



INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification ⁵ :

A47J 31/40

A1

(11) International Publication Number:

WO 91/07898

(43) International Publication Date:

13 June 1991 (13.06.91)

(21) International Application Number: PCT/EP90/01753

(22) International Filing Date: 17 October 1990 (17.10.90)

(30) Priority data:

22529 A/89

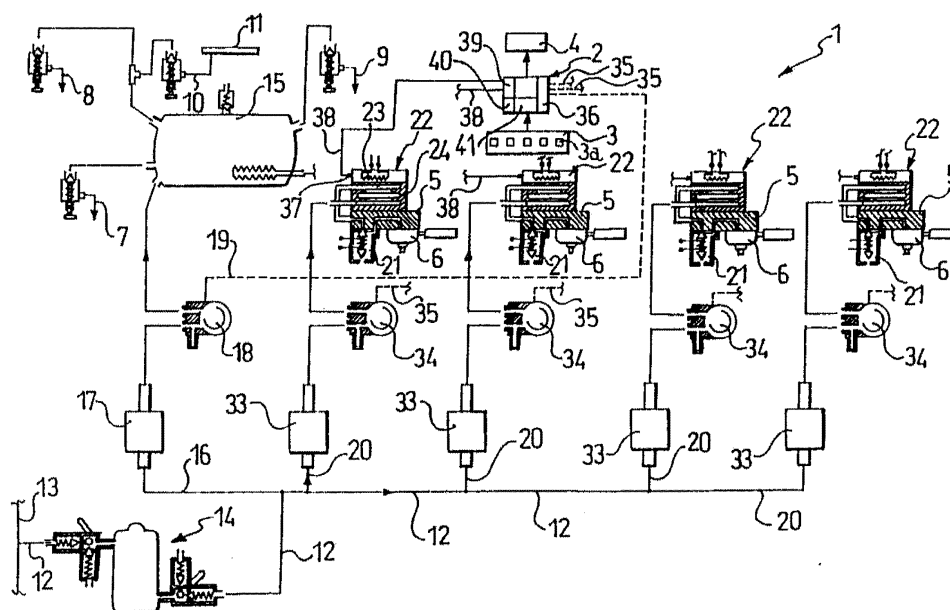
28 November 1989 (28.11.89) IT

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(IT).(81) Designated States: AT (European patent), AU, BE (Euro-
pean patent), CA, CH (European patent), DE (Euro-
pean patent), DK (European patent), ES (European pa-
tent), FR (European patent), GB (European patent), GR
(European patent), IT (European patent), LU (European
patent), NL (European patent), SE (European patent),
US.

Published

With international search report.

(54) Title: A PROFESSIONAL ESPRESSO COFFEE MAKER FOR BAR-ROOM USE



(57) Abstract

A professional espresso coffee maker for bar-room use (1), which is adapted to deliver espresso coffee, cappuccino, and the like, and can provide espresso coffee of superior quality, comprises an electronic control apparatus (2), steam and hot water delivery devices (7, 8, 9, 10), a plurality of dispensing bodies (5) adapted to receive respective percolator holding handles (6), and a water heater (22) associated with each of the dispensing bodies (5) to instantaneously heat the water to be supplied to the percolator holding handle (6).

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A professional espresso coffee maker for bar-room use

DESCRIPTION

This invention relates to a professional "espresso" coffee maker for bar-room use, which is of the type specified in the pre-characterizing part of the main claim.

As is known, coffee makers of this kind are to perform several different functions, they being expected to prepare a variety of drinks such as black coffee, notably espresso coffee, white coffee or "cappuccino", tea, and punch.

The demand for an ability to have such drinks prepared in a proper, satisfactory manner, especially where espresso coffee and cappuccino are involved for which the consumer is unwilling to accept a quality less than irreproachable, has resulted in a highly complicated machine construction, particularly in the respect of water and steam processing.

Unfortunately, this complex construction associates with difficult machine setting, and hence the likelihood that drinks be delivered in actual use which are less than fully satisfactory.

The problem that underlies this invention is to provide a machine which can meet such requirements and at the same time overcome the above-noted deficiencies.

This invention has been developed from the solutive idea of having the water required for espresso coffee making heated instantaneously and individually.

Based on this solutive idea, and to solve the above-noted technical problem, this invention provides a professional espresso coffee maker of the type specified in the characterizing part of the main claim.

Further features and the advantages of a machine according to this invention will be apparent from the following detailed

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description of a preferred embodiment thereof, given by way of non-limitative example with reference to the accompanying drawing figures, where:

Figure 1 shows schematically a professional espresso coffee maker for bar-room use, according to this invention;

Figure 2 is a part-sectional, elevation view of a detail of the coffee maker shown in Figure 1;

Figure 3 is a part-sectional, elevation view of the same detail as shown in Figure 2, but according to a modified embodiment of the invention;

Figure 4 is a top view of the detail shown in Figure 3, in the direction of the arrow IV;

Figure 5 is a sectional view of the detail shown in Figure 3, taken along the line V-V; and

Figure 6 is an enlarged scale, sectional view of a portion of the detail shown in Figure 3.

With reference to the drawing views, generally shown at 1 is a professional espresso coffee maker intended for bar-room use.

The coffee maker 1 includes an electronic control apparatus 2 provided with a keyboard 3 having coffee delivery control keys 3a, and a display 4.

The coffee maker 1 further includes a plurality of dispensing bodies, all identical with one another and collectively designated 5, being each adapted to receive, in a detachable manner, a respective a percolator holding handle 6 for the delivery of single-dose espresso coffee.

The machine 1 also includes steam and hot water delivery devices, among which are a hot water delivery nozzle 7 for

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preparing tea, punch, and the like, two steam delivery nozzles 8 and 9 for preparing cappuccino, and a nozzle 10 for delivering steam to a cup heater device 11.

The machine 1 has a common water feed line, indicated at 12, which can be connected to a water supply 13 and includes a decalcifying device, generally shown at 14, for softening the supply water.

For supplying the nozzles with water and steam according to necessity, an electrically fired boiler 15 is provided which is connected to the line 12, downstream from the decalcifying device 14 through a conduit 16 wherein there are connected a pump 17 and a pulsed meter 18, of a relatively small size, such as a metering turbine, which can issue pulses over a lead 19 in proportional numbers to the amounts of water flowing therethrough.

Each dispensing body 5 is connected to the line 12, downstream from the decalcifying device 14, by a respective conduit 20 and is provided with a cut-off solenoid valve 21 for cutting off the water feed to the percolator holding handle 6.

The machine 1 has, for each dispensing body 5, a heater 22 which is associated with the dispensing body 5 to instantaneously and individually heat the water for the fixed handle 6 independently of the other dispensing bodies.

Preferably, the heater 22 comprises an electric resistor 23 and a coil pipe 24 formed along the conduit 20. The electric resistor 23 and coil pipe 24 are received along respective paths 25 and 26 formed in a solid block 27 made of a good heat conducting material such as aluminum.

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The block 27 is juxtaposed to the dispensing body 5, and located above the latter.

The block 27 is a single casting 50 of aluminum wherein the resistor 23 and coil pipe 24 are embedded.

The single casting 50 has a top face 50a whereat the resistor 23 locates and a bottom face 50b which is juxtaposed to the dispensing body.

The coil pipe 24 has a water inlet 24a which locates next to the bottom face 50b of the single casting and a water outlet 24b which locates next to the top face 50a.

Connected in the conduit 20 upstream of the coil pipe 24 are a pump 33 and a pulse meter 34 which supplies, through a lead 35, pulses in proportional numbers to the amounts of water flowing therethrough.

The electronic apparatus 2 includes a pulse counter unit 36 which is supplied, over the leads 19 and 35, with the pulses from the meters 18 and 24, said unit 36 being operative to compute the total number of the pulses and to warn of a predetermined total number of pulses having been reached which corresponds to the amount of water requiring replacement of the decalcifying device 14.

Associated with each heater 22 in the machine 1 is a temperature sensor 37, for sensing the water temperature and issuing, over a lead 38, a signal proportional to the temperature sensed. The electronic apparatus 2 has a storage and comparator unit 39 which is supplied once for all with predetermined temperature increments and continuously with the temperature sensed to stepwise reduce down to zero the electric power dissipated through the resistor 23 on the sensed temperature

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passing said step values.

The sensor 37 is mounted close to the bottom face 50b juxtaposed to the dispensing body.

The electronic control 2 includes a power processing, logic unit 40 adapted to take account of the electric power being dissipated through the boiler 15 and of the, possibly reduced, power dissipated through the resistors 23, thereby de-activating the boiler 15 on a predetermined total power mark being reached.

Also provided in the electronic control 2 is an AND-type logic unit 41 for activating the resistor 23 of the heater 22 associated with each dispensing body 5 concurrently with the operation of its respective key 3a in the keyboard 3 to dispense a dose of espresso coffee.

Preferably, the activation of the resistor 23 of the heater 22 will occur at a reduced power value selected from said stepwise increments.

A modified embodiment of the block 27 will be next described with reference to Figures 3, 4, 5 and 6, wherein parts performing the same functions or having the same structures are denoted by the same reference numerals.

In this modified embodiment, the block 27 comprises an upper plate 28 having a top face 28a and a bottom face 28b, and a lower plate 29 having a top face 29a juxtaposed to the bottom face 28b and a bottom face 29b whereby the block 27 is juxtaposed to the dispensing body 5.

The path 25 for the resistor 23 comprises a channel 30 formed in the upper plate 28, on the top face 28a of the latter, said channel 30 being adapted to accommodate the resistor . .

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23 in a predetermined force fit relationship to be achieved by assembling under a press, for example.

The path 26 for the coil pipe 24 comprises a channel 31 formed in the lower plate 29, on the top face 29a thereof, adapted to accommodate the coil pipe 24. A projection 32 formed on the upper plate 28 at the bottom face 29b of the same interlocks with the channel 31 to produce, on the plates 28 and 29 being juxtaposed, a predetermined force fit of the coil pipe 24.

In operation, each dispensing body 5 becomes operative individually by activation of the resistor 23, solenoid valve 21, and pump 33. With the resistor 23 activated, the optimum temperature is attained accurately for the water by the stepwise control of the power supply to the resistor 23 as the sensed temperature approached the desired value. On reaching the optimum temperature, the machine is ready to dispense coffee. For this purpose, the key 3a is operated in the keyboard 3, thus activating the solenoid valve 21, and after a predetermined time interval to be adjusted at will, preferably in the 3 to 7 seconds range, and reported on the display 4, the pump 33 is activated. During this time interval, the desired percolation through the coffee cake loaded into the percolator holding handle, i.e. wetting of the coffee cake under a low pressure, takes place. With the pump 33 in operation, hot water will flow under a high pressure through the coffee cake to carry the percolation process to completion and result in espresso coffee being dispensed.

Possible deliveries of water and steam from the nozzles would take place from the boiler 15 independently of the

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espresso coffee being dispensed, without affecting the latter.

A major advantage of the coffee maker of this invention is that it can dispense espresso coffee of superior quality.

A further advantage of the inventive coffee maker is that the quality of the espresso coffee dispensed thereby is kept constant with precision by virtue of the accuracy with which the desired water temperature is attained at all times thanks to the control applied to the power dissipated by the resistor.

Percolation is also carried out in a smooth and constant fashion, as can be ensured by the provision of a pump for each dispensing body.

An additional advantage of the coffee maker according to this invention resides in the simple construction of the heaters, thereby it may be expected that it will operate for a long time without requiring costly servicing.

Also improved is ease of operation, on account of the time when the decalcifying device should be replaced being indicated, by simple and inexpensive means, after a predetermined total amount of water has been used up. It should be noted that this total amount of water is measured in the conduits, and therefore in a direct and accurate manner.

This coffee maker has also proved advantageous from the standpoint of energy consumption, both on account of the highly effective heat transfer from the resistor to the coil pipe in each heater and of the relatively low value of the maximum installed power, as made possible by the power processing logic unit.

Yet another advantage resides in that the dispensing body

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is under a condition of thermal stability because of the block being juxtaposed to the dispensing body at its bottom face where the coil pipe with the water inlet is located. The resistor, being located remotely therefrom, is kept well away from the dispensing body.

By virtue of that, on operating the keyboard, the resistor is activated at the same time, the sensor response time is suppressed, and the overall espresso coffee delivery time is advantageously shortened. The activation of the resistor by controlled power affords, moreover, gradual and accurate attainment of the desired temperature.

Understandably, the coffee maker described in the foregoing may be altered and modified in several ways by a skilled person in the art to meet specific and contingent requirements, without departing from the scope of this invention as set forth in the appended claims.

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CLAIMS

1. A professional espresso coffee maker for bar-room use (1), adapted for preparation of espresso coffee, cappuccino, and the like, comprising a plurality of dispensing bodies (5) adapted to receive respective percolator holding handles (6), steam and hot water delivery devices (7,8,9,10), and an electronic control apparatus (2), characterized in that it comprises a water heater (22) associated with each of the dispensing bodies (5) to instantaneously heat the water to be supplied to the percolator holding handle (6).

2. A coffee maker (1) according to Claim 1, characterized in that said water heater (22) comprises an electric resistor (23) and a coil pipe (24) formed along a conduit (20) connecting the dispensing body (5) to a common water supply line (12).

3. A coffee maker (1) according to Claim 1, characterized in that said water heater (22) comprises a solid block (27) of a good heat conductive material and a path (25) formed in said block (27) to accommodate the resistor (23) and a path (26) formed in said block (27) to accommodate the coil pipe (24).

4. A coffee maker (1) according to Claim 3, characterized in that the block (27) is juxtaposed to the dispensing body (5) at a location overlying the latter.

5. A coffee maker (1) according to Claim 4, characterized in that said solid block (27) is a single casting (50) of aluminum or the like material, wherein the resistor (23) and coil pipe (24) are embedded, the single casting (50) being juxtaposed to the dispensing body (5) at its bottom face (50b).

6. A coffee maker (1) according to Claim 5, characterized in that the coil pipe (24) has a water inlet (24a) located

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next to the bottom face (50b) of the single casting (50) and a water outlet (24b) located next to the top face (50a) of the single casting (50).

7. A coffee maker (1) according to Claim 6, characterized in that the electric resistor (23) is located next to the top face (50a) of the single casting (50).

8. A coffee maker (1) according to Claim 4, characterized in that said solid block (27) comprises an upper plate (28) and a lower plate (29), juxtaposed to each other, and in that the path (25) for the resistor (23) comprises a channel (30) provided on the top face (28a) of the upper plate (28), and the path (26) for the coil pipe (24) comprises a channel (31) provided on the top face (29a) of the lower plate (29), the lower plate (29) being juxtaposed to the dispensing body (5) at its bottom face (29b).

9. A coffee maker (1) according to Claim 8, characterized in that the upper plate (28) comprises a projection (32) formed on the bottom face (28b) in interlocked engagement with the channel (31) formed on the top surface (29a) of the lower plate (29).

10. A coffee maker (1) according to Claim 9, characterized in that the resistor (23) and coil pipe (24) are a predetermined force fit in their respective channels (30,31).

11. A coffee maker (1) according to Claim 1, characterized in that it comprises a supply boiler (15) for the steam and hot water delivery devices (7,8,9,10) connected, by a conduit (16), to the common water supply line (12).

12. A coffee maker (1) according to Claim 11, characterized in that it comprises a pump (17) connected in the boiler conduit

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(16) and a pump (33) connected in each of the dispensing body (5) conduits (20).

13. A coffee maker (1) according to Claim 11, characterized in that it comprises, connected in the boiler conduit (16) and the dispensing body (5) conduits (20), respective meters (18,34) operative to issue pulses in proportional numbers to the amount of water flowing therethrough, and a pulse counter unit (36) incorporated to said electronic apparatus (2) to which said pulses are supplied and being operative to compute the total number of the pulses and to indicate that a predetermined number of the pulses corresponding to the amount of water has been reached which makes replacement of a decalcifying device necessary.

14. A coffee maker (1) according to Claims 5 and 8, characterized in that it comprises a temperature sensor (37) associated with each of the heaters (22) to sense the water temperature, a storage and comparator unit (39) incorporated to said electronic apparatus (2) and supplied once for all with stepwise temperature values, to thereby reduce stepwise down to zero the electric power being supplied to the resistor (23) on the temperature sensed passing said stepwise values.

15. A coffee maker (1) according to Claim 14, characterized in that the sensor (37) is mounted to the block (27) close to the bottom face (29b) juxtaposed to the dispensing body (5).

16. A coffee maker (1) according to Claim 11, characterized in that the boiler (15) is an electrically fired boiler, and that the electronic control apparatus (2) includes a power processing logic unit (40) adapted to take account of the electric power being dissipated through the boiler (15) and of the possibly reduced stepwise power being dissipated through the

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resistors (23), to thereby de-activate the boiler (15) on a predetermined overall safe level being exceeded.

17. A coffee maker (1) according to Claim 14, characterized in that the electronic control apparatus (2) incorporates an AND-type logic unit (41) for activating the resistor (23) of the heater (22) associated with each of the dispensing bodies (5) concurrently with operation of a keyboard (3) to deliver a dose of espresso coffee.

18. A coffee maker (1) according to Claim 17, characterized in that the activation of the heater (22) resistor (23) occurs at a reduced power value selected from said stepwise values.

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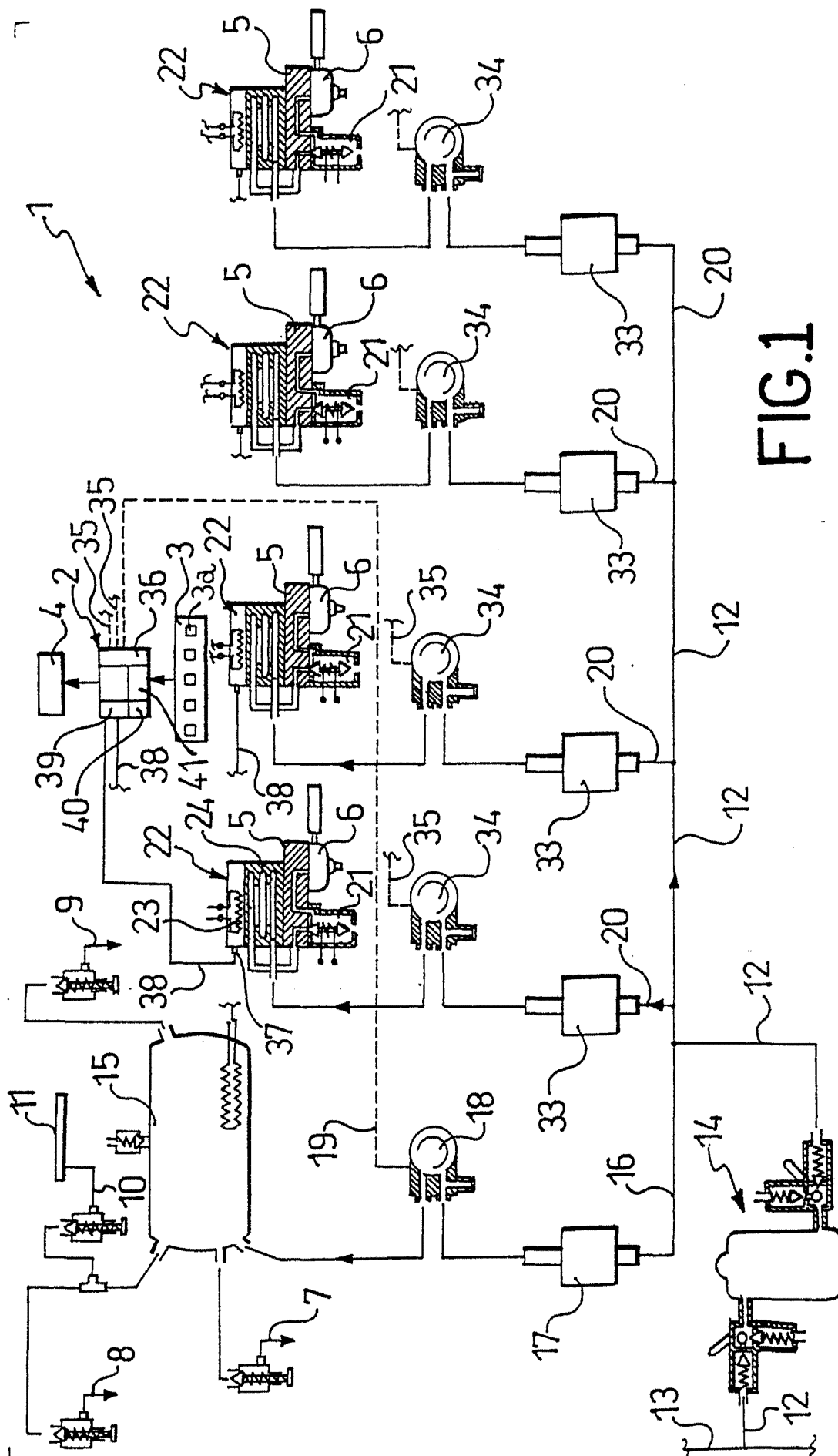


FIG.1

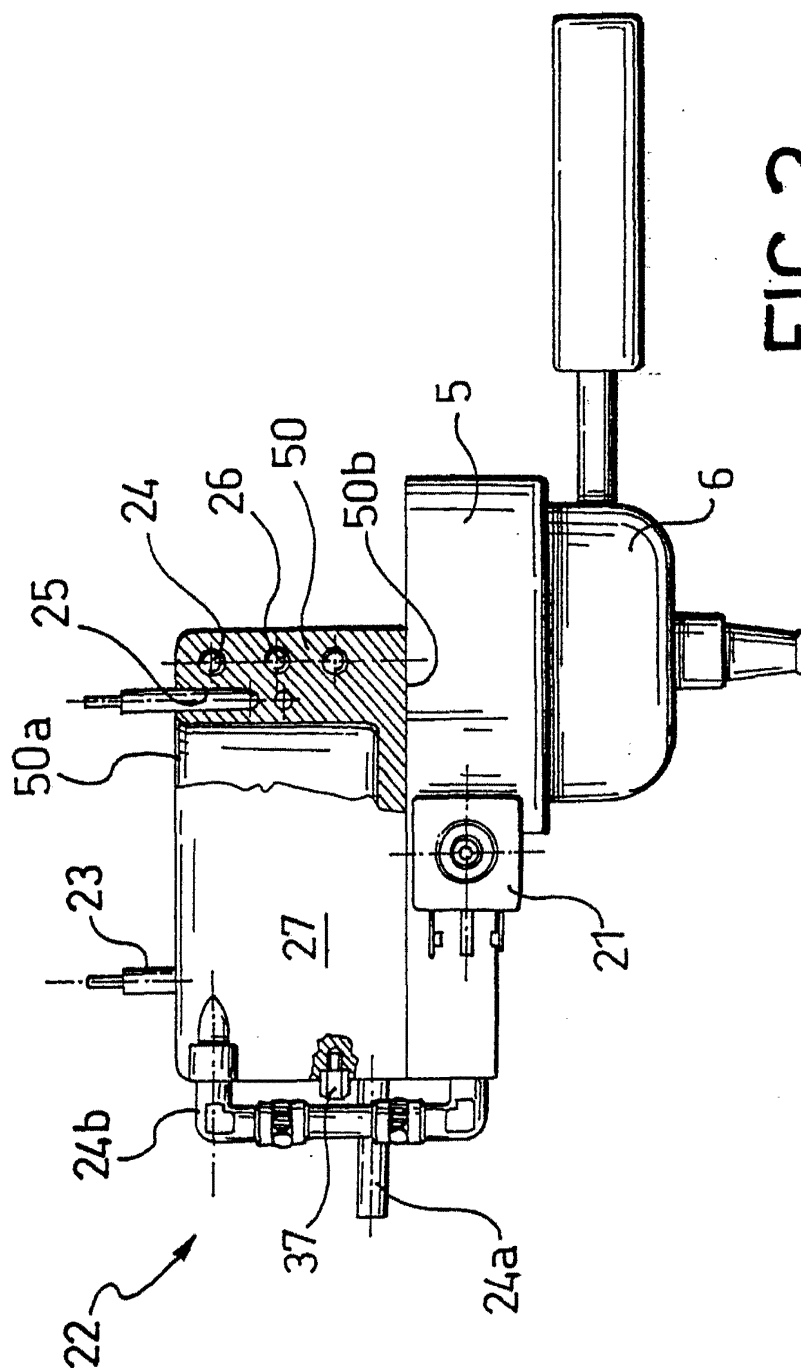
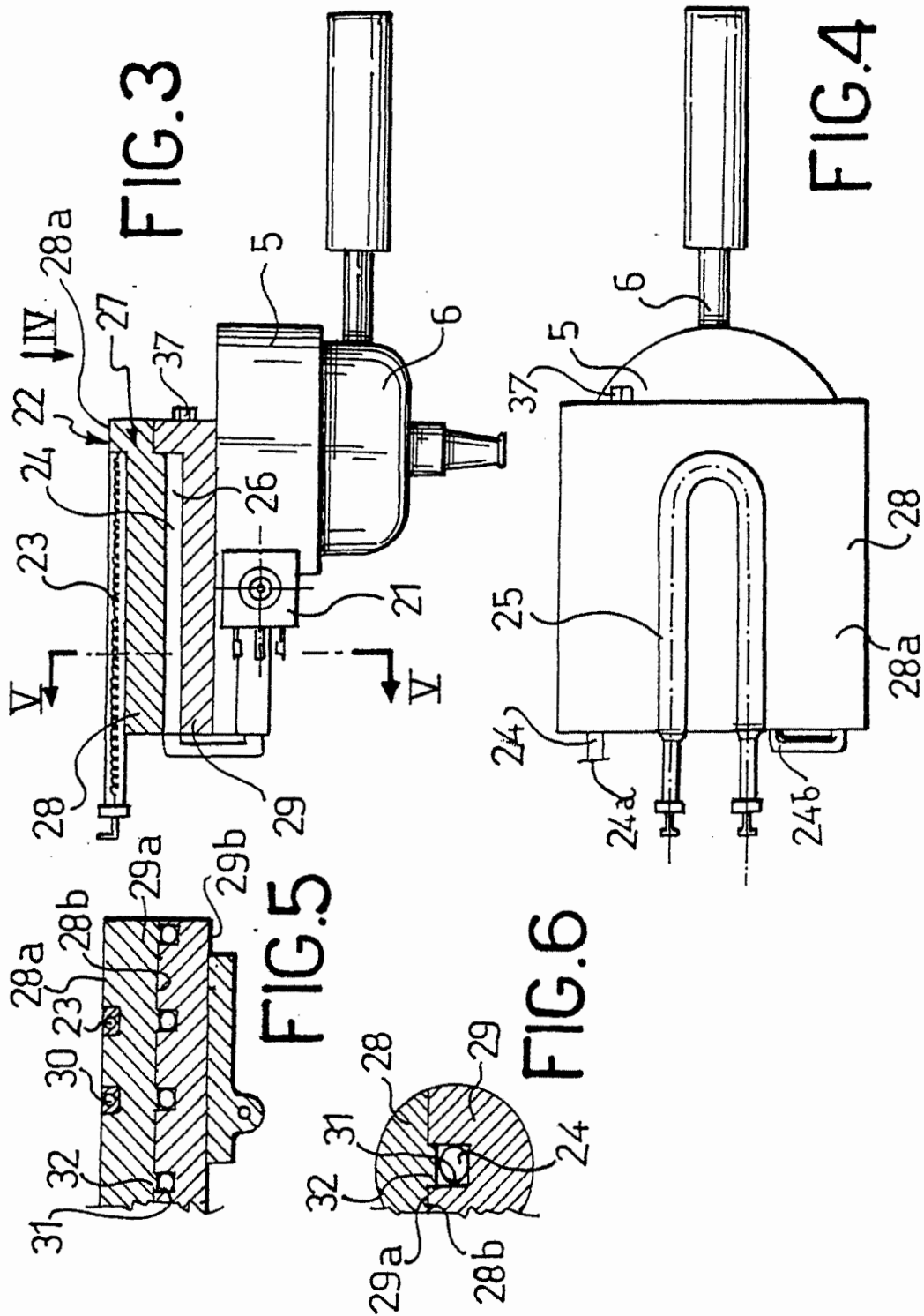


FIG. 2



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No PCT/EP 90/01753

I. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER (if several classification symbols apply, indicate all) ⁶ According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both National Classification and IPC IPC5: A 47 J 31/40											
II. FIELDS SEARCHED Minimum Documentation Searched⁷ <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="width: 25%; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Classification System</th> <th style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Classification Symbols</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="height: 40px; vertical-align: bottom; border-right: 1px solid black;">IPC5</td> <td>A 47 J</td> </tr> </table> Documentation Searched other than Minimum Documentation to the Extent that such Documents are Included in Fields Searched⁸			Classification System	Classification Symbols	IPC5	A 47 J					
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IPC5	A 47 J										
III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT⁹ <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 10%; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Category *</th> <th style="border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Citation of Document,¹¹ with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages¹²</th> <th style="width: 10%; border-bottom: 1px solid black;">Relevant to Claim No.¹³</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: top;">A</td> <td>DE, A, 1916774 (UNIVERSAL OIL PRODUCTS COMPANY) 30 October 1969, see the whole document --</td> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: top;">1-18</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: top;">A</td> <td>US, A, 3149556 (J.S. MARTIN) 22 September 1964, see the whole document -- -----</td> <td style="text-align: center; vertical-align: top;">1-18</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Category *	Citation of Document, ¹¹ with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages ¹²	Relevant to Claim No. ¹³	A	DE, A, 1916774 (UNIVERSAL OIL PRODUCTS COMPANY) 30 October 1969, see the whole document --	1-18	A	US, A, 3149556 (J.S. MARTIN) 22 September 1964, see the whole document -- -----	1-18
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IV. CERTIFICATION <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border-bottom: 1px solid black; vertical-align: top;"> Date of the Actual Completion of the International Search 20th December 1990 </td> <td style="width: 50%; border-bottom: 1px solid black; vertical-align: top;"> Date of Mailing of this International Search Report 21 JAN 1991 </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; vertical-align: top;"> International Searching Authority EUROPEAN PATENT OFFICE </td> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; vertical-align: top;"> Signature of Authorized Officer Mme N. KUIPER </td> </tr> </table>			Date of the Actual Completion of the International Search 20th December 1990	Date of Mailing of this International Search Report 21 JAN 1991	International Searching Authority EUROPEAN PATENT OFFICE	Signature of Authorized Officer Mme N. KUIPER					
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**ANNEX TO THE INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT
ON INTERNATIONAL PATENT APPLICATION NO. PCT/EP 90/01753**

SA 40809

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The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on 28/11/90
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Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
DE-A- 1916774	30/10/69	BE-A- 730747	01/09/69
		CH-A- 501551	15/01/71
		FR-A- 2005312	12/12/69
		GB-A- 1252988	10/11/71
		US-A- 3485162	23/12/69
US-A- 3149556	22/09/64	NONE	

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