



US011957271B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Duvall

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 11,957,271 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent:** **Apr. 16, 2024**

(54) **METHOD OF GENERATING A DESIRED TEMPERATURE OF AN INFUSED BEVERAGE WITHIN A BREWING ASSEMBLY**

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

CPC .. A47J 31/5253; A47J 31/5255; A47J 31/402; A47J 31/467; A47J 31/468; B67D 1/0044; B67D 1/0047; B67D 1/0036
See application file for complete search history.

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

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(21) Appl. No.: **18/109,177**

(Continued)

(22) Filed: **Feb. 13, 2023**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2023/0270282 A1 Aug. 31, 2023

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Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Division of application No. 17/020,799, filed on Sep. 14, 2020, now Pat. No. 11,576,524, which is a division of application No. 16/383,607, filed on Apr. 13, 2019, now Pat. No. 10,772,456, which is a division of application No. 15/845,946, filed on Dec. 18, 2017, now Pat. No. 10,258,187, which is a continuation of application No. 14/421,362, filed as application No. PCT/US2013/055348 on Aug. 16, 2013, now Pat. No. 9,867,491.

(60) Provisional application No. 61/742,688, filed on Aug. 16, 2012.

(51) **Int. Cl.**

A47J 31/52 (2006.01)

A47J 31/46 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

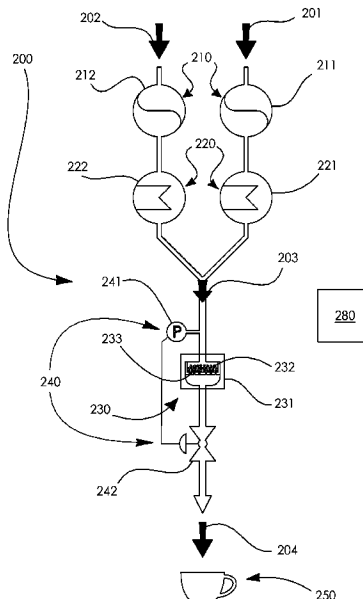
CPC **A47J 31/5255** (2018.08); **A47J 31/468** (2018.08); **A47J 31/5253** (2018.08)

(57)

ABSTRACT

A method of generating a desired temperature of an infused beverage within a brewing assembly that includes inducing a flow of a first solvent at a first temperature within a first solvent conduit upstream of a brewing chamber in a brewing assembly, inducing a flow of a second solvent within a second solvent conduit, separate from the first solvent conduit, upstream of the brewing chamber, and thermally modulating the second solvent to a second temperature higher and different than the first temperature. The method also includes selectively combining the first and second solvents at a resulting solvent conduit upstream of the brewing chamber to form a resulting solvent at a selectively desired temperature lower than the second temperature, receiving the resulting solvent at the brewing chamber housing a solute at the selectively desired temperature to produce an infused beverage, and discharging the infused through an outlet on the beverage assembly.

10 Claims, 6 Drawing Sheets



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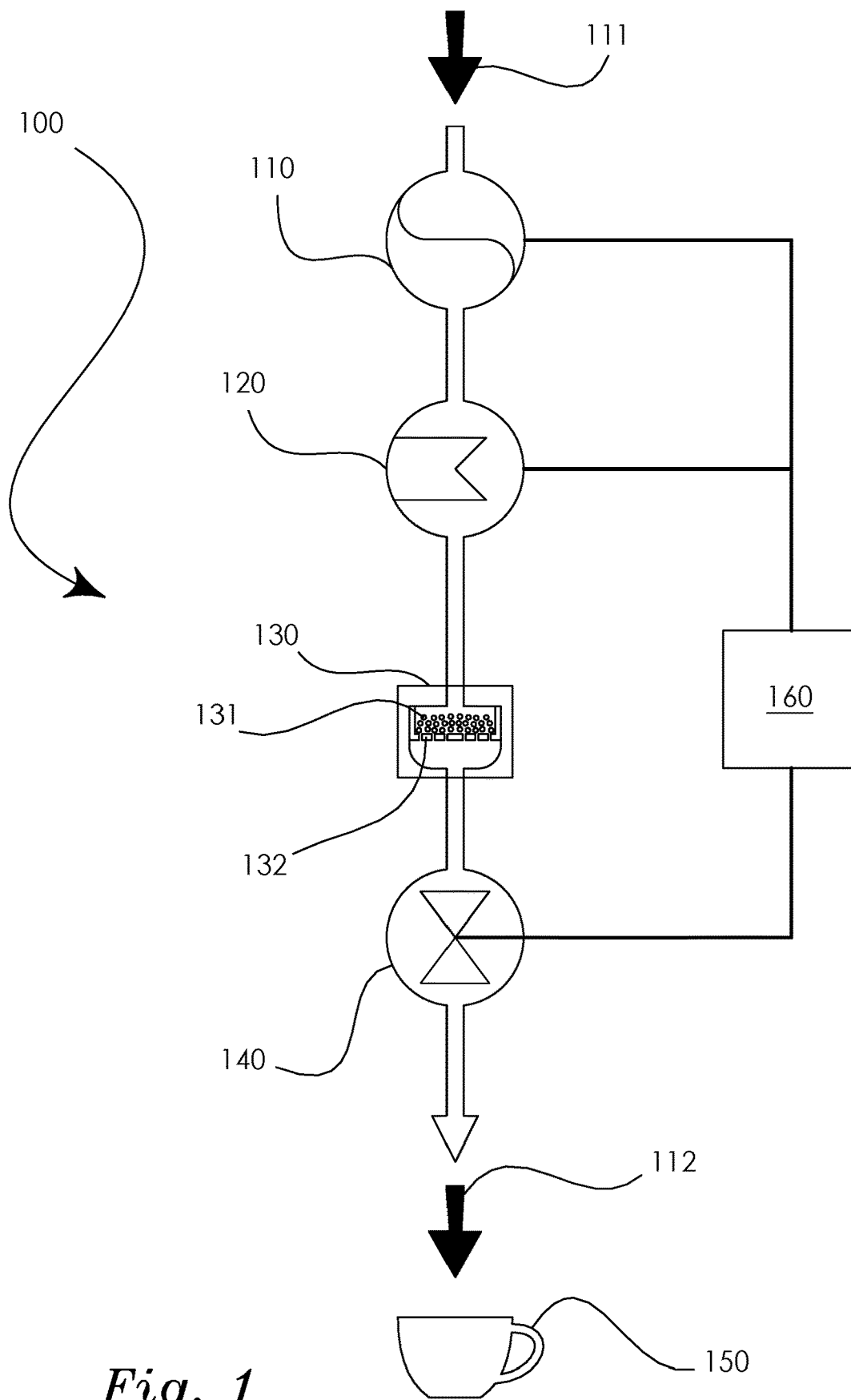


Fig. 1

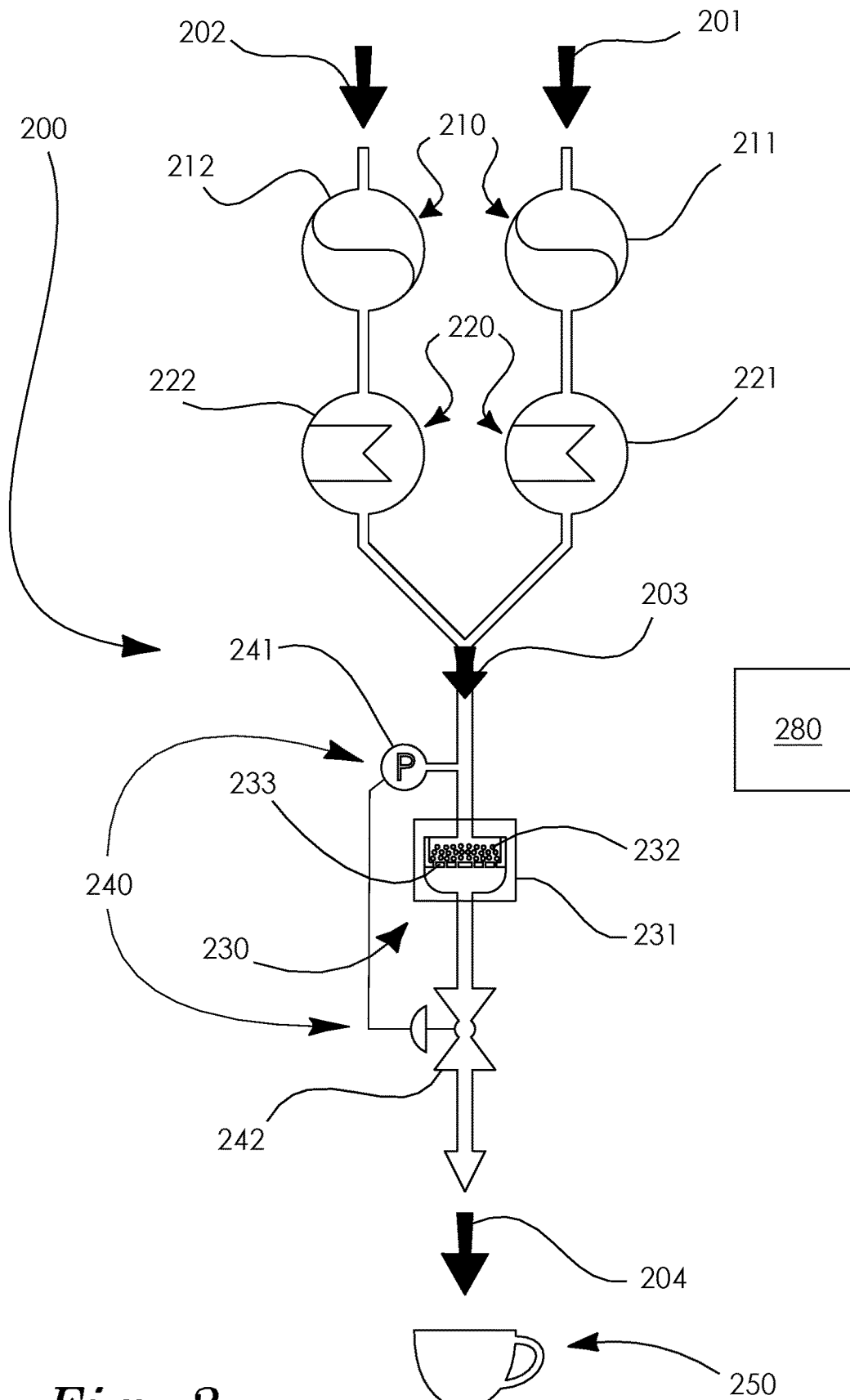


Fig. 2

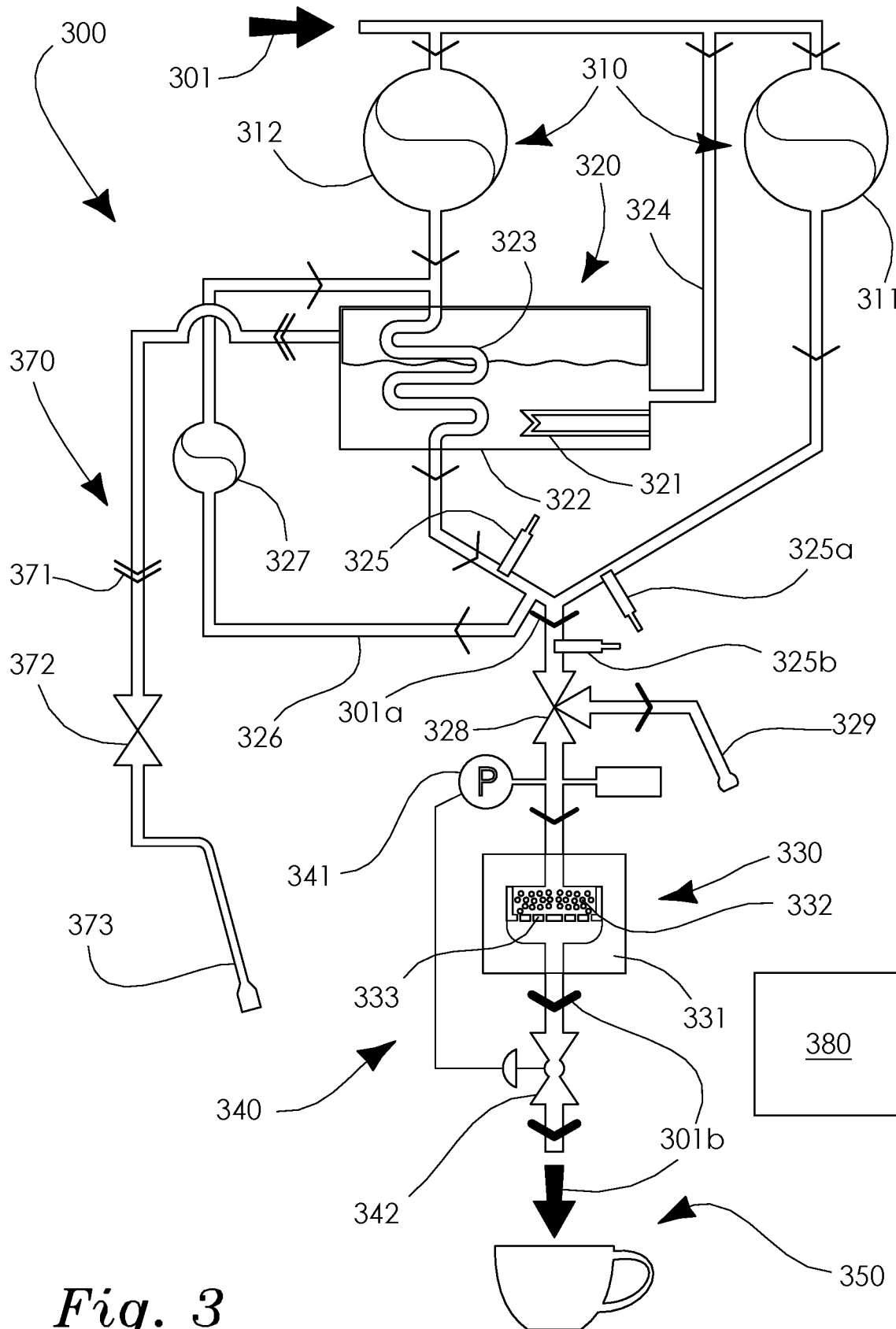


Fig. 3

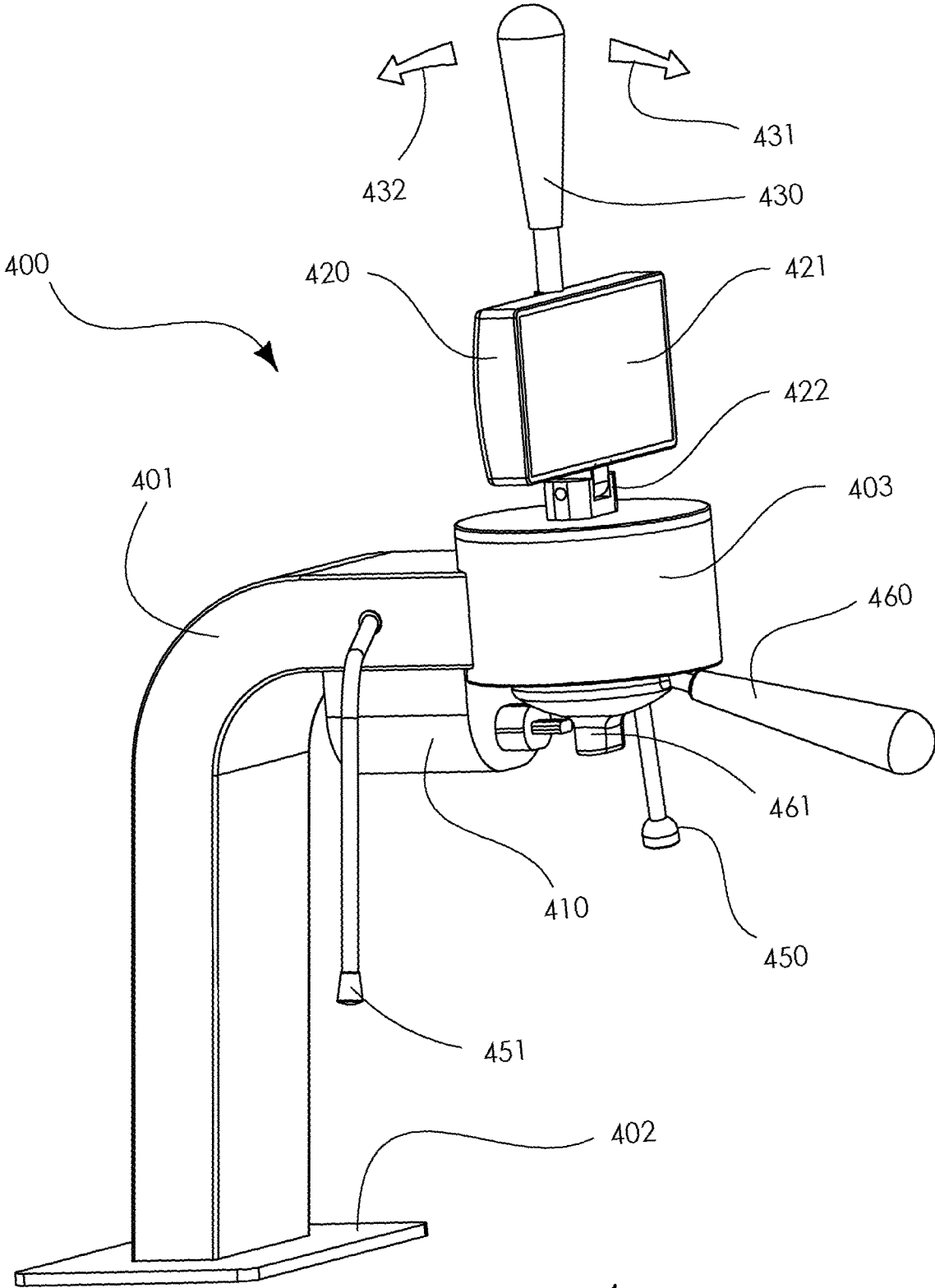
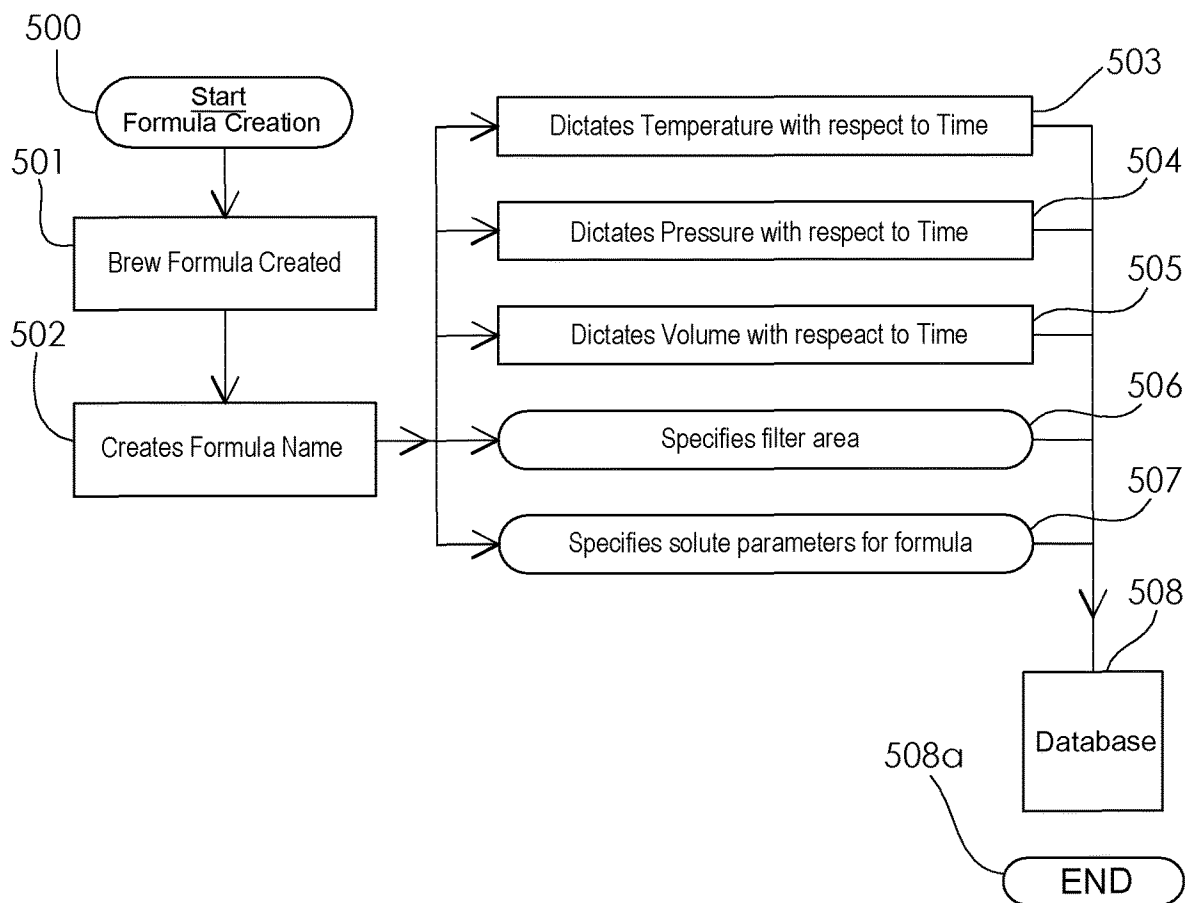
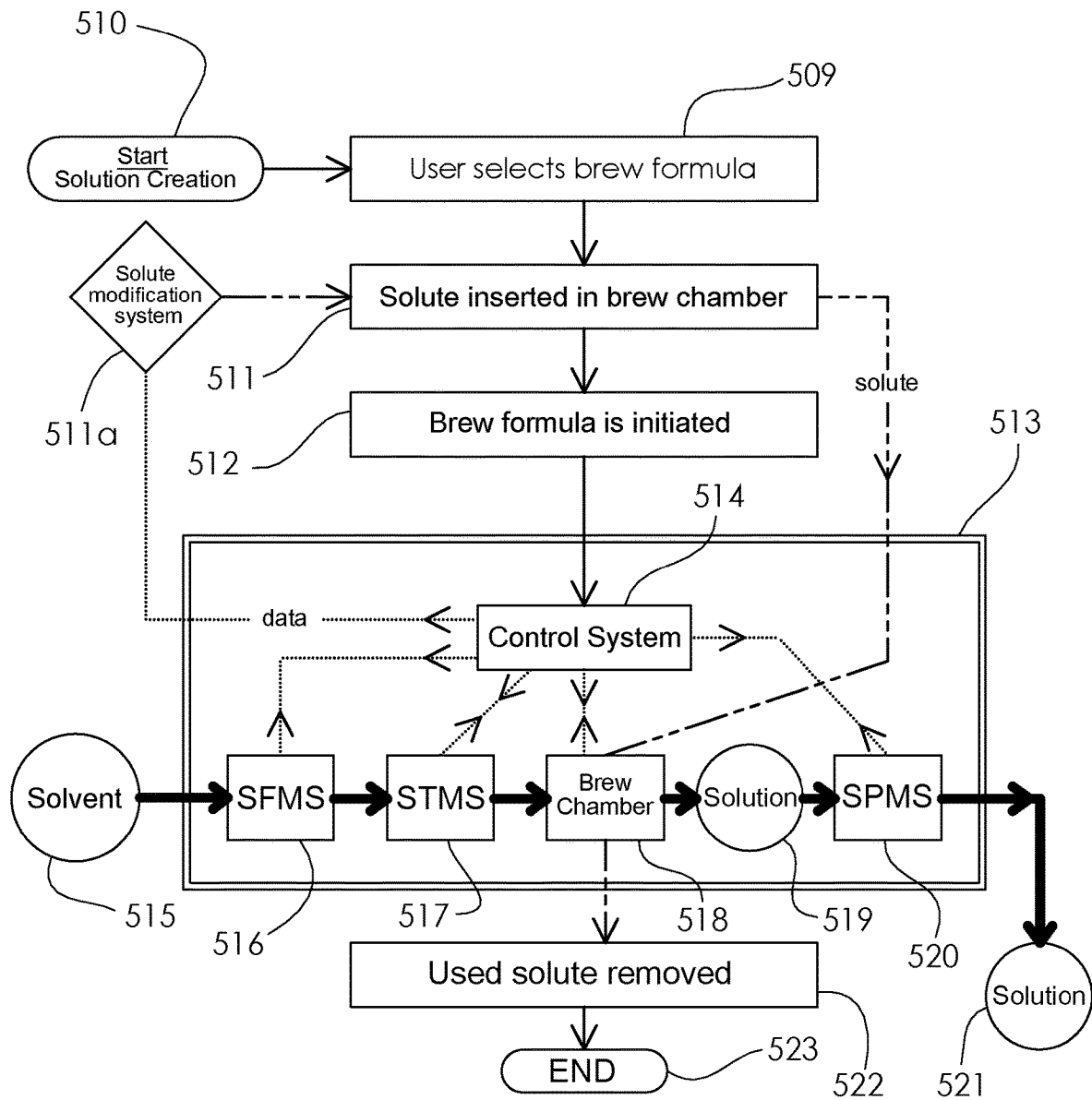


Fig. 4

*Fig. 5*

*Fig. 6*

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METHOD OF GENERATING A DESIRED TEMPERATURE OF AN INFUSED BEVERAGE WITHIN A BREWING ASSEMBLY

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to beverage brewing systems that utilize pressure, temperature, and flow of a solvent through a solute.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The creation of brewed or infused beverages through the infusion of a solvent with a solute contained within a filter media has been performed for over one hundred years. Over time it has come to be understood that the modification of brewing variables, such as infusion temperature, pressure, and flow rate of solvent through solute, change the resulting beverage's chemical composition and taste. Thus, many brewing systems have been developed that seek to enable flavor modification through selective modulation of one or more brewing variables. However, few, if any, brewing systems facilitate dynamic, i.e., within the brewing cycle, modulation of one or more of these variables during an infusion. Of those that do, modulation of one or more variables during an infusion results in unintended changes to other brewing variables. This lack of independent variable control makes the optimization and modification of infused beverages difficult.

For instance, currently available brewing systems that enable users to modify pressure during an infusion rely on back pressure generated in a brewing chamber by a resistive media typically composed of a filter and solute. In one configuration, brew chamber pressure modification is achieved by modulating the resistance of said resistive solute media while holding pumping energy constant. While this does result in a change in infusion pressure, it also changes the infusion flow rate. In another conventionally available system, the user modifies infusion pressure through the variation of solvent pumping force while keeping the resistance of the resistive media constant. This too results in an increase in infusion pressure and simultaneous change in infusion flow rate. Thus, in conventional systems, the variables of pressure and flow rate during the infusion process are dependent upon each other. As pressure and flow rate are both known to affect the chemical composition of the brewed infusion, there is an apparent need for a brewing system that affords independent modulation of infusion pressure and flow rate enabling the user to optimize infused solution chemical composition and produce consistent beverages.

Some known devices that are configured to modify one or more brewing variables to provide dynamic pressure control, but, again, lack control over flow rate independent of the pressure control. Specifically, said devices enable the user to create and execute brew formulas which modulate brew pressure and temperature with respect to time. This is performed through the use of a pressure sensor to monitor the infusion pressure within a brew chamber and modulating the pumping force of a water pump such that the desired infusion pressure is achieved in the brew chamber. Temperature control of infusion water is performed by utilizing a proportional mixing valve that is controlled by a controller to mix hot and cold water. While the aforementioned device may be capable of providing dynamic temperature and pressure control, it does so at the expense of the ability to

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regulate flow rate of the exiting infused beverage. The varying exiting flow rate disadvantageously creates inconsistent beverage output, which is costly for many retailers of beverages. The inconsistencies also are problematic for retailers and consumers, alike, as both the taste of the beverage and the amount of the beverage may change at each brewing cycle. Thus, flow rate, total dispensed volume, and ultimately beverage taste are dependent on variables such as fluctuations in solute particle size, packing density, solute quantity, along with filter media resistivity. As such, this makes it highly difficult to duplicate the flavor of an extraction even if the same brew formula of infusion pressure and temperature with respect to time are used.

It is well understood that infusion temperature also affects chemical composition of an infused beverage solution. Thus, an operator may find it advantageous to modify brewing infusion temperature during the brewing process to optimize flavor. Current brewing systems utilize boilers and brewing chambers with large thermal masses that are designed to provide consistent brewing temperature thus prohibiting the use of variable infusion temperatures to create optimal flavor. Therefore, a beverage brewing system that affords precise, accurate and dynamic temperature control would enable optimization of beverage flavor and is needed.

As previously explained, there is an acute need for a brewing system that affords the brewer independent, dynamic variation of brewing variables of temperature, pressure and flow rate during the production of infused beverages. Furthermore, there is a need for a brewing system that mitigates and/or eliminates the impact of external factors such as solute particle size variations and solute compaction on the beverage flavor.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a system and method of brewing beverages that satisfies the outlined need, facilitating dynamic, independent control of pressure, temperature and flow rate of solvent through solute contained within a filter during the infusion process. An exemplary brewing system is composed of a Solvent Flow Management System (SFMS) configured such that a desired flow rate is maintained regardless of pressure variations in the brewing chamber or other areas. This SFMS is operably connected to a Solvent Temperature Management System (STMS) that selectively and dynamically modulates (i.e., keep constant or change) the infusion temperature. The STMS is operably connected to a brewing chamber where solute resides within a filtering device and the infusion occurs. Operably connected to the brewing chamber is a Solution Pressure Management System (SPMS) which facilitates dynamic modulation of pressure within said brewing chamber.

Although the invention is illustrated and described herein as embodied in a system and method for brewing beverages with independently controlled flow rate, temperature, and pressure, it is, nevertheless, not intended to be limited to the details shown because various modifications and structural changes may be made therein without departing from the spirit of the invention and within the scope and range of equivalents of the claims. Additionally, well-known elements of exemplary embodiments of the invention will not be described in detail or will be omitted so as not to obscure the relevant details of the invention.

With the foregoing and other objects in view, there is provided, in accordance with the invention, a method of generating a desired temperature of an infused beverage within a brewing assembly having the steps of inducing a

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flow of a first solvent within a first solvent conduit upstream of a brewing chamber in a brewing assembly, wherein the first solvent is at a first temperature, inducing a flow of a second solvent within a second solvent conduit, separate from the first solvent conduit, upstream of the brewing chamber, and thermally modulating the second solvent to a second temperature higher and different than the first temperature, selectively combining the first and second solvents at a resulting solvent conduit upstream of the brewing chamber to form a resulting solvent at a selectively desired temperature lower than the second temperature, receiving the resulting solvent at the brewing chamber housing a solute at the selectively desired temperature to produce an infused beverage, and discharging the infused through an outlet on the beverage assembly.

In accordance with one feature, an embodiment of the present invention includes thermally modulating the first solvent in the first solvent conduit to the first temperature.

In accordance with yet another feature, an embodiment of the present invention also includes thermally modulating the first solvent in the first solvent conduit with a first thermal modulator and thermally modulating the second solvent in the second solvent conduit with a second thermal modulator.

In accordance with a further feature, an embodiment of the present invention also includes inducing the flow of the first solvent within the first solvent conduit with a first pump and inducing the flow of the second solvent within the second solvent conduit with a second pump.

In accordance with yet another feature, an embodiment of the present invention also includes electronically controlling the first and second pumps with an electronic controller to selectively modulate the flows of the first and second solvents, respectively, to generate a desired flow rate of the resulting solvent.

In accordance with an additional feature, an embodiment of the present invention also includes electronically controlling the first and second thermal modulators with the electronic controller to selectively modulate the temperatures of the first and second solvents, respectively, to generate the selectively desired temperature.

In accordance with yet another feature, an embodiment of the present invention also includes electronically controlling at least one pump with an electronic controller to selectively modulate the flows of the first and second solvents, respectively, to generate a desired flow rate of the resulting solvent.

In accordance with an additional feature, an embodiment of the present invention also includes electronically controlling a thermal modulator with an electronic controller to selectively modulate the temperature of the second solvent to generate the selectively desired temperature, thermally modulating the first solvent in the first solvent conduit to the first temperature with the thermal modulator, and electronically controlling the thermal modulator with the electronic controller to selectively modulate the temperature of the first solvent to generate the selectively desired temperature.

In accordance with yet another feature, an embodiment of the present invention also includes electronically controlling at least one pump with an electronic controller to selectively modulate the flows of the first and second solvents, respectively, to generate a desired flow rate of the resulting solvent.

In the instance of a beverage brewing system having only SFMS, STMS coupled to a brew chamber, a pressure sensor monitoring infusion pressure may be utilized to track variances in generated infusion pressure for the same brew formula. Said variances may be processed by a control system which modifies performance of a communicatively coupled solute modification system which may modify

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particle size and/or compaction as previously described in order to maintain a specified infusion pressure. In accordance with a further feature, the present invention also discloses a system for creating an infused beverage, the system including (1) a solvent flow management system configured to flow a solvent through a plurality of conduits in an infused beverage assembly, (2) a solvent temperature modulation system configured to modulate the temperature of the solvent, (3) a brewing chamber in which infusion of a solute and the solvent occurs to generate an infused beverage, the brewing chamber having an infusion process pressure and in fluid communication with at least one of the solvent flow management system and the solvent temperature modulation system, (4) an infusion pressure regulation system at least partially located downstream of the brewing chamber, the infusion pressure regulation system configured to selectively define and dynamically increase the infusion process pressure greater than a pressure created upstream in the brewing chamber caused by a flow of the solvent through the solute, and (5) an outlet for discharging the infused beverage.

Other features that are considered as characteristic for the invention are set forth in the appended claims. As required, detailed embodiments of the present invention are disclosed herein; however, it is to be understood that the disclosed embodiments are merely exemplary of the invention, which can be embodied in various forms. Therefore, specific structural and functional details disclosed herein are not to be interpreted as limiting, but merely as a basis for the claims and as a representative basis for teaching one of ordinary skill in the art to variously employ the present invention in virtually any appropriately detailed structure. Further, the terms and phrases used herein are not intended to be limiting; but rather, to provide an understandable description of the invention. While the specification concludes with claims defining the features of the invention that are regarded as novel, it is believed that the invention will be better understood from a consideration of the following description in conjunction with the drawing figures, in which like reference numerals are carried forward. The figures of the drawings are not drawn to scale.

Before the present invention is disclosed and described, it is to be understood that the terminology used herein is for the purpose of describing particular embodiments only and is not intended to be limiting. The terms "a" or "an," as used herein, are defined as one or more than one. The term "plurality," as used herein, is defined as two or more than two. The term "another," as used herein, is defined as at least a second or more. The terms "including" and/or "having," as used herein, are defined as comprising (i.e., open language). The term "coupled," as used herein, is defined as connected, although not necessarily directly, and not necessarily mechanically. The word "system," as used herein, is defined as one or more devices or components that form a network for performing or distributing something or operating for a common purpose. The word "correspond" or its equivalent is defined as being similar or equivalent in character, quantity, origin, structure or function.

As used herein, the terms "about" or "approximately" apply to all numeric values, whether or not explicitly indicated. These terms generally refer to a range of numbers that one of skill in the art would consider equivalent to the recited values (i.e., having the same function or result). In many instances these terms may include numbers that are rounded to the nearest significant figure. The terms "program," "software application," and the like as used herein, are defined as a sequence of instructions designed for

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execution on a computer system. A “program,” “computer program,” or “software application” may include a subroutine, a function, a procedure, an object method, an object implementation, an executable application, an applet, a servlet, a source code, an object code, a shared library/dynamic load library and/or other sequence of instructions designed for execution on a computer system.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The accompanying figures, where like reference numerals refer to identical or functionally similar elements throughout the separate views and which together with the detailed description below are incorporated in and form part of the specification, serve to further illustrate various embodiments and explain various principles and advantages all in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 1 is a schematic diagram depicting an independently controlled beverage brewing system in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a schematic diagram depicting an independently controlled beverage brewing system in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 3 is a schematic diagram depicting an independently controlled beverage brewing system in accordance with another embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 4 is a fragmentary perspective view of an independently controlled beverage brewing device in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 5 is a process flow diagram depicting an exemplary process of programming the beverage brewing system of FIG. 1 in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention; and

FIG. 6 is a process flow diagram depicting an exemplary process of operating the beverage brewing system of FIG. 1 in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

While the specification concludes with claims defining the features of the invention that are regarded as novel, it is believed that the invention will be better understood from a consideration of the following description in conjunction with the drawing figures, in which like reference numerals are carried forward. It is to be understood that the disclosed embodiments are merely exemplary of the invention, which can be embodied in various forms.

Although the invention is illustrated and described herein with reference to specific embodiments, the invention is not intended to be limited to the details shown. Rather, various modifications may be made in the details within the scope and range of equivalents of the claims and without departing from the invention.

With reference to FIG. 1, a schematic diagram depicting an exemplary brewing system 100 is shown. The brewing system 100 includes a solvent flow management system “SFMS” 110, operably connected to a solvent temperature management system “STMS” 120. The STMS 120 is operably connected to the brewing/infusion chamber 130. The infusion chamber 130 is operably connected to a solution/infusion pressure management/regulation system “SPMS” 140. In operation, a solvent 111 enters the SFMS 110 where it is pumped at a chosen and selectively modulated rate throughout system 100. It can be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the brewing system 100 operates normally under conditions of constant flow (i.e., movement)

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through the solvent conduits. The term “conduit” is defined as any channel through which something is conveyed. In one embodiment, the conduit may start and terminate where it enters and leaves, respectively, from one component to another within the brewing system 100. In other embodiments, the conduit may start at the beginning of the infusion process (e.g., SFMS) and may terminate at the end of the infusion process (e.g., outlet). The solvent 111 then enters the STMS 120 where it is selectively, whether manually by a user or automated with a control system, thermally modulated to a chosen temperature. Subsequently, the solvent 111 enters the infusion chamber 130 where it comes in contact with the solute 131, thereby creating an infused solution 112. The “infused solution” may be considered any mixture of a single or multi-phase liquid substance. Particulate matter may be removed via a filter 132. The infused solution 112 passes through a SPMS 140. The SPMS 140 selectively modulates the infusion pressure in infusion chamber 130. The infused solution 112 is then dispensed into container 150.

According to another embodiment, the control system 160 is used to independently and automatically monitor and or modify solvent characteristic variables including, but not limited to, flow rate, temperature and pressure of the infusion in accordance with the user-programmed specifications. The control system 160 is operable to modify the flow rate of solvent 111 by accordingly adjusting the SFMS 110. Additionally, control system 160 modulates solvent temperature through modulating STMS 120. Furthermore, the control system 160 may also adjust the pressure of the infusion by adjusting SPMS 140. During an infusion process, one or more of the aforementioned infusion parameters may be selectively modified during said infusion. This dynamic modification of said variables may be utilized to modify chemicals and/or dissolved solids infused into the resulting solution 112 producing a preferred beverage customizable by the user.

The parameters required to produce said preferred beverage may be created by a user remotely or on-site. Furthermore, said parameters may be stored as programs or brewing formulas in the control system 160, via a memory, and then may be recalled as desired to reproduce the preferred beverage. The control system 160 may be programmed to provide optimal infusion for numerous solutes or multiple preferred infusions with the same solute. As will be understood by those skilled in the art, to ensure accuracy and precision during the infusion process, feedback sensors, not shown, such as thermocouples, pressure meters, and flow meters may be positioned throughout brewing system 100. These sensors provide feedback to the appropriate control devices affording them the necessary data to modulate aspects of brewing system 100 to ensure programmed infusion conditions are achieved and maintained with consistency, if desired.

The control system 160 may track performance data such as the number, volume, and/or infusion parameters of infused beverages produced by the brewing system 100. This data may be combined with any recorded system errors or data that could be used to recommend and/or perform system maintenance. Data recorded by control system 160 may be accessed on-site or remotely.

As will be commonly understood, the brewing system 100 may be reconfigured such that SFMS 110 and STMS 120 are reversed such that solvent 111 initially flows into STMS 120, where solvent is thermally modulated to the appropriate or desired temperature. Subsequently, the thermally modulated solvent 111 would enter SFMS 110 then flow into infusion

chamber 130. The infusion chamber 130 may be any structural housing wherein a solute is capable of being disposed.

A preferred beverage may be produced by the incorporation of one or more of the dynamically adjustable systems, i.e., the SFMS 110, the STMS 120, and the SPMS 140. Said another way, any of the system 100 components, e.g., SFMS 110, are operable to adjust solvent/infusion parameters during an infusion process. In other embodiments, a beverage may be produced by a brewing system 100 that incorporates a non-dynamically controlled SPMS 140 and a dynamically controlled SFMS 110 and a STMS 120. Alternately, the brewing system 100 may include a non-dynamically controlled SFMS 110 and SPMS 140 and a dynamically controlled STMS 120.

Referring now to FIG. 2, a schematic diagram of a beverage brewing system 200 in an alternate configuration is shown. In said configuration, solvents 202 and 201 are pumped by two SFMS 210, the SFMS being operably connected to two STMS 220. After passing through the STMS 220, the thermally regulated solvents 202 and 201 combine to create a resulting solvent 203 of a resulting temperature. The resulting solvent 203 then passes into the brewing/infusion chamber 230, through a resulting solvent conduit—which may or may not be considered to be the same as a solvent conduit—where infusion of solute 232 and solvent 203 occurs. The result of the infusion of the solute 232 and solvent generates an infused solution 204. The infused solution 204 then passes through an infused solution conduit—which may or may not be considered to be the same as the solvent conduit or resulting solvent conduit—to a SPMS 240 and then exits the assembly through an outlet to a receptacle 250.

In the brewing system 200 shown in the figuration of FIG. 2, the SFMS 210 is composed of independently controlled pumping units 211 and 212, with the pump 212 receiving solvent 202 and the pump 211 receiving solvent 201. Said pumps 211, 212 work in tandem to provide an additive flow rate that is equivalent to the total desired infusion flow rate in the brewing chamber 230. For example, if the desired infusion flow rate is 1 cc/sec, the pump 211 may pump at 0.7 cc/sec and the pump 212 may pump at 0.3 cc/sec. The SFMS 210 may be independently controlled or coupled to control system 280, thereby modulating the pumps 211, 212 to achieve a required flow rate of solvents 201, 202 based on total desired flow rate of resulting solvent 203 and the desired infusion temperature as explained below.

In one embodiment, the SFMS 210 is operably connected to the STMS 220 where the solvent 202 is thermally modulated by a thermal modulator 222 and the solvent 201 is thermally modulated by a thermal modulator 221, such that the range of infusion temperatures desired by the user may be produced through their selective combination. Thermal modulations provided by thermal modulators 221, 222 dictate the solvent temperature range available for an infusion. For example, if a user desires to perform the infusion between 20° C. and 100° C. then thermal modulator 221 may yield solvent 201 at a temperature of 20° C. or lower and thermal modulator 222 may yield solvent 202 at a temperature of 100° C. or higher. In practice, to achieve infusion temperatures within this range, the SFMS 210 will selectively pump solvents 201, 202 through the STMS 220 at a rate that satisfies the desired overall infusion flow rate and temperature of the resulting solvent 203. For example, assuming a negligible thermal loss from the brewing chamber 230 and system conduits, if the user desires an infusion flow rate of 1 cc/sec and an infusion temperature of 90° C., the solvent 201 may be modulated to 100° C. and the solvent

202 may be modulated to 20° C. The pump 212 will flow solvent 202 at a rate of 1/8 cc/sec and pump 211 will flow solvent 201 at a rate of 7/8 cc/sec. In order to improve accuracy of the infusion temperature, the specific heat capacity and thermal conductivity of brewing chamber 230 and system conduits may be accounted for when determining solvents' 201, 202 flow rates. The STMS 220 may also be connected to the control system 280, which may modulate and/or monitor temperature of the respective solvents 201, 202, as necessary. Solvent temperatures and/or data from the STMS may be utilized by control system 280 to modulate the performance of the SFMS, thereby advantageously achieving a desired infusion temperature and infusion flow rate.

The STMS 220 is operably connected to the brewing chamber 230. In one embodiment, the brewing chamber 230 is composed of a chamber housing 231 and a filter system 233 designed to contain a solute 232. The brew chamber housing 231 may be designed with a removable section that readily facilitates the insertion or removal of the solute 232. In order to facilitate rapid, accurate, and dramatic fluctuations in infusion temperatures, the brew chamber 230 is optimally designed with a minimal specific heat capacity and thermal conductivity. Within the brewing chamber 230, the resulting solvent 203 contacts the solute 232 thereby creating a solution 204.

Operably connected to brewing chamber 230 is a SPMS 240 which selectively modulates infusion pressure via the addition of flow resistance generated by at least one pressure regulation component, e.g., a valve 242. As the filter 233 and the solute 232 may create a resistance to flow, a pressure monitoring device 241 is inserted antecedent to the solute 232, the pressure monitoring device 241 operably connected to the solvent 203 to enable accurate infusion pressure measurement. In order to increase infusion pressure (i.e., infusion process pressure) greater than that provided by solute 232 and filter 233, the valve 242 may be selectively activated increasing solution 204 flow resistance thereby increasing infusion pressure. Once activated, the valve 242 may be selectively deactivated, decreasing flow resistance and thus infusion pressure.

As will be understood by those skilled in the art, in order to control the infusion pressure in accordance with the present invention, the valve 242 is of a class that is not activated based on a defined or determined pressure differential across the valve 242, e.g., blowoff valve. Said another way, the valve 242 is such that the flow of the solvent through the solute is not contingent on a pressure differential across the pressure regulation component. Rather, it is activated or utilized to dictate the infusion pressure independent of pressure differential across itself. As such, the at least one pressure regulation component 242 is operably unaffected by a pressure differential across the at least one pressure regulation component during the infusion process. Any other known infusion systems that may utilize a valve downstream, are solely utilizing this valve 242 as a means to relieve pressure in the lines, thereby are always operably affected by a pressure differential across itself. Therefore, the present invention provides a user the advantage of dictating the infusion pressure independent of releasing the infused solution and controlling other system parameters.

In one embodiment, the pressure regulation component, e.g., valve 242, may be a needle valve. In other embodiments, the valve 242 may include a butterfly valve, a globe valve, a pinch valve, or any other flow impeding device capable of regulating pressure within brewing chamber 230. Ideal valves are impervious to particulate matter, oils, and

other dissolved solids that may exist in infused solution, possess a minimal internal volume, are readily cleaned, and possess a minimal thermal conductivity and specific heat capacity. In practice, the pressure monitoring device **241** is used to monitor the infusion pressure, which, in turn, modulates the valve **242** to adjust infusion pressure. The SPMS **240** may be connected to a control system **280** which may modulate the valve **242** based on inputs from the pressure monitoring device **241** to achieve a desired infusion pressure. Operably connected to the SPMS **240** is solution receptacle **250** which receives the solution **204** once it exits beverage brewing system **200**.

As will be commonly understood, the brewing system **200** may be reconfigured such that SFMS **210** and STMS **220** are reversed such that solvents **201**, **202** initially flow into STMS **220** where they are heated to the appropriate temperature, before subsequently entering the SFMS **210**, and then flowing into brewing/infusion chamber **230**.

According to another embodiment of the present invention, the control system **280** is used to independently and automatically modify flow rate, temperature, and pressure of the infusion. The control system **280** modifies flow rate of solvents **201**, **202** by accordingly adjusting the SFMS **210**. Additionally, the control system **280** modulates the solvent temperature through modulation of STMS **220**. Furthermore, the control system **280** adjusts pressure of the infusion by adjusting SPMS **240**. For example, during an infusion process, the control system **280** may selectively modify one or more of the aforementioned infusion parameters in accordance with user's desires. This dynamic modification may be utilized to modify chemicals and/or dissolved solids infused into the resulting solution producing a preferred beverage by the user or a consumer. The parameters required to produce said preferred beverage may be stored as programs or brewing formulas in control system **280** and recalled as desired to reproduce and replicate the preferred beverage formula. As such, the infused beverage formulate may be any recipe or formulation made up of infusion process parameters.

With reference now to FIG. 3, another schematic diagram is shown depicting a beverage brewing system **300** in accordance with an alternate embodiment of present invention. The beverage brewing system **300** is adapted to enable the brewing system to produce infused beverages while also producing steam for frothing beverages and enabling the selective dispensing of thermally modulated solvent without its passage through the brewing chamber.

As shown, the solvent **301** is pumped by SFMS **310**, which may include solvent pumps **311**, **312**, (operable equivalents of solvent pump **211** and **212**) and is in fluid communication with the STMS **320**. STMS **320** in the present embodiment is configured to selectively thermally modulate one of the solvent flows from the SFMS **310** or other solvent sources, i.e., a boiler. As will be obvious to those skilled in the art, thermal modulation of one solvent dictates that the minimum temperature for an infusion will be that of solvent **301**. The STMS **320** is operable to selectively heat the solvent **301** pumped from solvent pumps **311**, **312** through the use of a heat exchanger **323**. The heat exchanger **323** may be contained within a steam boiler **322** which is heated by a heating element **321** and supplied solvent from a boiler solvent supply line **324**.

A solvent recirculation system **326** is preferably in fluid connection with the heat exchanger **323**, such that it is connected downstream and upstream the steam boiler **322**. The solvent recirculation system **326** is operable to selectively recirculate the thermally modulated solvent **301** in

order to maintain an optimal temperature. A solvent recirculation pump **327** may also be utilized to aid in the recirculation of the solvent **301**. The temperature of the solvent **301** may be monitored by a temperature measuring device **325**. The temperature measuring device **325** may be communicatively coupled to the recirculation pump **327**, through the use of a controller **380** or other means, to modulate its performance and maintain a desired temperature and/or a uniform temperature within the solvent conduits. In other embodiments, the temperature measuring device **325** may also be communicatively coupled to a valve downstream of the steam boiler that is operable to inhibit the flow of the solvent until a desired temperature is reached.

The system **300** may also utilize a steam dispensing system **370** that is in fluid communication with steam boiler **322**, through use of one or more conduits, and is preferably configured to facilitate in dispensing steam **371**. Dispensing of said steam **371** is controlled by a steam valve **372**, which is also in fluid communication with the steam boiler **322** and operable to control the flow of the steam **371**. The steam dispensing system **370** may also include a steam dispensing nozzle **373** that may be uniquely adapted to dispense steam **371** in a manner which is optimized for the frothing of beverages. As will be obvious to those skilled in the art, the steam boiler **322** is configured to supply steam **371** at a pressure controlled by a pressure switch or alternate equivalent (not shown). The steam boiler **322** may also be configured to maintain a sufficient volume solvent level through the use of a selectively operable fill valve and fluid level switches (not shown).

In an operable equivalent manner to the beverage brewing system **200** depicted in FIG. 2, the thermally modulated solvent **301** pumped by solvent pump **312** may be mixed with the solvent **301** pumped by the solvent pump **311** which has not been appreciably thermally modulated and thus is of a different temperature thereby creating a resulting solvent **301a** of a resulting temperature. Depending on the desired temperature and flow rate, the SFMS pumps solvent **301** based on solvent temperatures measured by temperature measuring devices **325** and **325a**. The system **300** may also include a temperature measuring device **325b** that measures the temperature of the resulting solvent **301a**. In one embodiment, the temperature measuring device **325b** may provide feedback to a controller **380** that may modify performance of SFMS to ensure the resulting solvent **301a** is maintained at the desired temperature. In other embodiments, the temperature measuring device **325b** may be communicatively coupled to the heating element **321** or other system **300** components to operably modulate the resulting solvent **301a** to a desired temperature.

Flow of the resulting solvent **301a** to the brew chamber **330** is preferably controlled by a valve **328** that is operably configured to selectively prevent or inhibit the flow of the resulting solvent **301a**, facilitate flow of resulting solvent **301a** to the brew chamber **330**, facilitate flow of the resulting solvent **301a** to an external non-brew chamber location, and/or facilitate flow to a drain (not shown). The valve **328** may be manually operated or automatically operated by a controller **380**. In practice, when brewing system **300** is in its default state, the valve **328** is closed thereby preventing or otherwise inhibiting fluid flow. The active state of the system **300** may include, but is not necessarily limited to, when the user desires to dispense a specific temperature and/or volume of resulting solvent **301a** without passing the solvent **301a** through the brew chamber **330** or desires to pass the solvent **301a** through the brewing chamber. Therefore, the active state may include modifying the valve **328**

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such that the solvent **301a** is directed to flow out a dispensing spout **329** with the SFMS and the STMS providing the solvent **301a** at the desired temperature, volume, and flow rate. Said independent control of system components is what advantageously gives the user optimum control not available with prior art brewing systems.

Alternately, the valve **328** may direct the solvent **301a** to a drain (not shown), which will enable the flushing of solvent **301a** or any gas within the system. The valve **328** may also be utilized to ensure solvent **301a** is at a desired temperature prior to being directed to the brew chamber **330** for an infusion or dispensing spout **329** for dispensing. This is accomplished by a valve **328** directing solvent **301a** to a drain until temperature measuring device **325b** indicates that solvent **301a** is the proper temperature. In other embodiments, the valve **328** may recirculate the solvent **301a** to the steam boiler **322** or the recirculation pump **327**. When the solvent **301a** is at the proper temperature then the valve **328** may switch to direct solvent **301a** to the infusion chamber **330** or dispensing spout **329**.

When creating an infusion, i.e., the result of an infusion process, the solvent **301a** passes through the valve **328** and is directed to the brewing chamber **330**. The brewing chamber may be composed of a chamber housing **331** that is preferably configured to readily facilitate the removal and replacement of a filter system **333**. In one embodiment, the chamber housing **331** is of a size slightly larger in dimensions than the filter system **333** to facilitate a taut and relatively unyielding coupling with one another. In an alternate embodiment, the internal volume of chamber housing **331** is roughly equivalent to that of solute **332** and filter system **333**. In other embodiments, the coupling with the housing **331** and filter system **333** may have dimensional variance with one another. The filter system **333** may include a solute **332** that is placed in fluid communication with the solvent **301a** to facilitate infusion, thereby creating a solution **301b** (a solvent **301a**/solute **332** mixture). In fluid communication with the brew chamber **330** is a SPMS **340**, which is the operable equivalent to the aforementioned SPMS **240**. The SPMS **340** may include a valve **342** and a pressure monitoring device **341**, e.g., a pump or valve. The valve **342** is configured to selectively resist flow of the solution **301b** out of the brew chamber **330**, advantageously modulating the infusion pressure within brew chamber **330**. After the solution **301b** passes through the valve **342** it exits the brewing system **300** to a removable cup **350** or an operable equivalent.

As will be obvious to those skilled in the art, the configuration of brewing system **300** should take into account potential cavitations within said brewing system **300** which may diminish the performance of said brewing system. Thus it may be advantageous to configure said system **300** such that the solvent **301a** and **301** are under constant positive pressure.

The control system **380**, which may be an operable equivalent to the control system **280** described and shown with reference to FIG. 2, is adapted to the brewing system **300** to be communicatively coupled to one or more devices in the system **300**. The control system **380** may modulate the performance of the SFMS **310**, the STMS **320**, and the SPMS **340** to ensure that the user's specifications for an extraction manifested during the infusion or dispensing of the solvent **301a**.

One benefit of the disclosed beverage brewing system **300** is the ability to substantially separate the brewing chamber **330** from the STMS **320** and SPMS **340** without adverse effects on infused solution quality. A system of the afore-

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mentioned configuration is preferably configured such that solvent **301a** is produced proximate brewing chamber **330** thereby ensuring an accurate infusion temperature regardless brew chamber **330** to STMS **320** and SPMS **340** separation distance. Said separation preferably enables the minimization of the overall appearance of the beverage brewing system **300** to the viewing public, including the user. In practice, one methodology of minimizing brewing system appearance is positioning the STMS **320** and the SFMS **310** out of the user's view with the SPMS and brewing chamber **330** visible. FIG. 4 depicts an exemplary embodiment of the visible portion of the aforementioned visually minimized system.

FIG. 4 depicts a visible brewing component **400** that may include a mechanical support **401** with a platform mounting plate **402**. The visible brewing component **400** may include a brew chamber **403**, which is an operable equivalent of the brew chamber **330** described and shown in reference to FIG. 3. The component **400** also includes a SPMS **410**, which is also an operable equivalent of the SPMS **340** described and shown in reference to FIG. 3. The component **400** may also include a steam dispensing nozzle **451** and a dispensing spout **450** which are also operable equivalents to those comparable components described and shown in reference to FIG. 3.

The component **400**, which may also be referred to as a body, may also include a user interface **421** housed in a user interface housing **420** that is preferably made in operable attachment to mechanical support **401** by hinge support **422** which may be configured to facilitate rotation about said hinge of an interface housing **420** indicated by a directional indicator **431** or reverse rotation indicated by a directional indicator **432**. An interface housing control lever **430** may be attached to interface housing **420** thereby aiding in the selective movement. A sensor means (not shown) may be utilized to detect motion of interface housing **420** about hinge support **422** which may be utilized to selectively activate components of said beverage brewing system. An exemplary use of said switching means is the actuation of steam dispensing valve (not shown) facilitating the dispensing of steam from steam dispensing nozzle **451**. Said dispensing may be initiated by movement in one direction resulting in manually controlled steam dispensing and movement in the other direction initiating an automated dispensing of steam that may be controlled with respect to temperature rise of a frothed beverage.

The brew chamber **403** is configured to contain a filter system (not shown) within a removable filter housing **461**, both of which may be operable in an equivalent above-described manner. The filter housing **461** preferably has a filter system handle **460** attached thereto, which is configured to aid in its removal and replacement. In operable engagement with removable filter housing **461** is the SPMS **410** which is configured to modulate infusion pressure as described above.

FIG. 5 depicts a process flow diagram for the present invention. The process of brew formula creation begins in step **500**. Step **501** is the initialization of the brew formula creation mechanism. In this step the user will access software or alternate means of creating said brew formula. In step **502**, a formula name is created, preferably, said name is unique, distinctive and indicative of the solute to be used to create said brew. Steps **503-507** specify the brew parameters. In step **503** the temperature with respect to time is preferably specified. In step **504**, the pressure is preferably dictated with respect to time, and in step **505** the volume is specified with respect to time. As will be understood by

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those skilled in the art, the aforementioned brew parameters may be specified with respect to other parameters as long as the parameters of temperature, solution flow rate and infusion pressure are specified. Additionally, said brew formula may include step 506, the specification of filter area, and step 507, the specification of solute parameters. Said solute parameters may include average solute particle size, compaction and any other pertinent information which may be useful to an operator when executing the brew formula. In step 508, the aforementioned parameters are stored in a storage media known as a database. The process of brew formula creation is complete at step 508a.

With reference now to FIG. 6, a process flow diagram depicting an exemplary process of operating the beverage brewing system is shown. Electing to brew a beverage, a user starts at step 510. In step 509, a brewing formula is selected by the user. During step 511a solute is modified to the appropriate size based by a solute modification system according to a user's desires and/or information provided from a communicatively coupled control system 160. During step 511 the solute is inserted in brewing/infusion chamber 130. Subsequently, brew formula execution is initiated in step 512. In step 514, a signal is sent to the control system 160 of the brewing device 513 which is the operable equivalent to brewing device 100. In Step 515, the control system 160 causes solvent to enter brewing device 513. During step 516, the SFMS 110, 210, 310, receives a control signal from control system 160, causing flow of solvent at a rate dictated by the chosen brew formula. During step 517, the STMS 120 receives a control signal from the control system 160 and thermally modulates the solvent in accordance with the brew formula. The infusion of solvent and solute within brew chamber 130 occurs during step 518. During step 519, the infused solution/beverage exits from said brewing chamber 130. During step 520, the solution traverses through the SPMS 140, which receives a control signal from the control system 160, resulting in pressure regulation during the infusion process. During step 521, solution exits brewing device 513.

As will be obvious to those skilled in the art, steps 516, 517, 518, 519, 520 may all occur concurrently. At the conclusion of step 521, the removal of used solute from brewing chamber 130, occurs during step 522. After solute removal, the process concludes at step 523.

The SFMS 110, 210, 310 is a system of moving fluid that provides accurate, metered, variable flow of solvent through the brewing system. Applicable systems may include a pumping means capable of providing flow at pressures and rates equal to or greater than those required by the brewer. Exemplary pumps are preferably volumetric in operation however, gear pumps, piston pumps, rotary vane pumps or any others that satisfy the aforementioned criteria. Pumping means is preferably in operable connection with a solvent flow meter(s) or an equivalent mechanism that acts as a feedback mechanism ensuring the desired flow rate and volume is dispensed. Preferably, pumping is performed by a pump with 100% volumetric efficiency driven by a prime mover with feedback and/or position control such as a servo or stepper motors whereby the use of a flow meter is not required to achieve accurate flow rates. Additionally, the pumping means is capable of modulating and maintaining the required fluid flow rate during the brewing process regardless of system pressure. SFMS may be a self-controlled system or coupled to an external system controller that monitors and modulates performance.

The STMS, 120, 220, 320 is a system for providing rapidly variable, accurate and precise temperature solvent to

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the brewing chamber. Exemplary systems include instant or tankless solvent heating systems and the use of thermostatic mixing valves/systems. Regardless of the system utilized, an ideal STMS is capable of providing variations in temperature that are equal to or greater than those desired by the operator. Ideal STMS have the ability to provide solvent temperature modulations at a rate of at least 10° C./sec or 10° C./mL flow that contacts solute and provide a minimum accuracy of $\pm 3^\circ$ C. during the infusion. An optimal system takes into account specific heat capacity and thermal conductivity of solvent conduits in operable connection to solute material when delivering solvent.

An ideal brewing chamber 130, 230, 330 is a system that is operably connected to the SFMS, STMS, and SPMS. It includes a chamber configured to facilitate contact of solution and solute creating an infused solution, selectively contain solute media, and allow said infused solution to exit said brew chamber. An ideal brewing chamber has a minimal specific heat capacity and thermal conductivity such that infusion temperature can be rapidly modified. Preferably it is configured such that the material contacting solvent has a thermal conductivity at or below 1 W/m²K, exemplary materials include the class of polymers of Polyetherimide (PEI) and polyetheretherketone (PEEK). Additionally, said brewing chamber is capable of withstanding pressures greater than those provided by the brewing system.

Operably connected to brewing chamber is a SPMS, 140, 240, 340, that modulates the pressure within said brewing chamber by modifying infused solution flow resistance. The SPMS may include a pressure measuring device operably connected to solute within brew chamber and a valve that is capable of modulating infused solution flow resistance thus increasing pressure within brewing chamber. Exemplary valves include pressure regulators, needle, butterfly, globe and pinch valves or any other flow regulating device capable of regulating pressure within brew chamber. Ideal valves are impervious to particulate matter, oils, and other dissolved solids that may exist in infused solution. Furthermore, SPMS optimally contains a minimal internal volume and adjusts pressure within the chamber to an accuracy of at least ± 0.5 Bar and a minimum rate of pressure change greater than 1 Bar/sec. Additionally the internal volume should be readily cleaned.

An electronic control system 160, 280, 380, is ideally used to selectively modulate and monitor performance of SFMS, STMS, and SPMS during the infusion process. Additionally, the control system is able to be pre-programmed with brewing "formulas" that may be tailored to different personal preferences and solute. These formulas may be recalled when desired thus minimizing the amount of labor, skill and time required to reproduce brewing results. The control system may include networking capabilities such as being connected to the Internet, thereby enabling remote system monitoring and transmission of brewing "formulas" to the brewing system. Preferably, the said control system will be capable of processing a multitude of user imputed variables to create an executable extraction. Said variables include pressure, flow rate, temperature, overall time, and dispensed volume.

As will be obvious to those skilled in the art, the variables of flow rate, infusion time and dispensed infusion volume are not all independent variables, thus, the control system is preferably capable of affording the user the ability to select the two independent variables desired. For instance, the user may elect to dictate infusion flow rate with respect to infusion time thus making dispensed volume the dependent variable. Alternately, the user may elect to dictate dispensed

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volume with respect to time making flow rate a dependent variable determined by the control system.

Furthermore, the said control system is preferably capable of enabling the user to dynamically (i.e., during the brewing process) modify all the brew variables with respect to the other variables. For instance, the user may decide to dictate the variable of temperature with respect to pressure, time, or volume. Likewise, the pressure may be dictated with respect to time or volume or temperature. However, for the sake of simplicity, it is preferable for all the variables to be dictated with respect to the same parameter of either time or dispensed volume with absolute limits and rates of change governed by the capabilities of the STMS, SFMS, brew chamber, and SPMS. In the event that the feedback mechanisms indicate that the actual infusion deviated from any of the set values of the brew formula, an error message is preferably generated communicating the error to the user whereby the user may modify the brew formula or modify solute and or filter media to enable the brewing system to successfully execute the brew formula.

In the event that a brew formula is generated for a set volume and the user desires to increase the volume of solution brewed while maintaining the effective brew parameters, the control system is preferably capable of taking the original brew formula and modulating the dispensed flow rate in a temporary fashion thus, keeping total time constant, and also recommending an increase in filter media size to ensure the increased infusion volume is of consistent flavor with the original brew formula.

Benefits of the aforementioned system may be derived from inclusion of less than all three solution control systems: SFMS, STMS and SPMS. For instance a beverage brewing system may include a STMS and SFMS or an alternate configuration may include a SFMS and SPMS operably connected to a brewing chamber.

In this embodiment, flow rate of solvent is dictated and modified by the SFMS, temperature of solvent is modulated and controlled by the STMS and the pressure within the brewing chamber is modified by the SPMS. All of the aforementioned brewing variables are able to be independently varied by the user during the infusion. Additionally, due to the complexity of the aforementioned systems, it may be found advantageous to utilize a programmable controller to control and modify the aforementioned brewing variables of said brewing system.

While the disclosed beverage brewing/infusion system mitigates the impact effect variances in solute size and solute compaction have on the infusion flavor, it may be found useful to utilize data recorded by the control system to modify solute parameters such as solute size or solute compaction. The may be accomplished through a solute modification system, which may include a solute grinder and/or compaction tool operably connected with the brewing chamber where the solute is disposed. In one exemplary system, a control system, as described above, is communicatively coupled to a solute modification system, specifically a solute grinder, whereby sensor data from an infusion process may be utilized to modify performance of said grinder to improve the performance of the total system. One such example is utilizing pressure sensor data during an infusion process to modify the performance of a grinder to produce smaller or larger solute in order to ensure a consistent beverage flavor.

For instance, if a beverage is brewed/infused utilizing a formula and the SPMS 140, 240, 340 is unable to produce the pressure profile specified by the formula or SPMS requires excessive or inordinate levels of flow modulation,

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the control system may communicate with a solute grinder causing it to reduce or increase or decrease the size of solute disposed within the brew chamber. As will be obvious, assuming the same level of solute compaction and solute mass, a decrease in average solute particle size will result in higher solute resistance and an increase in average solute particle size will result in decreased resistance enabling lower infusion pressures. Likewise, the system may be configured to utilize control system data to modify solute compaction rather than average solute particle size.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of generating a desired temperature of an infused beverage within a brewing assembly comprising the steps of:

inducing a flow of a first solvent within a first solvent conduit upstream of a brewing chamber in a brewing assembly, the first solvent at a first temperature;

inducing a flow of a second solvent within a second solvent conduit, separate from the first solvent conduit, upstream of the brewing chamber, and thermally modulating the second solvent to a second temperature higher and different than the first temperature;

selectively combining the first and second solvents at a resulting solvent conduit upstream of the brewing chamber to form a resulting solvent at a selectively desired temperature lower than the second temperature; receiving the resulting solvent at the brewing chamber housing a solute at the selectively desired temperature to produce an infused beverage; and

discharging the infused through an outlet on the beverage assembly.

2. The method according to claim 1, further comprising: thermally modulating the first solvent in the first solvent conduit to the first temperature.

3. The method according to claim 2, further comprising: thermally modulating the first solvent in the first solvent conduit with a first thermal modulator and thermally modulating the second solvent in the second solvent conduit with a second thermal modulator.

4. The method according to claim 3, further comprising: inducing the flow of the first solvent within the first solvent conduit with a first pump and inducing the flow of the second solvent within the second solvent conduit with a second pump.

5. The method according to claim 4, further comprising: electronically controlling the first and second pumps with an electronic controller to selectively modulate the flows of the first and second solvents, respectively, to generate a desired flow rate of the resulting solvent.

6. The method according to claim 5, further comprising: electronically controlling the first and second thermal modulators with the electronic controller to selectively modulate the temperatures of the first and second solvents, respectively, to generate the selectively desired temperature.

7. The method according to claim 1, further comprising: electronically controlling at least one pump with an electronic controller to selectively modulate the flows of the first and second solvents, respectively, to generate a desired flow rate of the resulting solvent.

8. The method according to claim 1, further comprising: electronically controlling a thermal modulator with an electronic controller to selectively modulate the temperature of the second solvent to generate the selectively desired temperature.

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9. The method according to claim 8, further comprising:
thermally modulating the first solvent in the first solvent
conduit to the first temperature with a second thermal
modulator; and

electronically controlling a second thermal modulator 5
with the electronic controller to selectively modulate
the temperature of the first solvent to generate the
selectively desired temperature.

10. The method according to claim 9, further comprising:
electronically controlling at least one pump with an 10
electronic controller to selectively modulate the flows
of the first and second solvents, respectively, to gener-
ate a desired flow rate of the resulting solvent.

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