

Chapter 3 Milk Bottle Descriptions and Photographs

© Bill Lockhart 2001

Descriptions

Descriptions of bottles generally require some explanations. As with all specialties, the study of bottles has its own set of nomenclature.

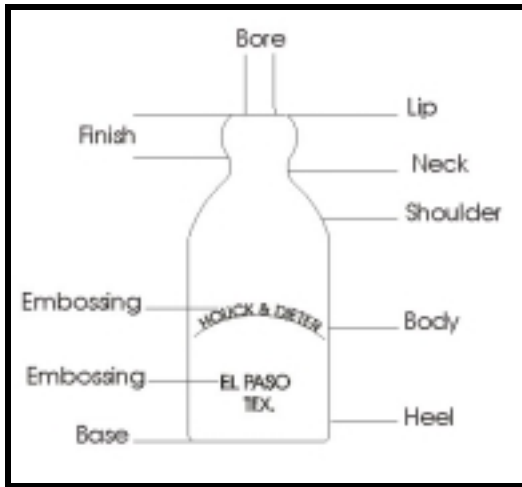


Figure 4-1 - Bottle Nomenclature

Bore - the inside diameter, also known as the throat.
Lip - the extreme upper surface
Neck - the usually narrow area between the shoulder and the finish
Shoulder - the change in slope where the body begins to narrow to form the neck
Body - the central section of the bottle, usually containing advertisements and messages
Heel - the lower section of the body, just above the base
Base - the part of the bottle that actually contacts a surface, also known as the resting point
Embossing - raised glass lettering (or pictures) that are an integral part of the molding process
Finish - the final, upper section of the bottle,

sometimes including part or all of the neck

The finish received its name because it was the last part of the bottle to be finished in hand-blown manufacturing process. In milk bottles, the most common finish (and the only one known in Alamogordo milk bottles) is the cap-seat finish (see Chapter 2 for description).

Wherever possible, I have used descriptive terms found in Jones and Sullivan (1989), such as ribs to describe embossed, rounded ridges, although I have continued to use spelling common to the United States (e.g. mold rather than mould).

Although I have attempted to be as comprehensive as possible, it is important to note that the list of bottles in this volume is incomplete. I know of at least two embossed milk bottles from Alamogordo that do not appear here because I have not yet seen or photographed them. One is from Bass dairy; the other is, according to the collector who owns it “not from there [Bass Dairy].” It is very likely that other local dairies bought embossed bottles at least once, and examples of these may still exist. In addition, some dairies etched their names on bottles. Some of these are probably still in existence as well.

Descriptions Within the Text

Each bottle listed in the text is described using the same format. At the top of each bottle description is an identification number (e.g. CD 01 for City Dairy) preceded by a brief description that highlights the container’s differences from preceding and/or following bottles. If

certain sections (e.g. neck or heel) are excluded in a given description, it is because they contain no labeling or descriptive design. If more than one size bottle is described or if the bottle type contains minor variations, the second (or third) size or variation is described in brackets []. Bracketed description only occurs in sections where change is apparent. If, for example, a body logo is the same on both pint and quart sizes but the neck embossing is different, a bracketed description will appear in the neck section but not in the body section. Embossing, etching, or ACL labeling is presented in either capitals or mixed letters as it appears on the bottle or printed label. Details (such as italics, arches, upwarly slanted labels, etc.) follow the lettering in parentheses (). A line change is indicated by a slash (/) between words (e.g. THIS BOTTLE/TO BE RETURNED means the second set of words appear below the first set of words).

Method of Manufacture: Thus far, only bottles made by machine have been identified as being used in Otero County. I will be surprised to find any other marked manufacturing styles here.

Color: This refers only to the color of the glass (e.g. green, colorless, or amethyst), not to labeling colors. Glass that contains no apparent pigmentation is referred to as colorless, not clear. The word, clear, is a very ambiguous term. The word, colorless, is much more (pardon the expression) clear. Early accounts refer to the color caused by iron impurities as common green, rather than aqua or aquamarine. I like the descriptiveness of the term and use it. Manganese-bearing glass is variously described as purple, solarized amethyst, or SCA (sun-colored amethyst). I chose to use the word, amethyst to cover all minor variations.

Size (in cm.): Size is given in centimeter and always includes height (h) and diameter (d) at center body. In most cases, body diameter is the mean diameter of a bottle. Although milk bottles appear to be circular in cross-section, they are usually slightly oval. Even relatively new bottles can vary in diametric measurement by as much as 0.1 cm., and older containers sometimes vary by more then 0.2 cm. If other diametric measurements are important, they are also listed. Bore diameter and diameter at cap seat are both important in milk bottles as there are several standardized sizes of ligneous disks (and therefore, bottles to accommodate them). Prior to standardization, there was even greater variation. Both height and diameter tend to vary among individual containers that were blown into a two-piece mold. Measurements were maintained at a closer tolerance with the advent of machine-made containers.

Primary Labeling Style: Labeling falls into three categories: embossed, etched, or pyroglazed. Embossing is raised lettering created during the molding process. Etching was usually accomplished by employees of the individual dairy with a hand tool and is generally quite crude. Pyroglazing, also known as Applied Color Labeling (ACL), is the application of heated enamel to the glass surface. Both embossed and pyroglazed labels appear on the few Alamogordo bottles of which I am aware, although etched bottles probably existed.

Finish: All known Alamogordo milk bottles were manufactured with cap seat finishes.

Capacity: Capacity is measured in generally accepted units (i.e. pints, quarts, etc.) or fluid ounces. Where such information was included as a part of the bottle labeling, it is reported as *x* pint/quart (e.g. ½ pint) or *x* oz. (e.g. 10 oz.). Except where sizes were obvious (e.g. quarts or

pints), when circumstances allowed, bottles with no content information on the label were filled with water to approximately 1.5 inches below the lip and then poured into a measuring cup. These were reported as ca. x oz. (e.g. ca. 10 oz.). Bottles I was unable to measure and which contained no content information were reported as ca. x oz. (est.) [e.g. ca. 10 oz. (est)].

Overall Bottle Design: This section describes the overall shape of the bottle (usually cylindrical) along with general embossed designs, such as swirls, vertical ropes, ribs, constricted waists, etc.

Front Description The sections below refer to the obverse or front side of the bottle. This generally contains the main labeling area.

Neck: Neck area labels or designs are described here.

Neck/Shoulder: Sometimes, because of the shape of the shoulder, location of the label, or label size, it is unclear whether a label is actually on the shoulder or the neck. In these cases, the designation, neck/shoulder, is appropriate.

Shoulder: Shoulder area labels or designs are described here.

Body: Labels or designs located on the body (usually the primary labeling area) are described here.

Heel: The heel was often a favorite area for content information, although occasional other data such as manufacturer's marks or mold numbers appear here.

Back Description The sections below refer to the reverse of back side of the bottle.

Neck: Same as front description.

Neck/Shoulder: Same as front description.

Shoulder: Same as front description.

Body: Same as front description.

Heel: Same as front description.

Base: Important dating information such as manufacturer's marks, patent dates, year of manufacture, or even initials of the company or company owner were frequently embossed on the base.

Manufacturer: Where known, the manufacturer is listed, along with the dates (in parentheses) during which the mark appearing on the bottle was used. Unless unavailable, dating of manufacturer's marks follows Giarde (1980).

Dating: The approximate dating period for the bottle appears in brackets (e.g. [1921-1933]). Wherever pertinent, an explanation of how the dating was derived follows.

Collection(s): This section contains names of collectors and/or collections where samples were obtained.

Bottle descriptions follow the histories of the companies that filled them. For help in cross-referencing, a list of dairies, owners/managers, and known dates of operation is provided in Appendix A.

Photographs

These photographs come from a variety of sources, mostly from my own collection. Because of lighting, age, and other considerations, these photos are of varying quality. Color is very true in some cases and somewhat distorted in others. Photos were selected because of the quality of each bottle's details or historical veracity, rather than for overall photo quality. Photos of my collection, taken by us, will not carry citations. If a photo came from another collection, it is labeled just below the picture with the collector's name or name of the specific collection (for archaeological collections or museums). Photographers' names (other than ours) will follow the collection name in brackets.