

Coffee Lids: Peel, Pinch, Pucker, Puncture



Editor's Note: The following text and images are an excerpt from a new book Coffee Lids: Peel, Pinch, Pucker, Puncture out now from Princeton Architectural Press. Coffee Lids features the collection of Louise Harpman and Scott Specht, the owners of the world's largest collection of coffee lids, or, more precisely, the world's largest collection of unique, patented, drink-through, disposable hot-beverage lids. To read the full text, and see all of the coffee lids, get the book here.

◆ **Read the article and fill in the gaps with a suitable form of the word in brackets.**

The origin of the coffee lid is a _____ (DISTINCT) American story and can be traced to the late 1970s, when coffee-loving car drivers, bus riders, train _____ (TRAVEL), and walkers forever changed the hot-beverage-drinking landscape in this country. Fast-food outlets, drive-in restaurants, and _____ (CONVENIENCE) stores had saturated the highways and byways of the United States by the late 1940s. Menus at these _____ (ESTABLISH) featured a wide selection of cold drinks served over ice in _____ (DISPOSE) cups, fitted with transparent or

translucent plastic lids, which included small cross-cuts to allow for the _____ (INSERT) of a drinking straw. Hot drinks were sold in smaller disposable cups, with tight-fitting, opaque lids, which had no penetrations other than a small pinhole to allow steam to escape. But drivers and riders and walkers wanted to drink their hot liquids like their cold ones — “on the go.” In order to enjoy hot coffee without removing the _____ (PROTECT) cover, these drinkers became accidental DIY designers: they created the first drink-through coffee lids by peeling away small sections of the polystyrene, thermoformed lids. Beginning at two points on the outer rim, they tore open the lids to make mouth-size openings. This created a serviceable drinking port but also a wedge-shaped piece of trash, which the late design writer Phil Patton likened to a flimsy guitar pick.

The DIY solution was inelegant, unhygienic, and time-consuming but also very popular. Behavior was changing, and designers took notice. _____ (COMMUTE), college students, and taxi drivers formed an accidental community of “extreme users,” similar to those that business writer Jay Greene identifies as drivers of _____ (INNOVATE) at companies like LEGO, Nike, and OXO in his 2010 book *Design Is How It Works*. At first, coffee drinkers wanted only a tight-fitting lid with a _____ (RELY), easy-open aperture in order to sip their beverages while traveling. They wanted to avoid spills, drips, and, most importantly, burns. The now-famous legal case *Liebeck v. McDonald's Restaurants*, brought against McDonald's for serving too-hot coffee with ill-fitting lids, was settled in the plaintiff's favor in 1994. Confronted with numerous spills that caused third-degree burns, McDonald's is reported to have lowered the _____ (SERVE) temperature of its coffee and added a visible warning on all its cup lids. It is the coffee-drinking community that brought awareness to this serious health problem, along with a myriad of pet peeves, which _____ (DESIGN) set out to remedy and which this collection lovingly, even obsessively, documents.

46 PEEL

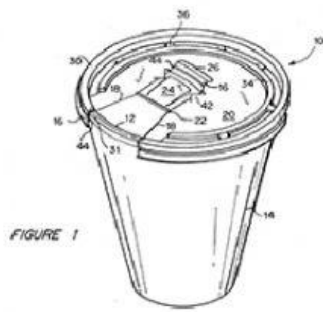


FIGURE 1

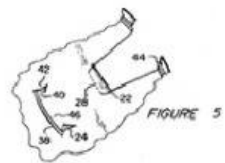


FIGURE 5

PEEL 47



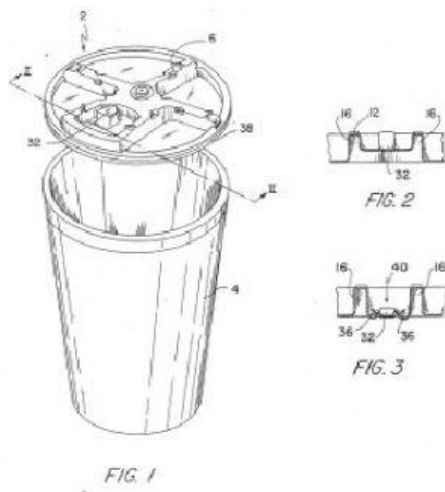
60 PEEL



PEEL 61



204 PUNCTURE



PUNCTURE 205



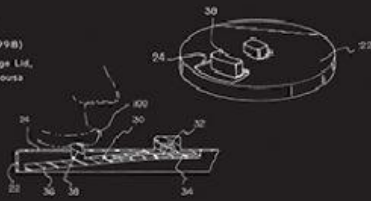
178 PUCKER



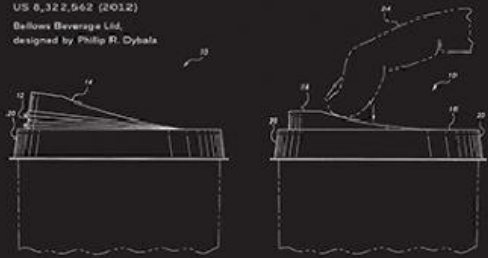
PUCKER 179



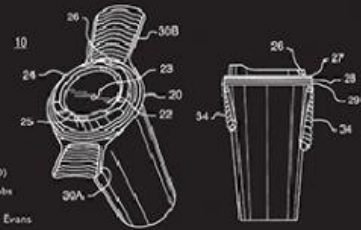
"Spring Loaded"
US 5,706,972 (1998)
Self-Closing Beverage Lid,
designed by Nuno Sousa



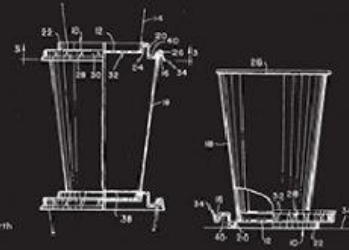
"Not Saul Bellows"
US 6,322,562 (2002)
Bellows Beverage Lid,
designed by Philip R. Oyhala



"Winged Victory"
US 6,070,755 (2000)
Lid with Folding Side Tabs
for Hot Beverage Cup,
designed by Michael G. Evans
and John Kevin Bruce



"The Stack Effect"
US 3,598,271 (1973)
Combination Disposable
Cup Lid and Coaster,
designed by Holley Danforth



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Glossary

Byway: a road or track not following a main route; a minor road or path.

On the go: very active or busy / in the process of being produced.

Rim: the outer curved or circular edge of something.

Filmsy: very thin or easily broken.

Drip: if a liquid drips, it falls in drops.

Myriad: a very large number of something.

Pet peeve: something that especially annoys you.

Peeve: a cause of annoyance.

Peel: to remove a covering slowly and carefully.

Pinch: to tightly press something.

Pucker: to tighten skin or cloth until small folds appear

Puncture: to make a small hole in something.

♦ Watch the video and answer the questions

[https://www.ted.com/talks/a_j_jacobs_the_evolution_of_the_coffee_cup_lid/transcript?language=en&referrer=playlist-small thing big idea season 2](https://www.ted.com/talks/a_j_jacobs_the_evolution_of_the_coffee_cup_lid/transcript?language=en&referrer=playlist-small%20thing%20big%20idea%20season%202)

When was the first lid patented?

When did drinking coffee on the move become an important part of the American culture?

What happened in 1975?

What significant changes were introduced in 1984?

Have you ever thought about the design of coffee lids?

◆ *A bit more about coffee lids*

