

## **ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION**

Le Palais Des Thes v. CollinsTyler, CollinsTyler  
Case No. D2023-4709

### **1. The Parties**

The Complainant is Le Palais Des Thes, France, represented by De Gaulle Fleurance & Associés, France.

The Respondent is CollinsTyler, CollinsTyler, United States of America.

### **2. The Domain Name and Registrar**

The disputed domain name <palaistea.com> (the “Domain Name”) is registered with OwnRegistrar, Inc. (the “Registrar”).

### **3. Procedural History**

The Complaint was filed with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the “Center”) on November 13, 2023. On November 14, 2023, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the Domain Name. On November 15, 2023, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response disclosing registrant and contact information for the Domain Name which differed from the named Respondent (Unknown Registrant in Case D2023-4709) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on November 16, 2023, providing the registrant and contact information disclosed by the Registrar, and inviting the Complainant to submit an amendment to the Complaint. The Complainant filed an amended Complaint on November 17, 2023.

The Center verified that the Complaint together with the amended Complaint satisfied the formal requirements of the Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Policy” or “UDRP”), the Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Rules”), and the WIPO Supplemental Rules for Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (the “Supplemental Rules”).

In accordance with the Rules, paragraphs 2 and 4, the Center formally notified the Respondent of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on November 27, 2023. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was December 17, 2023. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent’s default on December 26, 2023.

The Center appointed Nicholas Smith as the sole panelist in this matter on January 16, 2024. The Panel finds that it was properly constituted. The Panel has submitted the Statement of Acceptance and Declaration of Impartiality and Independence, as required by the Center to ensure compliance with the Rules, paragraph 7.

#### **4. Factual Background**

The Complainant is a French company that specialises the making and selling of high-end tea and tea accessory products. It offers its products under the trademark LE PALAIS DES THES or PALAIS DES THES (the “LE PALAIS DES THES”) mark and from its website at “www.palaisdesthes.com” (“the Complainant’s Website”).

The Complainant has registered the LE PALAIS DES THES Mark as a trademark in France for goods and services in classes 30, 35, 39, and 42 (Registration Number 1,453,112, registered August 5, 1988).

The Domain Name <palaistea.com> was registered on September 7, 2023. The Domain Name resolves to a website (“the Respondent’s Website”) that reproduces the LE PALAIS DES THES Mark and various product images as well as the overall impression and design of the Complainant’s Website. The Respondent’s Website purports to offer the Complainant’s tea products and accessories or counterfeit versions of the Complainant’s tea products and accessories under the Complainant’s LE PALAIS DES THES Mark.

#### **5. Parties’ Contentions**

##### **A. Complainant**

The Complainant contends that it has satisfied each of the elements required under the Policy for a transfer of the Domain Name.

Notably, the Complainant contends that:

- a) The Complainant is the owner of the LE PALAIS DES THES Mark, having registered the LE PALAIS DES THES Mark in France. The Domain Name reproduces the “palais” element and the English translation of the “thes” element in the LE PALAIS DES THES Mark.
- b) There are no rights or legitimate interests held by the Respondent in respect of the Domain Name. The Respondent is not commonly known as the Domain Name nor does the Respondent have any authorization from the Complainant to register the Domain Name. The Respondent is not making a legitimate noncommercial fair use of the Domain Name. Rather the Respondent is using the Domain Name to create a website that sells fake versions of the Complainant’s products and reproduces the Complainant’s mark and copyrighted material, such use not being *bona fide*.
- c) The Domain Name was registered and is being used in bad faith. By using the Domain Name for a website that reproduces the Complainant’s copyrighted material, and purports to represent the Complainant, the Respondent is clearly aware of the LE PALAIS DES THES Mark and is using it to deceive consumers as to its affiliation with the Complainant. Such conduct amounts to registration and use of the Domain Name in bad faith.

##### **B. Respondent**

The Respondent did not reply to the Complainant’s contentions.

## 6. Discussion and Findings

### A. Identical or Confusingly Similar

It is well accepted that the first element functions primarily as a standing requirement. The standing (or threshold) test for confusing similarity involves a reasoned but relatively straightforward comparison between the Complainant's trademark and the disputed domain name. WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Selected UDRP Questions, Third Edition, ("[WIPO Overview 3.0](#)"), section 1.7.

The Complainant has shown rights in respect of a trademark or service mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.2.1.

The Panel finds the mark is recognizable within the Domain Name. Accordingly, the Domain Name is confusingly similar to the mark for the purposes of the Policy. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.7. The Domain Name reproduces the dominant element "palais" and the English translation of the element "thes", with the elements "le" and "des" being omitted. The conclusion is affirmed by the use to which the Domain Name has been put. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 1.15.

The Panel finds the first element of the Policy has been established.

### B. Rights or Legitimate Interests

Paragraph 4(c) of the Policy provides a list of circumstances in which the Respondent may demonstrate rights or legitimate interests in a disputed domain name.

While the overall burden of proof in UDRP proceedings is on the complainant, panels have recognized that proving a respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in a domain name may result in the often impossible task of "proving a negative", requiring information that is often primarily within the knowledge or control of the respondent. As such, where a complainant makes out a *prima facie* case that the respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests, the burden of production on this element shifts to the respondent to come forward with relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the domain name. If the respondent fails to come forward with such relevant evidence, the complainant is deemed to have satisfied the second element. [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.1.

Having reviewed the record, the Panel finds the Complainant has established a *prima facie* case that the Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in the Domain Name. The Respondent has not rebutted the Complainant's *prima facie* showing and has not come forward with any relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the Domain Name.

The Panel considers that the record of this case reflects that:

- before any notice to the Respondent of the dispute, the Respondent did not use, nor has it made demonstrable preparations to use, the Domain Name or a name corresponding to the Domain Name in connection with a *bona fide* offering of goods or services. Paragraph 4(c)(i) of the Policy, and [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.2.
- the Respondent (as an individual, business, or other organization) has not been commonly known by the Domain Name. Paragraph 4(c)(ii) of the Policy, and [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.3.
- the Respondent is not making a legitimate noncommercial or fair use of the Domain Name, without intent for commercial gain to misleadingly divert consumers or to tarnish the trademark or service mark at issue. Paragraph 4(c)(iii) of the Policy, and [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.4.
- the record contains no other factors demonstrating rights or legitimate interests of the Respondent in the Domain Name.

The Respondent has used the Domain Name to operate a website to sell tea products that purport to be legitimate LE PALAIS DES THES products. The Complainant submits that such material is likely to be fake, and it has received complaints from customers misled by the Respondent's Website. If the products (being tea and tea accessories) sold on the Respondent's Website are not genuine products produced by the Complainant, the Respondent's use of the Domain Name does not grant it rights or legitimate interests since it is using the Complainant's LE PALAIS DES THES Mark for a site selling counterfeit products.

Even if the Respondent is offering genuine LE PALAIS DES THES products from the Respondent's Website, such use does not automatically grant it rights and legitimate interests. The principles that govern whether a reseller of genuine goods has rights or legitimate interests have been set out in a variety of UDRP decisions, starting with the case of *Ok! Data Americas, Inc. v. ASD, Inc.*, WIPO Case No. [D2001-0903](#).

The [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 2.8.1, summarizes the consensus views of UDRP panels in assessing claims of nominative (fair) use by resellers or distributors in the following manner:

"Panels have recognized that resellers, distributors, or service providers using a domain name containing the complainant's trademark to undertake sales or repairs related to the complainant's goods or services may be making a *bona fide* offering of goods and services and thus have a legitimate interest in such domain name. Outlined in the "Ok! Data test", the following cumulative requirements will be applied in the specific conditions of a UDRP case:

- (i) the respondent must actually be offering the goods or services at issue;
- (ii) the respondent must use the site to sell only the trademarked goods or services;
- (iii) the site must accurately and prominently disclose the registrant's relationship with the trademark holder; and
- (iv) the respondent must not try to "corner the market" in domain names that reflect the trademark.

The "Ok! Data test" does not apply where any prior agreement, express or otherwise, between the parties expressly prohibits (or allows) the registration or use of domain names incorporating the complainant's trademark."

In this case, the Respondent's Website does not accurately or prominently disclose the Respondent's relationship with the Complainant, in particular that it is not an authorized dealer or has any particular connection with the Complainant. Rather, its prominent display of the LE PALAIS DES THES Mark, its reproduction of the Complainant's official product images, the absence of a disclaimer, or any explanation as to the identity of the operator of the Respondent's Website results in the impression that the Respondent's Website is an official website of the Complainant. Even in the event that the Respondent is reselling genuine LE PALAIS DES THES products, its use of the Domain Name for the Respondent's Website does not grant it rights or legitimate interests in the Domain Name.

Based on the available record, the Panel finds the second element of the Policy has been established.

### **C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith**

The Panel notes that for the purposes of paragraph 4(a)(iii) of the Policy, paragraph 4(b) of the Policy establishes circumstances, in particular but without limitation, that if found by the Panel to be present, shall be evidence of the registration and use of a domain name in bad faith.

The Panel considers that the record of this case reflects that the Respondent has intentionally attempted to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to its website or other online location, by creating a likelihood of confusion with the Complainant's LE PALAIS DES THES Mark as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement of the Respondent's website or location or of a product or service on the Respondent's Website. Paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy, and [WIPO Overview 3.0](#), section 3.1.4.

The Respondent registered the Domain Name for the purposes of operating a website specifically to sell either the Complainant's products or counterfeit products that compete with the Complainant's apparel products. The Respondent is using a Domain Name that is confusingly similar to the LE PALAIS DES THES Mark to sell products, be they genuine or otherwise, in competition with the Complainant and without the Complainant's approval and without meeting the Oki Data test.

Based on the available record, the Panel finds the third element of the Policy has been established.

## **7. Decision**

For the foregoing reasons, in accordance with paragraphs 4(i) of the Policy and 15 of the Rules, the Panel orders that the Domain Name <palaistea.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

*/Nicholas Smith/*

**Nicholas Smith**

Sole Panelist

Date: January 24, 2024