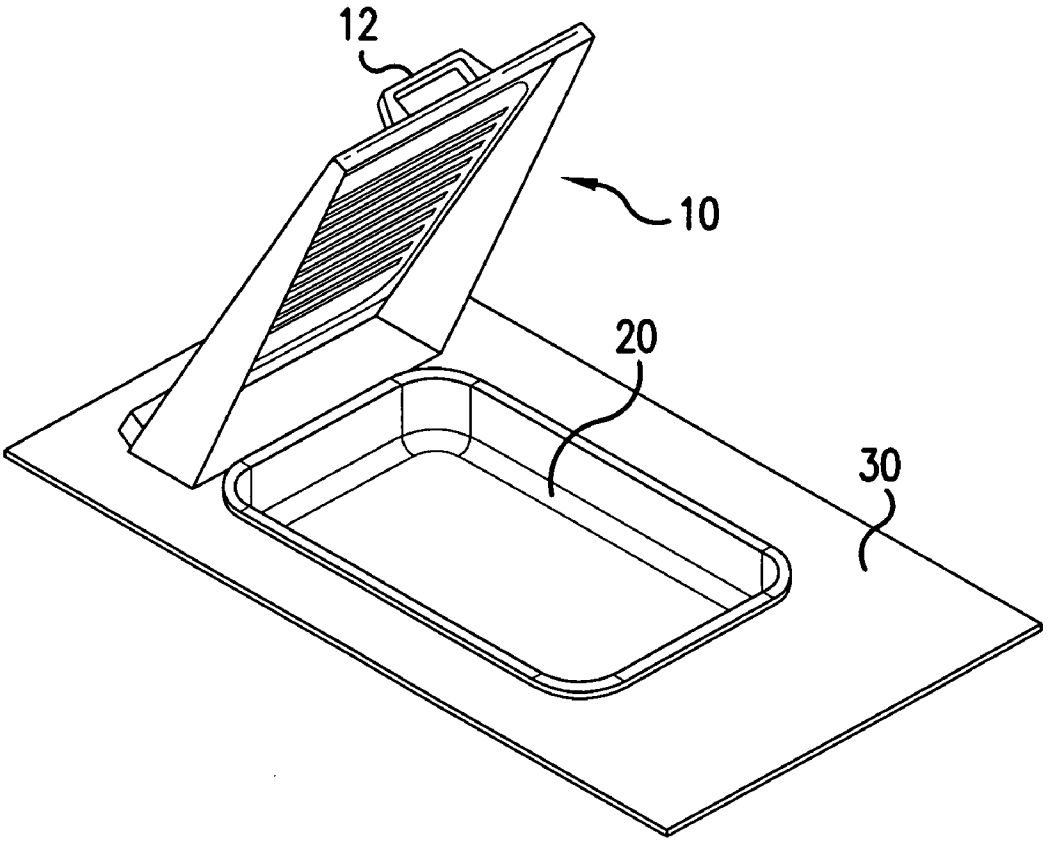
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A top cover includes a display area formed in at least part of the top cover for permitting an individual to view a product disposed beneath the top cover. A plurality of individual reflective members are positioned on the display area. By applying heat to the individual reflective members the temperature of the display area is selectively increased for preventing the formation of moisture that tends to condense on the inside or the outside of the top cover. Thus, a consumer is enabled to view the product disposed beneath the top cover. The individual reflective members may be made of a dark color on a top surface with either a reflective lower surface or with a dark color on the lower surface. The reflective lower surface will prevent heat from being radiated while a dark lower surface will permit heat to be radiated.



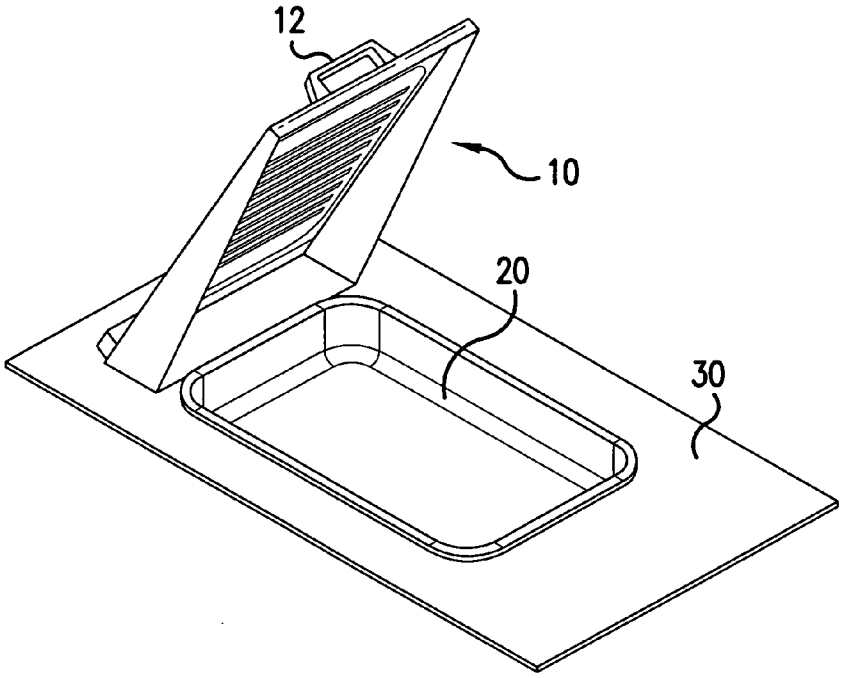


FIG.1

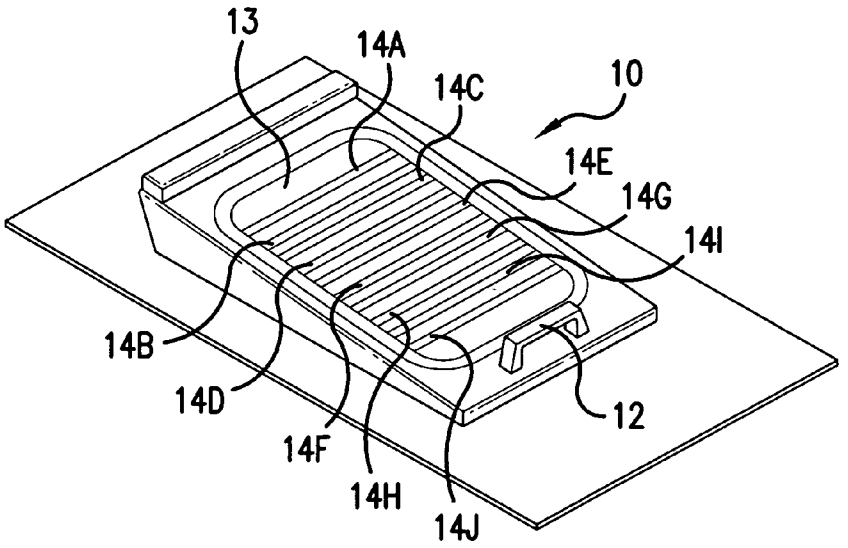


FIG.2

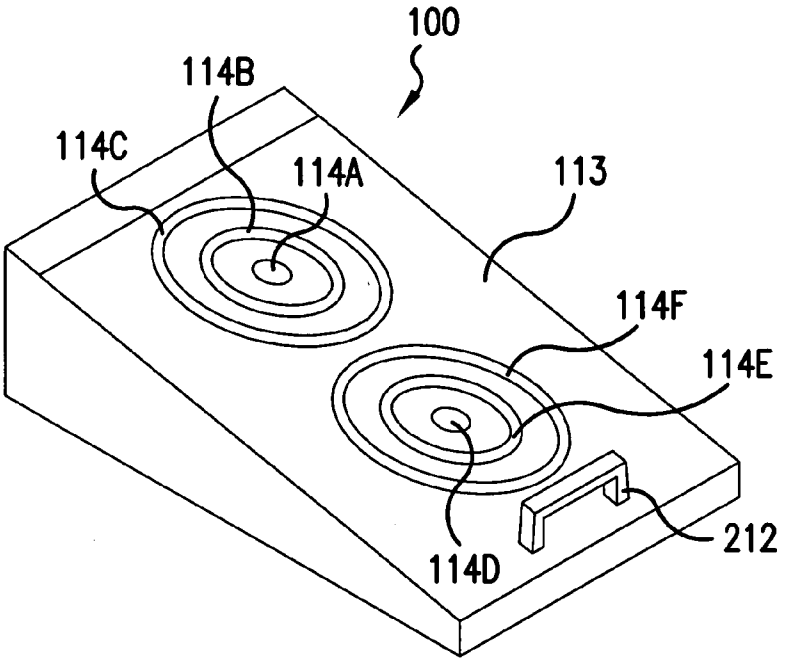

100
114B
114C
114A
113
114F
114E
212
114D

FIG.3

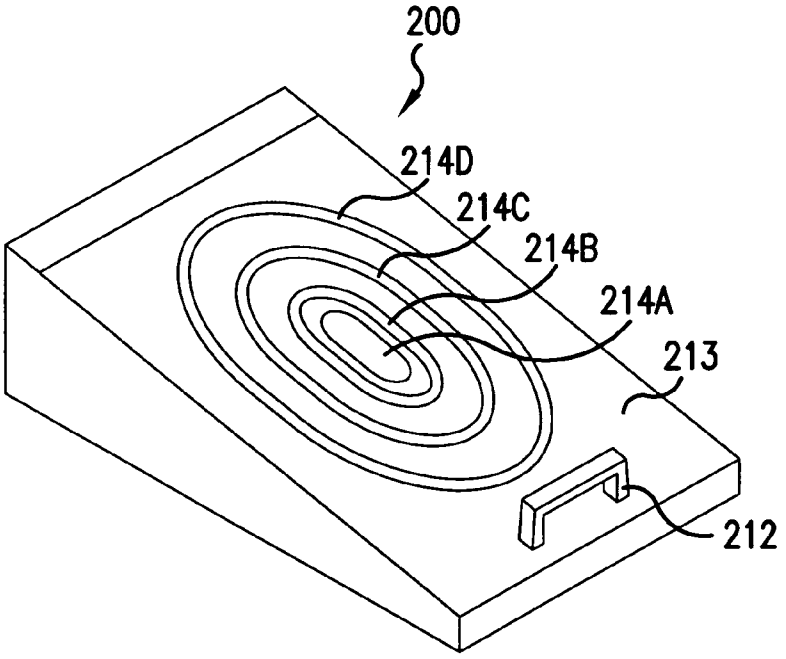

200
214D
214C
214B
214A
213
212

FIG.4

STRIPED GLASS AND METHOD FOR PREVENTING CONDENSATION

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] The present application is related to U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/498,645 filed on Aug. 29, 2003 the entire contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference and priority is claimed under 35 USC 119(e).

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The present invention is directed to a cover for a container that may be constructed of clear plastic or glass or a combination of a metal frame with a glass or plastic viewing window. The cover is used for displaying either hot or cold food products without condensing moisture forming on the clear plastic or glass or the viewing window that would prevent an individual from seeing the food.

[0004] 2. Description of Background Art

[0005] Hithertofore, containers that are utilized at a salad bar for displaying food normally includes a metal, clear plastic or glass cover that is required to be removed to permit an individual to see the food in the container. The clear plastic or glass cover or the metal cover with a viewing window has a problem relating to moisture condensing on the inside or the outside of the clear plastic or glass or the viewing window that prevents an individual from seeing the food. Thus, the cover must be removed and set aside to permit an individual to remove food from the container. This produces an unsatisfactory result in that the cover must be positioned somewhere on the display table during the removal of the food from the container and the moisture on the inside of the cover tends to soil the display table.

SUMMARY AND OBJECTS OF THE INVENTION

[0006] It is an object of the present invention to prevent condensing moisture form forming on a clear plastic or glass cover of a container to thereby permit an individual to see the contents of the container. The present invention relates to the heating of the clear plastic or glass above the dew point. A typical application of the present invention would be in conjunction with a salad bar or any display of hot or cold food products.

[0007] These and other objects of the present invention are achieved by providing a top cover to be disposed over a container that includes a display area formed in at least part of the top cover for permitting an individual to view a product disposed beneath the top cover. A plurality of individual reflective members are positioned on the display area. By applying heat to the individual reflective members a temperature of the display area is selectively increased for preventing the formation of moisture that tends to condense on an inside portion of the top cover. Thus, a consumer is enabled to view the food product disposed beneath the top cover.

[0008] In a first embodiment the individual reflective members are dark in color on a top surface and are reflective on a lower surface for permitting the dark color to raise the temperature of the display area while the reflective lower surface prevents heat from being radiated to the product disposed beneath the top cover.

[0009] In a second embodiment, the individual reflective members are dark in color on a top surface and are dark in color on a lower surface for permitting the dark color on the top surface to raise the temperature of the display area while the dark color on the lower surface heats the product disposed beneath the top cover.

[0010] Further scope of applicability of the present invention will become apparent from the detailed description given hereinafter. However, it should be understood that the detailed description and specific examples, while indicating preferred embodiments of the invention, are given by way of illustration only, since various changes and modifications within the spirit and scope of the invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art from this detailed description.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] The present invention will become more fully understood from the detailed description given hereinbelow and the accompanying drawings which are given by way of illustration only, and thus are not limitative of the present invention, and wherein:

[0012] **FIG. 1** is a perspective view illustrating a lid of the present invention with strips disposed thereon wherein the lid is open;

[0013] **FIG. 2** is a perspective view illustrating a lid of the present invention with strips disposed thereon wherein the lid is closed;

[0014] **FIG. 3** is a perspective view illustrating a lid of the present invention with circular strips disposed thereon; and

[0015] **FIG. 4** is a perspective view illustrating a lid of the present invention with oval strips disposed thereon.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0016] As illustrated in **FIGS. 1 and 2**, the present invention includes a top cover **10** that is disposed over a container **20**. The container **20** is mounted within an aperture in a display table **30**. The top cover **10** may be constructed of glass or clear plastic **13** or a combination of glass and/or plastic together with a metal support structure. During normal use, the top cover **10** is positioned on the container **20** and a consumer wishing to select a particular food product disposed within the container **20** is able to view the food product through the glass or clear plastic. However, due to moisture condensing on the inside of the top cover **10**, it is sometime difficult for a consumer to view the food product disposed within the container **20**.

[0017] The present invention provides thin stripes of material **14A-14J** that are positioned on the clear plastic or glass **13** so that a consumer may view the food product through the spaces provided between the strips of material **14A-14J**. The strips of material **14A-14J** may be constructed with a reflective surface on one side and a dark or black surface on the other. In a second embodiment, the strips of material **14A-14J** may be constructed with a dark or black surface on both sides of the stripes.

[0018] If it is desired to display cold food in the container **20**, the clear plastic or glass **13** would have thin stripes of reflective material **14A-14J** applied thereto wherein the stripes are reflective on the bottom and dark or black on top. By shining a heat lamp on the top cover **10**, heat would be drawn to the dark or black stripes **14A-14J** to thus raise the temperature of the clear plastic or glass **13** above the dew point. The shiny surface on the bottom of the striped material **14A-14J** would not radiate heat to the food because of the low rate of emissivity. The heating of the striped material **14A-14J** will prevent moisture from condensing on the outside of the top cover. Thus, a consumer is able to view the product disposed beneath the top cover **10**.

[0019] If it is desired to display hot food in the container **20**, clear plastic or glass **13** would have thin stripes of reflective material **14A-14J** applied thereto wherein the thin stripes are dark or black on both the bottom and the top. By shining a heat lamp on the top cover **10**, heat would be drawn to the dark or black stripes **14A-14J** to thus raise the temperature of the clear plastic or glass **13** above the dew point. The bottom of the stripe being dark or black would cause the heat in the clear plastic or glass **13** to radiate onto the food so the heat lamp would heat both the clear plastic or glass **13** and the food. The heating of the striped material **14A-14J** will prevent moisture from condensing on the inside of the top cover. Thus, a consumer is able to view the product disposed beneath the top cover **10**.

[0020] It is understood that although the above description refers to stripes, any form. As illustrated in **FIG. 3**, the cover **100** is made of glass **113** with thin stripes **114A-114F** applied as circles on the viewing window **113**. A handle **112** is provided for raising or lowering the cover **100**. In addition, as illustrated in **FIG. 4**, the cover **200** is made of clear plastic **213** with thin stripes **214A-214D** applied as ovals on the viewing window **213**. A handle **212** is provided for raising or lowering the cover **200**. It is to be understood that any geometric pattern for the reflective material that is applied to the clear plastic or glass viewing window **13**, **113** or **213** would be acceptable.

[0021] It is to be understood that the cover **10**, **100**, **200** of the present invention may be readily removed and taken to a kitchen for cleaning. In addition, the cover **10**, **100**, **200** may be used not only in connection with salad bars but also with chafing dishes, hot food lines, preparation tables, etc.

[0022] The invention being thus described, it will be obvious that the same may be varied in many ways. Such variations are not to be regarded as a departure from the spirit and scope of the invention, and all such modifications as would be obvious to one skilled in the art are intended to be included within the scope of the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A top cover adapted to be disposed over a container comprising:

a display area formed in at least part of said top cover for permitting an individual to view a product disposed beneath said top cover; and

a plurality of individual reflective members positioned on said display area;

wherein applying heat to said individual reflective members selectively increases a temperature of said display area for preventing the formation of moisture from condensing on the top cover and thus enable a consumer to view the product disposed beneath the top cover.

2. The top cover according to claim 1, wherein the individual reflective members are dark in color on a top surface and are reflective on a lower surface for permitting the dark color to raise the temperature of the display area while the reflective lower surface prevents heat from being radiated to the product disposed beneath the top cover.

3. The top cover according to claim 1, wherein the individual reflective members are dark in color on a top surface and are dark in color on a lower surface for permitting the dark color on the top surface to raise the temperature of the display area while the dark color on lower surface heats the product disposed beneath the top cover.

4. The top cover according to claim 1, wherein the reflective material is arranged on the display area in stripes.

5. The top cover according to claim 1, wherein the reflective material is arranged on the display area in circles.

6. The top cover according to claim 1, wherein the reflective material is arranged on the display area in ovals.

7. The top cover according to claim 1, wherein the top cover is constructed of glass and the display area is formed over the entire top cover.

8. The top cover according to claim 1, wherein the top cover is constructed of clear plastic and the display area is formed over the entire top cover.

9. The top cover according to claim 1, wherein the top cover is constructed of a metal frame with glass forming the display area in the top cover.

10. The top cover according to claim 1, wherein the top cover is constructed of a metal frame with clear plastic forming the display area in the top cover.

11. The top cover according to claim 1, wherein applying heat to said individual reflective members selectively increases said temperature of said display area for preventing the formation of said moisture from condensing on an inside portion of the top cover.

12. The top cover according to claim 1, wherein applying heat to said individual reflective members selectively increases said temperature of said display area for preventing the formation of said moisture from condensing on an outside portion of the top cover.

13. A method of preventing moisture from condensing on an inside portion of a top cover adapted to be disposed over a container comprising the following steps:

providing a display area formed in at least part of said top cover for permitting an individual to view a product disposed beneath said top cover;

providing a plurality of individual reflective members positioned on said display area; and

applying heat to said individual reflective members for selectively increasing a temperature of said display area for preventing the formation of moisture from condensing on the top cover and thus enable a consumer to view the product disposed beneath the top cover.

14. The method according to claim 13, wherein the individual reflective members are applied with a dark color on a top surface and are reflective on a lower surface for permitting the dark color to raise the temperature of the

display area while the reflective lower surface prevents heat from being radiated to the product disposed beneath the top cover.

15. The method according to claim 13, wherein the individual reflective members are applied with a dark color on a top surface and are dark in color on a lower surface for permitting the dark color on the top surface to raise the temperature of the display area while the dark color on lower surface heats the product disposed beneath the top cover.

16. A method according to claim 13, wherein the step of applying heat to said individual reflective members for selectively increasing said temperature of said display area prevents the formation of said moisture from condensing on an inside portion of the top cover.

17. A method according to claim 13, wherein the step of applying heat to said individual reflective members for selectively increasing said temperature of said display area prevents the formation of said moisture from condensing on an outside portion of the top cover.

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