Piazzoli Designs from Capstan Glass

By Barry L. Bernas

The Capstan Glass Company was chartered as a corporation on April 12th, 1918. Throughout its existence, the home office and factory were located in South Connellsville, Pennsylvania.

After extensive refurbishment to the former Ripley Glass plant, operations in the Capstan works began on April 17th, 1919. The first shipment of mostly tumblers was sent off on June 9th, 1919.

From its opening until September 1928, this Corporation functioned as a subsidiary of the Anchor Cap & Closure Corporation of Long Island City, New York. After this date, Capstan became a part of the Anchor Cap Corporation and remained such until December 31st, 1937.

There was a unique element to the history of this company. It occurred in July 1934, when another glass producer joined the Anchor Cap team - the Salem Glass Works of Salem, New Jersey. From this point until January 1938, operations there were commingled with Capstan’s under the singular leadership of South Connellsville officers.

New Year’s Day 1938 saw the merger become effective between the Anchor Cap Corporation of Long Island City, New York and the Hocking Glass Company of Lancaster, Ohio. The consolidated organization was known as the Anchor Hocking Glass Corporation. As a result, the combined Capstan and Salem glass factories became two separate units within the nascent Anchor Hocking concern.

On February 18th, 1938, the name – Capstan Glass Company – was officially changed in the Company’s original charter to the Anchor Hocking Glass Corporation of Pa. Glass production continued on a reduced basis in Anchor Hocking’s South Connellsville factory until September 1938. It was in this month that officials in Lancaster, Ohio decided to close the former Capstan site.1

Throughout its lifetime, the Capstan Glass trademark (capstan) was affixed to the base of each piece manufactured in the Company’s factory. A picture of this logo can be seen in Figure 1.2

A Capstan Success Trait

One stellar thread that ran throughout Capstan Glass was the use of employee ideas for the overall betterment of the Corporation. Management started this program early in the firm’s existence and continued it right through until the merger. In my opinion, this policy was just one of many others within this glass container maker that underpinned its success for almost two decades.

Theodore J. Piazzoli stands out as just one shining example of this theme. Between April 30th, 1931, when his first request for a design patent was filed, and December 1st, 1936, the date he was issued his final one, the United States Patent Office granted protection to no less than seventeen of his ideas. Of this total, eleven were for outer patterns to jars, three for tumbler designs, and three for bottle motifs. Pursuant to the aforementioned success trait, he signed over the rights for all but one to his employer – Capstan Glass.3

In this article, I want to introduce you to the seventeen designs Mr. Piazzoli conceived. In doing so, a sketch of each specimen will be shown along side a picture of a production model, if one has been identified. Accompanying the pertinent data about the design patent will be information about when this example was marketed by the Capstan Glass Company. This assembly will provide more facts to those interested in the so-called “art deco” era for glass containers.

Design Patent – 84,593

On April 30th, 1931, the United States Patent Office started to process a request from Mr. Piazzoli for a design patent on the left-hand sketch in Figure 2. Less than three months later, his submission was approved on July 7th, 1931.4

The example on the right in Figure 2 was promoted in four sizes, ranging in capacities from ten to forty-five ounces. Oddly, jars in this motif have been verified with mold numbers 5710, 5712, 5734, 5746 and 5791 on the base. This fact may mean more jars with different capacities were added to the 57XX line due to demand.

As near as I can determine, this Piazzoli concept was initially advertised in June 1932 by Capstan’s sales personnel. The last marketing pitch for it I ran across was in the March 1934 issue of The Glass Packer.5

Design Patent 85,712

Less than three months after his initial application was approved, Theodore J. Piazzoli requested issuance of a second design patent for the outer motif on a jar. The Patent Office started the paperwork trail for it on October 14th, 1931. On the left side in Figure 3 is an extract of this innovation. December 8th of the same year brought Federal registration of his idea.

I believe that I’ve identified an example of this vessel. It is shown on the right in Figure 3. This specimen carries the number-letter combination of 8M on its base. Also, it has a paper label on the front for the Ann Page brand of prepared mustard packaged for the distributor - The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company of New York City.

This 9-ounce container is the only size I’ve run across so far. Equally regrettable is the fact that after a review of all of the Capstan Glass marketing endorsements I have I’ve failed to turn-up a picture of this container. It appears it was
never advertised for general sale.

**Design Patent – 86,408**

Shortly before Christmas in 1931, Mr. Piazzoli sent off a third application to the United States Patent Office. Personnel there started to process this submission on December 26th. Processors concluded their work when they granted Theodore J. Piazzoli a design patent for it on March 1st, 1932.

The profile of the eight-sided jar on the left in **Figure 4** encapsulated his new idea. A picture of an actual production model can be seen beside on the right. Two specimens of this packers’ container have been reported. The taller and larger capacity version came with the number 5972 on its base. Its smaller mate had only the script letters \textit{ASCO}. This abbreviation stood for the American Stores Company of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

As was the case with Design Patent 85,712, there are no sales promotions available for this Piazzoli jar.

**Design Patent – 86,470**

The next jar pattern from Theodore J. Piazzoli was granted a design patent on March 8th, 1932. Seen on the left in **Figure 5**, the application to register this outer pattern commenced its journey through the United States Patent Office on the same day as the request for Design Patent 86,408. Even though this submission was initially processed ahead of its companion, it took another week for this motif to be approved.

The picture on the right side in Figure 5 depicts an actual example of this container. It carries a paper label for the \textit{Lady Betty} brand of relish spread from the Wheatley Mayonnaise Company, Incorporated of Louisville, Kentucky and Jacksonville, Florida. On the underneath of it are four digits – 4406 - identifying the mold. To date, only two other two sizes have been found. The numerical identifiers for these are 4412 and 4416. The latter example I have also carries a paper label. It shows the distributor to be Sprague, Warner & Company of Chicago, Illinois. The former content of this jar was pickled boneless pigs feet cutlets packed under the \textit{Richelieu} brand name. There is the possibility that other larger capacity jars in this series were made. However, if they were, none have surfaced as of yet.

First offered for sale in June 1932, this attractive Piazzoli design last appeared in a Capstan ad in June 1935.

**Design Patent – 86,540**

Six weeks after personnel from the Patent Office started to process Theodore J. Piazzoli’s fifth application for a design patent on a jar, the process was completed on March 15th, 1932. The final step issued to him Design Patent 86,540.

An extract of this design can be seen in **Figure 6**. It stands alone because I haven’t been able to locate an example nor has one been reported to me.

The only Capstan Glass advertisement for this container that I could find appeared in the February 1938 edition of \textit{The Glass Packer}. The single promotion of this item certainly creates the impression that the outer motif wasn’t popular with either packers or consumers. Also, since this advertisement appeared a mere month after Capstan Glass was absorbed into the Anchor Hocking Glass Corporation and just before the Company’s name was changed, this model may not have been manufactured with a capstan logo for a long period, if at all.

**Design Patent – 88,106**

This entry is the first of three tumblers with a distinctive outer or inner pattern by Mr. Piazzoli. Also, it was his sixth request for
a design patent.

The application to patent the container profiled in Figure 7 was forwarded to the Patent Office on March 7th, 1932. Eleven days later, government personnel started to process the submission. Over six and one-half months later, registration for this Piazzoli motif was issued to him on October 25th.11

No model has yet been founded. This fact may suggest Design Patent 88,106 was never manufactured.

**Design Patent – 90,082**

Theodore J. Piazzoli forwarded another idea for an outer design on a tumbler. Filed with the United States Patent Office on April 14th, 1933, this concept earned a design patent on June 6th, 1933 under the identifier.12 A sketch of this vessel can be seen in Figure 8.

I’ve been unable to locate an advertisement or sample of this container.

**Design Patent – 91,083**

The third and last tumbler motif was in the shape of a mug. An outline of it can be seen in on the left in Figure 9.

On May 3rd, 1933 or about six months after a picture of the item initially appeared in a Capstan Glass ad, Theodore J. Piazzoli forwarded a request to the United States Patent Office to patent its outer saw-tooth pattern. Officials there approved his concept on November 21st, 1933.13

Unfortunately, I haven’t found a specimen of this container with a capstan trademark or mold number 555 on its base. Nevertheless, I do possess one without a logo and the three digits. Since a picture of this vessel appeared in both Capstan and Anchor Hocking ads without a trademark or mold identifier, I’m assuming that my version parallels the one with the Capstan Glass nautical symbol on it.14 A photograph of it can be seen on the right in Figure 9.

The November 1932 edition of The Glass Packer carried the first marketing pitch for this container. This announcement and others about it stated the handled vessel had a capacity of 11 3/4-th ounces. This made it suitable for jellies, preserves, mustard, nut meats, peanut butter and chocolate syrup among other foods. After the Volstead Act was modified, this example was also touted as an ideal 3.2 beer mug in Company ads. By September 1933, Capstan officials were promoting this design patented model in both clear and amber glass. Sales personnel from this South Connellsville firm illustrated this item for the final time in December 1935. The last advertisement I encountered for Design Patent 91,083 was in April 1938. It was sponsored by the Anchor Hocking Glass Corporation. Based on this informational lineage, this style of Piazzoli mug was probably manufactured for at least five years and perhaps longer.15

**Design Patent – 91,366**

Theodore J. Piazzoli’s ninth ornamental design appeared on a jar. The application for it was submitted in the midst of the Great Depression on November 16th, 1933. Two months to the day later, the United States Patent Office approved his request.16

The outer motif on this distinctive packers’ vessel can be seen on the left in Figure 10. To its right is a specimen of the manufactured vessel. To date, I’ve only encountered one size of container in this style. This example carries the number 5913 below the Capstan trademark on its base. Above the Company’s nautical insignia is the embossed phrase - PAT. APPLIED FOR - in a curved alignment.

To the best of my knowledge, this model was advertised only twice by Capstan Glass. Its first appearance was in December 1933 or six weeks before the design patent was issued. The other showed up in the August 1935 issue of The Glass Packer.17
Design Patent – 92,423
The drawing on the left and picture adjoining it to the right in Figure 11 depict another creation by Theodore J. Piazzoli. April 10th, 1934 was the date employees at the United States Patent Office started to process his request to patent this motif. The paperwork process took less than two months to complete. As a result, issuance of a design patent occurred on June 5th, 1934.18

I've found only one example of this container. Its base carries the mold number 4730 and phrase PAT. APPLIED FOR. Nonetheless, there are most likely other sizes yet to be discovered. I make this statement because the Capstan announcements about it indicated it came in three sizes: seven and three-fourths, fifteen and three-eighths and thirty and three-eighths ounces.

First promoted in November 1934, the Anchor-Capstan sales force continued to advertise this model on two other occasions. The last one was in April 1936.19

Design Patent – 92,424
Government personnel in the Patent Office started to work on Mr. Piazzoli’s eleventh request for a design patent on the same day as number 92,423. Not surprisingly, the approval trail ended on the same date as well - June 5th, 1934.20 The profile of this container can be seen in Figure 12.

To my chagrin, I’ve not been able to locate an example of this jar.

Additionally, a review of the Capstan Glass Company advertisements I hold failed to turn up a picture of this pattern in a promotion. Thus, it appears this jar might not have been manufactured.

Design Patent – 92,975
The twelfth design patent by Theodore J. Piazzoli was for his first ornate pattern on a bottle. This concept commenced its journey through the United States Patent Office on June 4th, 1934. A little over two months later, the approval was returned on August 7th.21

The outer motif on this container can be viewed in Figure 13.

Regrettably, I couldn’t locate this container in any Capstan Glass Company promotion. It may have never been produced.

Design Patent – 94,095
The ninth unique exterior motif on a jar was also Theodore J. Piazzoli’s thirteenth design patent. The sketch on the left in Figure 14 shows this style of container. The request to register this profile started to work its way through the United States Patent Office on September 7th, 1934. Three months and eleven days later, the process ended in approval.22

The container on the right in Figure 14 is a production example of this style. As you can see, it has four groups of horizontal bars along either side seam. There is another version as well. On this model, the jar has only three groups of horizontal bars on either side of the vessel’s body.

Up to this point in time, I’ve come across three different sizes of this type of jar. These samples were embossed with the following mold numbers 4823, 4830 and 4850. The first two series of digits were placed on the base of a four group vessel. The latter numerals appeared in the same location on a three group specimen.

There are probably more four group versions with other volumetric capacities. I make this statement with certitude because a May 1937 ad pictured seven distinct models of the 4823/4830 motif. As for their three group mate, the 4850 example is the only size I’ve identified.

Six months after the Patent Office issued Mr. Piazzoli a design
patent for this jar, the glass trade journal - The Glass Packer - carried the first promotion of it. This sales pitch and others that followed showcased either both varieties or one of the two styles. A three group version was last illustrated by Capstan Glass in February 1938. This set of facts suggests that Design Patent 94,095 was manufactured in South Connellsville for about four years.

**Design Patent – 94,357**

The request for a design patent for the screw top bottle outlined in Figure 15 (on the left) was forwarded on October 22nd, 1934. It was filed by Patent Office workers five days later. January 15th, 1935 saw approval of this pattern being granted to Theodore J. Piazzoli. Unfortunately, no example has yet been discovered. Likewise, a Capstan Glass Company advertisement hasn’t surfaced showing it.

**Design Patent – 98,958**

On July 20th, 1935, Mr. Piazzoli signed his fifteenth patent application. This request asked for the bottle, depicted on the left in Figure 16, to be granted protection for its exterior profile. Nine days hence, hands at the United States Patent Office started to process his package of paperwork. Seven months and eighteen days later, Mr. Piazzoli was issued a design patent for his work. By mesne assignments, he forwarded the rights for it to the L. E. Waterman Company of New York City.

The actual blown version of this familiar ink container is pictured on the right in Figure 16. In addition to Capstan turning out this bottle, several other glass manufacturers did so as well. Undoubtedly, this vessel was designed specifically for the L. E. Waterman Company. As such, I could find no advertisement for it sponsored by the Capstan Glass Company.

**Design Patent – 99,304**

A formatted submission seeking a design patent for the tenth or penultimate jar pattern by Theodore J. Piazzoli was sent forward on March 7th, 1935. Workers at the Patent Office received this request and began working it on March 12th. A bit over a year later, a design patent was granted on April 14th, 1936. Figure 17 has a sketch of this distinctive container on the left. Beside it on the right is an actual example that was manufactured in Capstan’s factory. Known as the Styleline series, this group was sold in seven sizes. To date, I’ve identified four of the seven models. These have the trailing mold identifiers inscribed on the base - 3514, 3518, 3523 and 3547.

It didn’t take long for this set to be marketed. Less than three months after Mr. Piazzoli signed the patent request, a Styleline jar appeared for the first time in a June 1935 advertisement. In subsequent sales promotions, the 35XX marked vessels were pitched by Capstan Glass through April 1937.

**Design Patent – 102,171**

The last jar motif and seventeenth design patent application by Mr. Piazzoli was dated October 9th, 1936. This request garnered approval less than two months later. A drawing of this container can be seen in Figure 18. As was the case with other Piazzoli designs, neither an example of his creation nor an advertisement for it has been located. This fact calls into question whether this model was ever produced for sale by the Capstan Glass Company.

**Wrap Up**

By my count, records at the United States Patent and Trademark Office document twenty-four patents or design patents being issued for tumblers, jars and bottles to personnel associated with Capstan Glass. Of this total, the rights to twenty-three were signed back over to their employer in South Connellsville. The other was assigned to the L. E. Waterman Company of New York City.

Five Company men participated in the Federal process to patent their glass container innovations. By far and away, Theodore J. Piazzoli was the leader in getting approval for his concepts. As I’ve just shown, seventeen of his designs were approved.

Unique Piazzoli conceived motifs for eleven jars, three tumblers and three bottles have been detailed in this article. Of this total, eight jars, one tumbler (mug) and one bottle (ink) were manufactured by hands at the Capstan Glass factory. For the others,
I'm still searching for an example, if one exists.

If you can help me document any missing style of container that matches a design patent granted to Theodore J. Piazzoli, please don't hesitate to contact me directly. BLB

Endnotes:
3. Tumblers, Jars and Bottles, A Product Identification Guide For the Capstan Glass Company, South Connellsville, Pennsylvania, Barry L. Bernas, 239 Ridge Avenue, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 2007, pgs. VII-IX. The rights to design patent 98,958 were signed over to the L. E. Waterman Company of New York City.