

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OFFICE OF SINGAPORE  
PATENT AGENTS QUALIFYING EXAMINATION (QE) 2005

**PAPER B: AMENDMENT OF A PATENT SPECIFICATION**  
**11 October 2005, Tuesday**  
**1400 – 1730 hrs**

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**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

1. This Paper consists of 20 pages, including this cover page.
2. 30 minutes of reading time is provided. Only notes made on loose sheets are allowed during that time.
3. Write your answers in English. Answers in any other language will not be marked. Answers in illegible handwriting will not be taken into consideration.
4. Only your answers and/or drawings to the question(s) written or glued in the Answer Booklet(s) provided by the Examination Secretariat will be considered. You are to write on one side of each sheet in the Answer Booklet (s).
5. You should accept the facts given in the Paper and not use any special knowledge you may have. Assume also that the prior art given is exhaustive.
6.
  - (a) Your task is to prepare a draft response to the Written Opinion, including amendment to the claims if necessary. The basis for any amendment proposed to the claims must be indicated.
  - (b) For the purpose of this Paper you do not need to propose any amendments to the description of the Patent Application.
7. Candidates may find more than one potential amendment that may render the claims valid by overcoming the objections in the Written Opinion. In the advice letter to client, candidates should identify the amendment (s) that give (s) the best protection to the client and give recommendations to client, including the option of using alternatives, if any.
8. The advice letter to client can be prepared in point form.

To be continued

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9. The documents provided in the question are:
- (a) Document A – the client's letter (1 page);
  - (b) Document B – the specification of the Singapore Patent Application (6 pages of description plus claims and 1 page of drawings);
  - (c) Document C – the Written Opinion (2 pages);
  - (d) Document D1 – the 1<sup>st</sup> reference cited in the Written Opinion (4 pages of description plus claims and 1 pages of drawings); and
  - (e) Document D2 – the 2<sup>nd</sup> reference cited in the Written Opinion ( 2 pages of description and 1 page of drawings).

End

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**Document A – Client's letter (1/1)**

Dear Patent Agent,

5

Thank you for transmitting the Written Opinion and the cited prior art documents.

I studied the documents, but I still do not understand the objections. My inventive bowl can be used with direct heating – by putting it in direct contact with a heat source – as well as in  
10 a bain-marie<sup>1</sup> by stacking it on a saucepan. The documents you have sent to me do not even mention bain-marie cooking! So what are these objections all about?

Also, the base element of my bowl is made of a metal (stainless steel) to provide for a high thermal capacity so as to keep the food in the bowl warm for a long time. The documents  
15 describe the use of other materials for the base element. This is a big difference!

I have no idea what is wrong with my claim 7. The drawings clearly show my bowl design.

I need your advice what options I have.

20

Best regards,

Client

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<sup>1</sup> Bain-marie = A vessel of hot water in which cooking-pans and their contents are slowly heated; a double saucepan. Source: The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary 1993 Edition.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OFFICE OF SINGAPORE  
PATENT AGENTS QUALIFYING EXAMINATION (QE) 2005

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**Document B – Singapore Patent Application No.200412345-0 (1/7)**

Note: This Singapore Patent application No. 200412345-0 was filed on May 28, 2004  
5 under claiming the priority of the Italian Patent Application No. 2003/12345 of June 30, 2003 and represents a word-by-word translation thereof.

HIGH-FUNCTIONALITY BOWL STRUCTURE

10 The present invention relates to a high-functionality bowl structure. More particularly, the invention relates to a bowl structure that can be used either directly on a conventional heat source or for bain-marie cooking.

As it is known, makers of kitchen pots and pans are keen to produce products of  
15 increasing efficiency from the point of view of use.

In particular, there is no bowl currently on the market that can be used both directly on a heat source to cook the food contained therein, and to warm the food contained therein in a bain-marie, without having to change the container.

20 Briefly, there are known structures for bowls or pans that can be placed directly on a heat source, e.g. a stove. Also, there are known bowl structures, which can be used for bain-marie warming, in which the bowl is partly immersed in another container, which, in turn, is placed in direct contact with the heat source. However, a bowl structure, which could be  
25 used for both purposes, is not known.

It is a primary object of the present invention to provide a high-functionality bowl structure that can be used both on a traditional source of heat and for bain-marie purposes.

30 Another object of the present invention is to provide a bowl structure that can also be used to serve the food at the table, the bowl keeping the food hot for a prolonged period of time.

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PATENT AGENTS QUALIFYING EXAMINATION (QE) 2005

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**1400 – 1730 hrs**

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**Document B (2/7)**

Still another object of the present invention is to provide a bowl structure of great reliability that is easy to manufacture at low costs.

5

These and other objects are achieved according to the present invention by a high-functionality bowl structure comprising a hollow containment body capable of containing food to be cooked or warmed, which hollow containment body has a base, the said structure being characterized in that it comprises a thermal base element fixed to the said base capable of transmitting heat from an external heat source into the said hollow containment body.

10

Other features and advantages of the invention will become clearer in the course of the description of the bowl structure according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention, which is illustrated in the accompanying drawings, in which:

15

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a preferred embodiment of the bowl structure according to the present invention; and

20 Figure 2 is a partial cross sectional view of a lower portion of the bowl structure as shown in Figure 1.

With reference to the above mentioned figures, the bowl structure 1 according to the present invention comprises an internally hollow containment body 2 capable of containing food to be cooked or warmed, the containment body 2 having a base 3, to which a thermal base element 4 is fixed, allowing an efficient transmission of the heat into the inside of the containment body.

25

The presence of the thermal base element 4 means that the energy of the steam underneath it is used very efficiently.

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**11 October 2005, Tuesday**  
**1400 – 1730 hrs**

Maximum Time: 3 Hours + 30 Minutes of reading time

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**Document B (3/7)**

The hollow containment body 2 of the bowl structure 1 according to the invention also comprises in an outer region situated immediately adjacent to and above the thermal base element 4, a portion comprising at least one step, preferably a plurality of steps 5, designed in such a way, in particular with regard to the depth of the step, that the bowl according to the invention can be securely stacked on saucepans of different diameters for bain-marie warming of the food contained in the bowl structure 1.

10 The bowl structure according to the present invention may be provided with a lid with a silicone seal to cover the bowl.

The presence of the three steps 5, which are designed to give the bowl structure adaptability to saucepans of different diameters on which the bowl may be stacked, ensures that the thermal base element 4 of the bowl dips into the saucepan on which the bowl structure is stacked, so that the bowl can be used for bain-marie cooking of food. In other words, bain-marie cooking can be performed in that the bowl rests with one of its steps 5 on the top of a corresponding saucepan already filled with water, which saucepan is then itself placed in direct contact with a source of heat.

20

Due to the presence of the steps 5 and the thermal base element 4, the bowl structure 1 according to the invention makes much more efficient use of the energy of the steam coming from the saucepan on which it is stacked. Since the thermal base element 4 itself is sufficient as heat transfer area, the steps 5 can be arranged immediately adjacent to and above the thermal base element 4, as explained above, since it is not necessary to dip also the hollow containment body 2 into the saucepan for it to be used in bain-marie cooking.

25

Alternatively the bowl structure 1 according to the invention can also be used for direct cooking, wherein the bowl structure 1 rests with its thermal base element 4 directly on the heat source, and moreover can be used for serving the food at the table while keeping it hot for a long period of time by utilizing the thermal capacity of the thermal base element 4.

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PATENT AGENTS QUALIFYING EXAMINATION (QE) 2005

**PAPER B: AMENDMENT OF A PATENT SPECIFICATION**  
**11 October 2005, Tuesday**  
**1400 – 1730 hrs**

Maximum Time: 3 Hours + 30 Minutes of reading time

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**Document B (4/7)**

The three steps 5 in the containment body 3 of the bowl structure 1 can be formed in the shape of curved lines, or can be connected to each other at right angles, without  
5 influencing the functionality of the bowl, but purely affecting its aesthetic appearance.

In practice, the materials used for the bowl structure according to the invention may be freely varied, provided they are compatible with the specific use, and the dimensions and shapes defined by circumstances.

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PATENT AGENTS QUALIFYING EXAMINATION (QE) 2005

**PAPER B: AMENDMENT OF A PATENT SPECIFICATION**  
**11 October 2005, Tuesday**  
**1400 – 1730 hrs**

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**Document B (5/7)**

CLAIMS

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1. High-functionality bowl structure comprising a hollow containment body capable of containing food to be cooked or warmed, the hollow containment body having a base, said structure being characterized in that it comprises a thermal base element which is fixed to the said base and is capable of transmitting heat from an external heat source into the said hollow containment body.

10

2. Bowl structure according to claim 1, wherein the said hollow body comprises at least one step to enable the said bowl to be stacked on a saucepan.

15

3. Bowl structure according to Claim 2, further comprising three steps formed in the shape of a curved line.

4. Bowl structure according to Claim 2, further comprising three steps connected to each other at right angles.

20

5. Bowl structure according to any one of claims 1 to 4, further comprising a lid with a hermetic silicone seal.

6. Bowl structure according to any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the said thermal base element is fixed to the outside of said base of the said hollow containment body.

25

7. Bowl structure according to any one of claims 1 to 6, characterized in that it includes one or more of the features described and/or illustrated.

30



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PATENT AGENTS QUALIFYING EXAMINATION (QE) 2005

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**11 October 2005, Tuesday**  
**1400 – 1730 hrs**

Maximum Time: 3 Hours + 30 Minutes of reading time

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**Document B (6/7)**

ABSTRACT

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High-functionality bowl structure

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High-functionality bowl structure for direct an bain-marie cooking, comprising a hollow containment body capable of containing food to be cooked or warmed, the said hollow containment body having a base, wherein the bowl structure comprises a thermal base element which is fixed to the said base of the containment body and is capable of transmitting heat from an external heat source into the said hollow containment body. The thermal base element is made of a material with good heat transmitting properties and high heat capacity, preferably of stainless steel, to keep food therein warm for a long time.

15

(Figure 1)

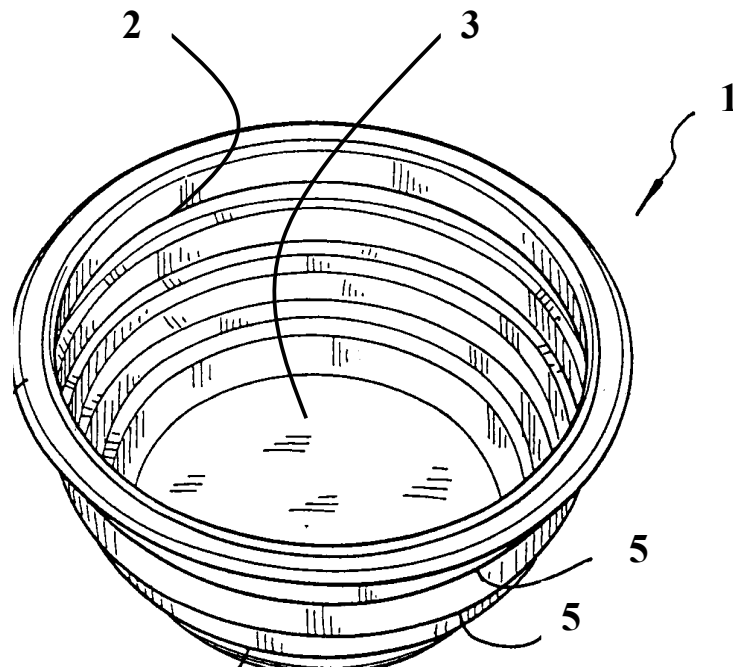
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**11 October 2005, Tuesday**  
**1400 – 1730 hrs**

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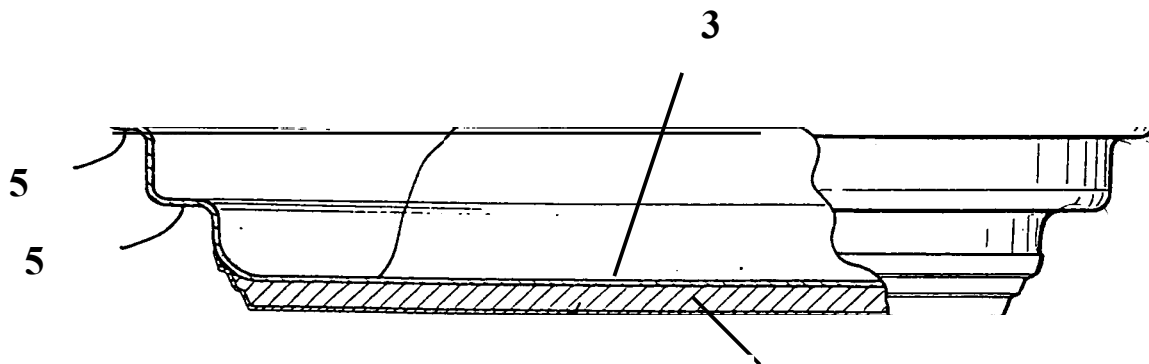
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**Document B (7/7)**



**Fig. 1**



**Fig. 2**

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PATENT AGENTS QUALIFYING EXAMINATION (QE) 2005

**PAPER B: AMENDMENT OF A PATENT SPECIFICATION**  
**11 October 2005, Tuesday**  
**1400 – 1730 hrs**

Maximum Time: 3 Hours + 30 Minutes of reading time

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**Document C - Written Opinion (1/2)**

**Statement**

5	Novelty (N):	Claims 1, 2 and 6	No
	Inventive Step (IS):	Claims 3, 4 and 5	No
	Industrial Applicability (IA):	Claims 1 to 6	Yes

10 **Citations and Explanations**

Citations: GB 1234567 A (D1) and SG 200112345-9 (D2)

1)

- 15 - Documents D1 and D2, each taken alone, disclose a bowl structure comprising all features of independent claim **1**. In particular they disclose a thermal base fixed to the base of the bowl and capable of transmitting heat from an external heat source.
- Furthermore, documents D1 and D2 also disclose the features of dependent claim **2**: as represented in fig. 1 of D1 as well as fig. 1 of D2 a step(s) is provided in the body of the
- 20 cooking vessel and pot, respectively.
- Said documents also disclose the features of dependent claim **6**.

Consequently, the present application does not meet the requirements of Section 13(1) of the Patents Act, because the subject-matter of claims **1, 2, 6** is not new in the sense of

25 Sections 14(1) and (2) of the Patents Act.

2)

- In the light of D2 (see steps denoted by 21 in D2), the measure of providing the bowl with three steps - claims **3** and **4** - cannot be considered as involving an inventive step in the
- 30 sense of Section 15 of the Patents Act.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OFFICE OF SINGAPORE  
PATENT AGENTS QUALIFYING EXAMINATION (QE) 2005

**PAPER B: AMENDMENT OF A PATENT SPECIFICATION**  
**11 October 2005, Tuesday**  
**1400 – 1730 hrs**

Maximum Time: 3 Hours + 30 Minutes of reading time

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**Document C (2/2)**

- Similarly, in the light of D1, the additional feature of dependent claim **5** does not involve an inventive step. D1 discloses a lid to hermetically seal the cooking vessel. That silicon is used  
5 for providing a hermetical seal for the lid is within the knowledge of a person with ordinary skills in the captioned technical field.

3) Claim **7** is objected under Sections 25(5) (a) and (b) of the Patents Act in conjunction with rule 19(9) of the Patents Rules, since it contains reference to the description and the  
10 drawings.

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PATENT AGENTS QUALIFYING EXAMINATION (QE) 2005

**PAPER B: AMENDMENT OF A PATENT SPECIFICATION**  
**11 October 2005, Tuesday**  
**1400 – 1730 hrs**

Maximum Time: 3 Hours + 30 Minutes of reading time

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**Document D1-The 1<sup>st</sup> reference cited in the Written Opinion (1/5)**

5 UK Patent Application GB 1234567 A  
Date of filing: 6 June 1983  
Priority data: 11 June 1982, GB 7654321  
Date of publication: 11 January 1984

10

COOKWARE

The invention relates to a cooking vessel comprising a stainless steel shell and a bottom member that comprises a layer of oxidisable metal and a protective cover layer.

15

Stainless steel is used to make shells comprising a base and upstanding sidewalls for use in the cookware field. Stainless steel has a number of advantages. It resists oxidation and washing solutions. It is easy to clean. Also, its resistance to wear is good.

20

However, stainless steel has the disadvantage of having poor thermal conductivity. Another disadvantage of stainless steel is that it is an expensive material. Hence, in order to ensure the lowest possible costs in a very competitive market, the absolute minimum shell thickness is used. As a result, the weight of the finished cooking vessel may not be as great as one would wish from the standpoint of customer confidence in terms of balance and stability to

25

use.

The purpose of the present invention is to provide a cooking vessel which has a bottom member with high thermal conductivity, which has a high balance and stability in use and which is easy and inexpensive to manufacture.

30

According to the invention, the cooking vessel comprises a stainless steel base and upstanding sidewalls, and a bottom member secured to the shell. The bottom member comprises a layer of oxidisable metal that covers at least a portion of the undersurface of the

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OFFICE OF SINGAPORE  
PATENT AGENTS QUALIFYING EXAMINATION (QE) 2005

**PAPER B: AMENDMENT OF A PATENT SPECIFICATION**  
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**1400 – 1730 hrs**

Maximum Time: 3 Hours + 30 Minutes of reading time

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**Document D1 (2/5)**

base of the shell and a protective layer enclosing the exposed surfaces of the layer of oxidisable metal.

5

The layer of oxidisable metal is preferably a plate in the shape of a disc which is secured to a central portion of the undersurface of the base of the shell. The metal may be iron for example. Because an oxidisable metal has a tendency to rust, the exposed areas of the layer of this material are enclosed by a protective layer engaging the base of the shell. The engagement is an effective seal to prevent corrosion of the layer of oxidisable metal. In order to ensure a good thermal conductivity, the protective layer is made of aluminum or copper.

10

The cooking vessel according to the invention may further comprise a lid with means to hermetically seal the vessel when covered with the lid.

15

The invention will now be particularly described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which Figure 1 is a cross-sectional elevational view of a cooking vessel comprising a stainless steel shell and a bottom member according to the invention; and

20

Figure 2 is an enlarged view of a detail of Figure 1.

With reference to Figures 1 and 2, the cooking vessel comprises a stainless steel shell or body 1 having a base 2 and upstanding side walls 3. The thickness of the shell may be from 0.3 to 1.5 mm. A disc 4 made of oxidisable metal, preferably iron, has one face engaging the central region of the undersurface 5 of the base 2 of the shell. The disc may have a thickness of 0.5 to 6 mm. The disc 4 and an associated protective cover layer 6 together form a bottom member on the shell. The protective cover layer 6 covers the opposite face 7 of the disc 4, extends around the periphery 8 of the disc 4 and terminates in a portion 9 engaging the undersurface 5 of the base 2 of the shell. The protective layer 6 is preferably made of copper and may be about 0.5 mm thick. The disc 4, protective cover layer 6 and base 2 of the stainless steel shell are secured together preferably by solder or with brazing material which may be located between the engaging surfaces of components 2, 4 and 6 of

25

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INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OFFICE OF SINGAPORE  
PATENT AGENTS QUALIFYING EXAMINATION (QE) 2005

**PAPER B: AMENDMENT OF A PATENT SPECIFICATION**  
**11 October 2005, Tuesday**  
**1400 – 1730 hrs**

Maximum Time: 3 Hours + 30 Minutes of reading time

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**Document D1 (3/5)**

the vessel. In order to ensure a sound joint it is preferred to shape the portion 9 of the protective cover layer 6 engaging the undersurface 5 of the base 2 of the shell so that a cavity 10 is defined between the protective cover layer 6, the uppermost portion of the periphery 8 of the disc 4 of oxidisable metal and the undersurface of the base 2 of the shell. The cavity 10 is occupied by solder so that a sealing bead of solder around the periphery of the joint prevents exposure of the oxidisable metal to the atmosphere and/or entry of corrosive media.

Because iron is liable to rust, the prevention of corrosion has limited its application in cookware in the past, particularly because of the high costs of protective treatments. Such expensive protective treatments are not needed in the invention where corrosion can be prevented in a reasonably economic manner.

Iron and other oxidisable metals are relatively cheap in relation to stainless steel. Thus the iron may be used in a relatively large mass and, as a result, the layer of iron provides a very effective means for diffusing heat provided from the heat source through the protective cover layer.

Because the major component of the thickness of the bottom member, the oxidisable metal such as iron, is relatively inexpensive material, the invention enables the achievement of a greater weight addition per unit cost than in conventional cookware. Moreover the addition of the oxidisable metal to the bottom of the cooking vessel also places the additional material where it can best contribute to the physical stability and balance of the cooking vessel. An aesthetically pleasing appearance is maintained because the finished cooking vessel has the outward appearance of stainless steel with a thick copper base.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OFFICE OF SINGAPORE  
PATENT AGENTS QUALIFYING EXAMINATION (QE) 2005

**PAPER B: AMENDMENT OF A PATENT SPECIFICATION**  
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**1400 – 1730 hrs**

Maximum Time: 3 Hours + 30 Minutes of reading time

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**Document D1 (4/5)**

CLAIMS

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1. A cooking vessel comprising
  - (a) a stainless steel shell having a base and upstanding side walls; and
  - (b) a bottom member secured to the said shell, the bottom member comprising
    - i. a layer of oxidisable metal that covers at least a portion of the undersurface of the base of the shell, and
    - ii. a protective cover layer enclosing the otherwise exposed surfaces of the layer of oxidisable metal by being attached to the base of the shell, the thickness of the protective cover layer being at most 1.5 mm.

10

15

2. A cooking vessel as claimed in claim 1, wherein the oxidisable metal is iron and the protective cover layer is of copper.



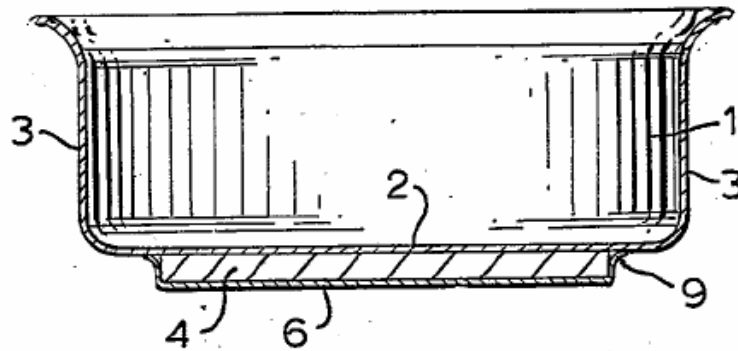
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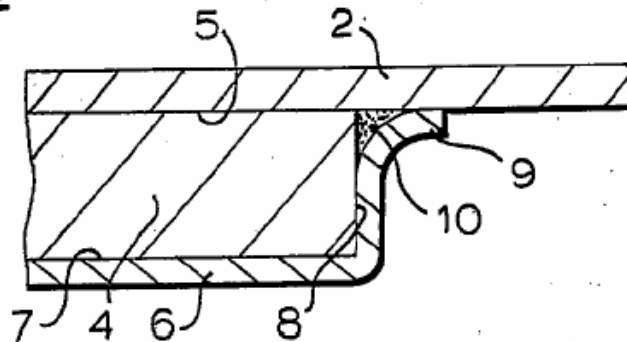
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Document D1 (5/5)

**FIG. 1**



**FIG. 2**



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PATENT AGENTS QUALIFYING EXAMINATION (QE) 2005

**PAPER B: AMENDMENT OF A PATENT SPECIFICATION**  
**11 October 2005, Tuesday**  
**1400 – 1730 hrs**

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**Document D2 – the 2<sup>nd</sup> reference cited in the Written Opinion (1/3)**

Singapore Patent Application No. 200112345-9

5 Date of filing: January 12, 2001

Priority data: Nil

Date of first publication: August 19, 2003

10 KITCHENWARE WITH THERMAL CONDUCTIVE SYSTEM

The present invention relates to the general technical field of kitchenware with a thermal conducting bottom intended for to be heated by all source of heat, in particular to a cooking pot with a thermal conductive bottom intended to be heated especially by induction.

15

It has already been suggested to manufacture a cooking pot made of stainless steel with a thermal conductive bottom. The bottom of this cooking pot is preferably composed of two layers of aluminum or an alloy containing this metal and of a laminated steel or iron plate inserted between said layers. The laminated bottom plate of steel is magnetized, so that it allows the cooking pot to be heated by induced currents. However, this type of pot does not solve the problem of thermal expansion and/or deformations occurring at the bottom, since the heat from the heating means leads to expansions or deformations as the bottom contains several coats of different compound materials, which can ultimately lead to a detachment of the thermal conductive layers.

25

The object of the invention aims especially at supplying a kitchenware that can be heated preferably by induction, and which possesses a good resistance against expansion and/or deformation while maintaining a good continuity of the currents induced in the bottom.

30

This object of the invention is solved by a kitchenware with a thermal conducting bottom, said bottom comprising from inside to outside at least one good heat conducting metal plate and at least one metal sheet provided with perforations, said sheet being at least partially embedded in the plate so that the perforations are filled with the metal of the plate, wherein the perforations present a cumulative surface of 5 to 20 % of the total surface of the sheet.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OFFICE OF SINGAPORE  
PATENT AGENTS QUALIFYING EXAMINATION (QE) 2005

**PAPER B: AMENDMENT OF A PATENT SPECIFICATION**  
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**Document D 2 (2/3)**

The invention will now be described more in detail with reference to the drawings, where

5 FIG. 1 shows a partial cross-section of an embodiment of a cooking pot according to the invention; and

FIG. 2 shows a view from below the bottom of the cooking pot according to the invention.

10 FIG. 1 shows a cooking utensil in form of a cooking pot 1 with essentially cylindrical shape with a circular thermal conductive bottom 2 from which rises a wall 3 of the pot 1. The thermal conductive bottom 2 is composed of a sandwich structure, namely, from inside to outside, an upper layer 4 formed integrally with said wall 3, a good heat conductive metal plate 5, such as aluminum, covering a central portion of the underside of the upper layer 4  
15 and a metal sheet 6, e.g. of stainless steel, being preferably magnetic which is able to generate an induced current.

According to FIG. 2, the metal sheet 6 is provided with perforations 10 distributed uniformly on its surface in order to guarantee the creep of material forming the metal plate 5 inside the  
20 perforations 10 while the sandwich structure is being manufactured, thereby at least partially embedding of the sheet 6 in said plate 6.

.....

25 Furthermore, the wall 3 of the cooking pot 1 comprises a slightly outwardly curved portion 21 close to a rim 20 of the pot 1, thereby enhancing the aesthetic appearance of the pot 1 which is of importance in the technical field of kitchenware.

By mastering the geometry and the dimensions of the perforations, the kitchenware presents  
30 good properties of resistance against expansion and/or deformations thereby preventing the danger of detachment of the layers of the sandwich structured thermal conductive bottom of the kitchenware.

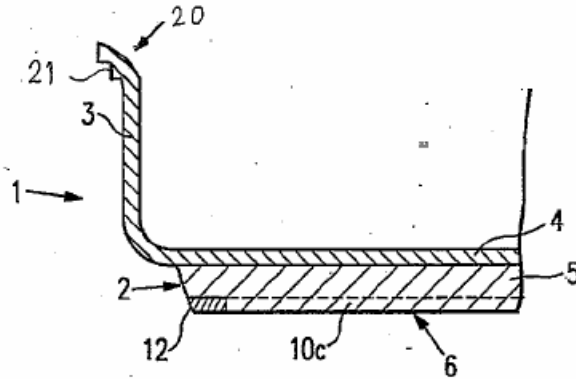
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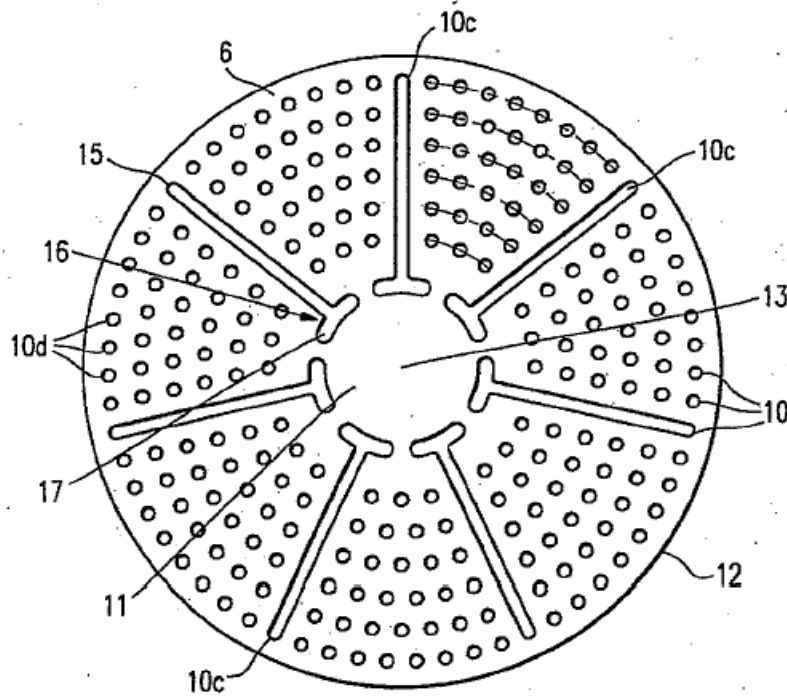
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**Document D 2 (3/3)**



**FIG. 1**



**FIG. 2**