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Bruce E. Tricinella's Combo Pop-Top: Yet Another Too New To Be Cool? By Don Thornton

If you have small fingers, long fingernails or diseased or weak hands, Bruce Evans Tricinella's "combination pop-top and bottle opener" is for you. Tricinella, a lifelong resident of Huntington Beach, California, was granted Patent No. 4,864,898 on September 12, 1989 for his combo opener "capable of opening either capped bottles or pop-top cans of the type having a lift tab."

While "pop-top cans are very convenient, certain individuals have difficulty in opening them," Tricinella said in his patent application. "This includes children and other individuals having small digits on their hands or weak hands, persons with diseased or injured hands and persons having long fingernails which they desire to remain intact."

His opener, Tricinella said, solved these problems with its "lever body having a lifting means for fitting underneath a pop-top can lift tab" and "assisting in lifting and rotating the lift tab." He also touted the tool's bottle cap opening ability, saying it had a metal "edge gripper plate" that fit under the bottle cap and was "essentially impervious to deformation."

The palm-size, 2½-inch plastic opener (with metal gripper) was made for branding and is marked in tiny type on its sides: **EVANS MFG SA CA 92704 PAT. 4,864,898** and **BEVERAGE WRENCH PAT. PEND.** One example is branded: **FRANKLIN UNITED METHODIST HOME.** (See footnote below.)



It is interesting to note Tricinella was granted Patent No. 4,949,600 on August 21, 1990 for an opener that was an improvement on his 1989 one. It was basically the same as the original but its official patent description was "combination pop-top can and bottle opener having engaging lip." The lip was an improved "gripper plate."

United States Patent [19] [11] Patent Number: **4,864,898**
Tricinella [45] Date of Patent: **Sep. 12, 1989**

[54] **COMBINATION POP-TOP CAN AND BOTTLE OPENER** *Primary Examiner—Debra Meislin*
[76] Inventor: Bruce E. Tricinella, 6342 Warner Ave., #22 G, Huntington Beach, Calif. 92647 *Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Herb Boswell*

[21] Appl. No.: 199,311 [57] **ABSTRACT**
[22] Filed: May 26, 1988 An opener for both pop-top cans and bottles is formed to include an elongated lever body. A lifting element is positioned on the lever body and is sized and shaped to fit underneath the lift tab on a pop-top can. A fulcrum element is further formed on the lever body in physical association with the lift element but spaced away from the lift element so as to form a channel between the lift element and the fulcrum element. The channel is sized and shaped such that the lift tab of the pop-top can can be sheaved in the channel between the lift element and the fulcrum element for manipulation of the lift tab to open the pop-top can. The opener further includes a bottle cap edge gripper located on the lever body in physical association with the fulcrum element. For removing bottle caps from capped bottles, the bottle cap edge gripper is independently formed and then positioned on the opener such that it engages the edge of the bottle cap when the fulcrum element is positioned in the center of the bottle cap.

[51] Int. Cl.³ B67B 7/44
[52] U.S. Cl. 81/3.09; 3.27, 3.4
[58] Field of Search 81/3.55, 3.57; 7/151; 30/450

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4,524,646 6/1985 Kimberlin, Jr. 81/3.55
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Marks' Standard Handbook for Mechanical Engineers, Eighth Edition, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1978, pp. 6-36 to 6-38.

7 Claims, 1 Drawing Sheet

United States Patent [19] [11] Patent Number: **4,949,600**
Tricinella [45] Date of Patent: **Aug. 21, 1990**

[54] **COMBINATION POP-TOP CAN AND BOTTLE OPENER HAVING ENGAGING LIP** *Primary Examiner—D. S. Meislin*
[76] Inventor: Bruce E. Tricinella, 17629 San Cristobal, Fountain Valley, Calif. 92708 *Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Herb Boswell*

[21] Appl. No.: 393,566 [57] **ABSTRACT**
[22] Filed: Aug. 11, 1989 A combination pop-top can and bottle opener having an elongated lever body, a lifting element positioned on the lever body and sized and shaped to fit underneath a lift tab on a pop-top can, a fulcrum element formed on the lever body in physical association with the lift element but spaced away from the lift element to form a pop-top tab sheaving channel between the lift element and the fulcrum element, is improved by including an improved bottle cap edge gripper on the lever body. The edge gripper is formed to include one or both of a concave edge or a tongue. The tongue is tilted out of the plane of the remainder of the edge gripper. Further, opposing detents are formed on the gripper member to facilitate attachment of the gripper member to the lever body.

[63] Continuation-in-part of Ser. No. 199,311, May 26, 1988, Pat. No. 4,864,898.

[51] Int. Cl.³ B67B 7/44
[52] U.S. Cl. 81/3.09; 81/3.55
[58] Field of Search 81/3.09, 3.27, 3.4, 81/3.55, 3.57; 7/151; 30/450

[56] **References Cited**
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4,583,429 4/1986 Kroeger 81/3.55

17 Claims, 2 Drawing Sheets

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The opener was produced by Evan's Manufacturing, Garden Grove, California, founded by Tricinella in 1983 as an injection molding company. Evan's was acquired by HPG Brands, Braintree, Massachusetts, in 2023. Tricinella died in 2010 at the age of 55.

Tricinella's opener, like those of James Douglas Welch of Getagadget of Austin, Texas, and Brian James Kelleghan of Bison Designs of Longmont, Colorado, is probably too contemporary to draw the attention of today's JFO world, but it may garner the attention of future JFOers if crown caps are still around.

FOOTNOTE: The markings on the opener include **SA CA 92704**, which cannot be explained. The SA and zip code are for Santa Ana, which is eight miles from Garden Grove. The branding, **FRANKLIN UNITED METHODIST HOME**, is unusual for an opener which usually attracts beer and other beverage concerns, not an assisted living facility in Franklin, Indiana.



Various Different Opener Styles for Tricinella's Patent, Mostly Beer Advertising.

