

United States District Court
Northern District of California

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**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

THE VINEYARD HOUSE, LLC,
Plaintiff,

v.

**CONSTELLATION BRANDS U.S.
OPERATIONS, INC.,**
Defendant.

Case No. 4:19-cv-01424-YGR
CONSOLIDATED CASE

**RULE 52 ORDER AFTER TRIAL ON THE
MERITS**

**CONSTELLATION BRANDS U.S.
OPERATIONS, INC.,**
Consolidated Plaintiff,

v.

THE VINEYARD HOUSE, LLC,
Consolidated Defendant.

“To Kalon:” Defined by the Greeks as “Highest Good” or the “Highest Beauty.” Undisputedly used in Napa Valley by the famous winemaker H.W. Crabb beginning as early as 1886. More recently trademarked by Robert Mondavi Winery (“RMW”) in 1988. The roots of this action are embedded in the fundamental question of what “To Kalon” represents or signifies now and for the last hundred and thirty years. Like much in nature, “To Kalon” has transformed with time. Yet, despite this change, one conclusion is certain: The Vineyard House (“TVH”) cannot use the term in any way, shape, or form. Based on a seven-day bench trial, the Court’s rationale is detailed below in its Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law.¹

¹ The Court will not encumber these Findings of Fact and Conclusions of law with voluminous record cites as the same is clearly identified in the parties’ post-trial filings found at Docket Numbers 239 and 240-4. The Court admitted, considered, and reviewed over 600 exhibits.

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1 **I. FINDINGS OF FACT**

2 **A. History of To Kalon**

3 One cannot appreciate the full context of the significance of To Kalon without traveling
4 back to the 1880s. Historians have told the tale, as early as 1889 (later reprinted in 1973), of the
5 life of H. W. Crabb that was known:

6 Nestled cosily back from the county road, and half hidden by a
7 wilderness of vines and trees, is the celebrated To Kalon Vineyard,
8 belonging to Mr. Henry [sic] W. Crabb. The fact that Mr. Crabb is an
9 Ohio man may have something to do with his phenomenal success as
10 a vigneron, but his confrères seem to think that study and much
11 practical experience are the qualifications which have crowned To
12 Kalon products with success. "The name To Kalon " said Mr. Crabb,
13 "is Greek, and means the highest beauty or the highest good but I try
14 to make it mean the boss vineyard." There are 350 acres in vines
15 ranging from 12 to 18 years old, and the whole tract is well sheltered
16 from the sea breeze.

12 * * *

13 As a successful wine-maker Mr. Crabb is without a peer in the State,
14

14 Wines and Vines of California, pp. 108, 109, (1889) (later reprinted in 1973) (TX0311); *see also*
15 California Wineries, Napa Valley, Volume One, p.79 (1975) (TX0312).

16 The legacy of Hamilton Walker Crabb² was repeated in numerous books among other
17 names which have remained constant in the Napa Valley for well over a century:

18 Napa County's viticulture began as a direct descendant of Sonoma's
19 when George Yount crossed the western Mayacamas range separating
20 the two parallel valleys and set out cuttings from General Vallejo's
21 Mission vines. Then for more than two decades it slumbered,
22 progressing little, until Charles Krug made the same crossing. Krug
23 brought with him the ideas and ideals of Agoston Haraszthy, and he
24 sparked the Napa Valley's dramatic ascent to pre-eminence in both
25 quantity and, to many palates, quality. It was at first a slow ascent, but
26 between 1870 and 1880 wine production increased nearly ten-fold.
27 By the end of that decade Napa was producing about half as many
28 gallons as the state's leader, Sonoma, and almost as many as second-
place Los Angeles County. A decade after that it led them all. . . .

25 An even more adventuresome vineyardist was Hamilton Walker
26 Crabb, an Ohioan who came to the Napa Valley in 1865 and, although

27 ² Some historians refer to Mr. Crabb as "Henry W. Crabb," while others "Hamilton W.
28 Crabb." The Court relies on the official probate records of the individual to refer to him as
"Hamilton."

1 close to middle age, began planting vines with youthful single-
 2 mindedness. He had a passionate interest in experimenting with
 3 different varieties, and he bought all he could lay his hands on,
 A decade after he began he had nearly two hundred varieties, by the
 1880s some four hundred.

4 Winemaking in California, Ruth Teiser, pp. 82, 83 (1983) (TX0339). The record is replete with
 5 references showing that Mr. Crabb used To Kalon (or some variation thereof) as a brand on wine,
 6 the name of a company, and the name of his vineyard, all simultaneously. The suggestion that it
 7 only referred to a vineyard is defied by the evidence in the record.

8 According to Andrew Beckstoffer, the history of H.W. Crabb was well-known and well-
 9 documented when Mr. Beckstoffer arrived in the valley in approximately 1967 or 1968 from
 10 Connecticut charged with researching Napa Valley for Heublein, Inc., which was entering the
 11 domestic wine business and in the process of buying the now well-known wineries called
 12 Inglenook and Beaulieu Vineyards, in addition to Italian Swiss Colony. Assuredly, those
 13 interested in, and knowledgeable of, the history of California wines, were familiar with the history
 14 of H.W. Crabb.

15 While the precise boundaries of Mr. Crabb's vineyard may have been illusive, the general
 16 reference to the land was not. Mr. Beckstoffer found five or six different books and each one
 17 mentioned that the "To Kalon Vineyard as being the most outstanding vineyard in Napa Valley . .
 18 . ." (Trial Transcript ("TT"), Vol. 2, p. 236: 8-9.) He believes the references included such
 19 publications as including Wines & Vines (1937); F. Schoonmaker and T. Marvel, American
 20 Wines (1941); Wines & Vines, Vol. 24, No. 8 (1943); Wines & Vines, Vol. 32, No. 2 (1951).
 21 Before 1988, other books existed which referenced To Kalon as part of Napa Valley's history,
 22 continued before 1988.³ That said, there is sparse evidence that signs or maps demarcated the

24 ³ (See TT, Vol. 2, pp.250-56 (citing Wines & Vines, Vol. 50, No. 2 (1969); D. Corey,
 25 Hamilton Walker Crabb (1973); F. Wait, Wines & Vines of California (1973, reprint of 1889
 26 book) (TX0311); M. Topolos and B. Dobson, California Wineries: Vol. I, Napa Valley (1975)
 27 (TX0312); R. Teiser and C. Harroun, Winemaking in California (1983) (TX0339); and in 1988
 28 and thereafter: B. Dobson, Fruit of the Vine, 200 Years of Winemaking in California, (1988)
 (TX0353); T. Pinney, A History of Wine in America, (1989); D. Berger and R. Hinkle, An Inside
 Look at Napa Valley (1991); C. Sullivan, Napa Wine - A History from Mission Days to Present
 (1994); I. Haynes, Ghost Wineries of Napa Valley. (1995); C. Sullivan, A Companion to
 California Wine, (1998); L. Weber, Old Napa Valley, The History to 1900 (1998); S. Koplan, A
 Sense of Place: An Intimate Portrait of the Niebaum-Coppola Winery and the Napa Valley (1999);

1 boundaries of the vineyard (precise or otherwise) unlike other geographic areas such as the
2 existing townships in Napa Valley or established American Vinicultural Areas (“AVA”). The
3 Court acknowledges one historic map which showed the vineyard, but it was more of a general
4 attraction.

5 Mr. Beckstoffer testified that he believed he learned the location of H.W. Crabb’s To
6 Kalon Vineyard, that being the “357 . . . contiguous acres in Oakville, California” where he
7 “cultivate[d] grapes,” in 1969, through his research and Beaulieu Vineyard’s winemaker, Mr.
8 Andre Tchelistcheff. (TT, Vol 2, pp. 243:14-15, 246:8-19.) More precisely, Mr. Crabb purchased
9 240.66 acres in 1868, then 119.83 contiguous acres in 1879 for a total of 360.49. All of this land
10 sits in a geological formation called an alluvial fan on the floor of the Napa Valley which is
11 created from a mixture of gravel and rock that had washed down the Mayacamas Mountains and
12 settled onto the Napa Valley floor. No dispute exists that Mr. Crabb harvested grapes for wine
13 from this acreage.

14 Rather, this action raised the question of whether wine grapes were grown on a separate
15 parcel up the hill known as the Baldrige Parcel. An excellent summary of the historical record in
16 this regard can be found in a report which plaintiff itself commissioned in 2018 to submit to the
17 Napa County Planning Commission long before the filing of this action. (*See* TX1002.) That it
18 was not done for purposes of litigation increases its reliability and credibility.

19 The report instructed that in 1872, Mr. Crabb switched from cultivating table grapes to
20 wine grapes and renamed his operations “Hermosa Vineyards.” *Hermosa* meaning “beautiful” in
21 Spanish. The nature of the soil contributed to the success of his wine making. By 1878, he had
22 planted half his property with 120,000 vines becoming, by the end of the decade, “one of the
23 largest, most productive wineries in Napa Valley and perhaps the state.”

24 Fourteen years later, in 1886, Mr. Crabb renamed his winery as the To-Kalon Winery
25 Company. Over his career, Mr. Crabb won numerous domestic and European wine awards, spoke
26 at conferences, wrote prolifically, and shared his expertise and knowledge about viticulture. He

27 _____
28 W. Heintz, California's Napa Valley, One Hundred Sixty Years of Wine Making (1999)).

1 also established a nationwide distribution network with locations in Washington D. C. and
2 Chicago. “His winery operation [was] characterized as a “young town” employing approximately
3 80 to 100 workers and comprised of a practical and efficient complex of well-insulated, one- and
4 two-story, wood-frame buildings.” Unquestionably, he was both a pioneer and instrumental force
5 within the developing wine industry of Napa Valley.

6 **B. Acquisition of the Baldrige Property**

7 In 1889, William Baldrige⁴ sold his property, approximately 168.5 acres, including his
8 residence and the associated ancillary buildings to Mr. Crabb (“Baldrige Parcel”). Ten years
9 later, Mr. Crabb died.

10 The evidence with respect to how Mr. Crabb actually used the Baldrige Parcel is scant,
11 but with the purchase, Mr. Crabb owned over 500 acres of property. Unfortunately, plaintiff’s
12 proffered historian, Dr. Scott Miltenberger, engaged in conjecture at trial to support TVH’s trial
13 position. Undisputedly, the land was known to be, and is, primarily “hilly acreage.” (TX1002, p.
14 20.) Indeed, as plaintiff’s own report found, “[o]nly a narrow, flat portion of Baldrige’s original
15 property appears to have been cultivated for agricultural use, with the remaining portion consisting
16 of wooded foothills of the Mayacamas Mountains.” (*Id.*; *see also* TX1003 p.10.) Notably, Mr.
17 Crabb loved horse racing and the need to grow hay to support this hobby has support in the record.

18 The Court finds the best evidence regarding Mr. Crabb’s use of the land, at least relative to
19 wine making, are the probate records for “Hamilton W. Crabb,” dated March 25, 1899, which
20 included an 11-page “Inventory and Appraisal” detailing his holdings. (TX1440.) With
21 respect to his account receivables, the records identify certain affiliates, namely “To Kalon Wine
22 Co” in Washington D.C. and “To Kalon Vineyard” in Chicago, Illinois. However, more
23 importantly, his “Real Estate” holdings, which were listed and consistent with the other historical
24 records, provide the best evidence of the use of his three parcels. The inventory reads:

25

26 ⁴ William Baldrige himself had historical significance and was recognized as a “pioneer
27 of pioneers.” Interestingly, he apparently “found himself in the position of single-handedly
28 accepting the surrender of John Sutter at Sutter’s Fort. (TX 1002, p. 15.) Winemaking, though,
was never mentioned among Mr. Baldrige’s fortes.

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First Tract – Home Place. Situated at Oakville in Napa County California and described as follows to wit [legal description and appraisal of land]. . . .

All of said land is planted to Resistant Vineyard, nearly all grafted, and 160 acres in bearing-we appraise the value of Vineyard improvement at

\$35,900.

We appraise the Building improvements on said tract at

\$14,900.

Second Tract- Known as Lewelling place, adjoining the above and described as follows, [legal description and appraisal of land]. . . .

45 acres of said land is planted to resistant vineyard and to orchard, the value of which we appraise at

2,250.

We appraise the Building improvements on said land at

2,400.

Third Tract-Baldrige Farm, [legal description]

We appraise the land with the valuable timber thereon at

\$3240.

The Building improvements thereon at

600.

The system of Reservoirs and piping and the Water rights of said place in connection with first two tracts above described, we value at

\$8000

(TX1440 (emphasis in original).) The inventory also referenced “70 acres growing hay in field on Lewelling tr.” and “Baldrige [sic] tract” valued at \$500 and \$150, respectively. Then, in the summary or “Recapitulation,” the Inventory makes a distinct separation in Mr. Crabb’s “Real Estate” between the “To Kalon Vineyard Property at Oakville 359 acres” valued at “\$91250” and the “Baldrige Tract, including Water Rights” valued at “\$11840.”

How Mr. Crabb may have used the referenced water rights, piping and timber is irrelevant to whether he ever planted a vineyard on the Baldrige property. The evidence overwhelming confirms that he did not, at least not with any commercial value, and that the Baldrige tract was principally “wooded” or full of “valuable timber.” To find otherwise would require the Court to ignore a legal document, the entire purpose of which was to document accurately the state of Mr. Crabb’s affairs at the time of his death.

The argument that Mr. Crabb planted commercial vines on the Baldrige tract lacks any

1 evidentiary basis.⁵ That newspapers articles may have mentioned that Mr. Crabb’s vineyards were
2 over 500 acres does not compel a contrary result. (*See, e.g.*, TX0211.) The accuracy of such
3 articles must always be considered against other known information. Collapsing the extent of Mr.
4 Crabb’s ownership of lands into a newspaper blurb regarding this vineyard does not seem
5 particularly problematic from a “news” point of view but it does not persuade on the issue of
6 actual use given the evidence to the contrary.

7 After Mr. Crabb’s death, the winery operations continued until 1939 when a fire closed the
8 operations. Not until 1951 does credible evidence, that being a United States Geological Survey
9 topographic map, show vineyards growing on the Baldrige Parcel. With brief ownership by
10 Robert Lieff in 1982, Gil Nickel acquired a portion of the Baldrige lands in 1984, transferred
11 ownership to the Nickel Land Company which Jeremy Nickel inherited in 2003 upon his father’s
12 death. He then transferred the property to Nickel Vineyard Company LLC, which leases the land
13 back to TVH (both of which are wholly owned by Jeremy Nickel).

14 C. Representations to the Trademark Office

15 Robert Mondavi Winery was awarded the following U.S. Trademark Registrations (the
16 “TO KALON Registrations”):

17 **Mark** TO KALON
18 **Date of Reg.** May 24, 1988
Reg. No. Goods 1,489,619 Wine (IC 033)⁶

19 As a starting point, the TO KALON Registrations have achieved incontestability, which is
20 conclusive evidence of Constellation’s exclusive right to use TO KALON and TO KALON

21
22 ⁵ Importantly, plaintiff knew before filing suit that the historic record indicated that the
23 Baldrige property was primarily wooded, and that “Baldrige’s original estate does not appear to
24 have been cultivated with grapes used by the To-kalon Vineyard Co.” (TX1002, pp. 9, 10.) Mr.
25 Baldrige lived on the property for four decades and while he may have grown grapes there is no
26 indication that he did so to produce wine as opposed to raisins or sugar as was the custom of other
27 Napa Valley farmers. (*Id.*, pp. 14-17; *see also* TX1003 at 5-7.)

28 ⁶ Constellation Brands U.S. Operations Inc.’s (“Constellation”) predecessor trademark
owner, RMW, was originally granted registrations for TO-KALON and TO-KALON VINEYARD
(with hyphens). In 2004 and 2008, however, Constellation amended its registrations (as permitted
under 15 U.S.C. § 1057(e)) to remove the hyphens, modernizing them to TO KALON and TO
KALON VINEYARD. (TX1027 at 1-2; TX1042 at 1-2; Dkt. No. 202 at ¶7(m).)

1 VINEYARD on wine. (TX1027 at 3, 8; TX1042 at 3, 5; 15 U.S.C. § 1115(b); Dkt. No. 202 at
2 ¶7(n).)

3 Plaintiff’s challenge dates back to the initial application process. In response to an Office
4 Action from the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) requesting additional
5 information regarding the proposed trademark, Robert Mondavi Winery, stated:

6 TO KALON . . . has no present meaning or significance in the
7 relevant trade or industry. Prior to the turn of the 20th Century,
8 there was a winery in the Napa Valley which used the name
9 “Tokalon.” Upon information and belief, that winery was sold off
10 in parcels during the first fifteen to twenty years of the 20th
Century and use of the name was discontinued. Accordingly,
although the name has some historical significance, it has no
current meaning or significance in the wine industry.

11 (TX0018.) The evidence of whether it had “no present meaning or significance” is mixed. On the
12 one hand, the history of Mr. Crabb was well-documented in the voluminous historical writings
13 about the Napa Valley. (*See supra* note 3.) However, documentation alone does not necessarily
14 mean, for trademark purposes, that the “relevant trade or industry” afforded the phrase meaning
15 and significance.

16 The Court acknowledges that Mr. Beckstoffer credibly testified that when the USPTO
17 asked Robert Mondavi whether the name To Kalon had any historic or current meaning, and Mr.
18 Mondavi claimed it did not, that Mr. Beckstoffer reasonably believed that Mr. Mondavi knew that
19 he was misrepresenting the truth. (TT, Vol 2, p. 249: 5-7.) “[E]verybody – anybody you talked to
20 in the Napa Valley in those days would – would recall and would state that To Kalon was a
21 vineyard, a famous vineyard owned by Hamilton Crabb.” (*Id.* 249:14-16.) That being said, Mr.
22 Beckstoffer also admitted that Mr. Mondavi had a reputation for honesty and believed that the
23 winemaker, more than the land, drove successful winemaking. Further, RMW *did* advise the
24 USPTO of the historic vineyard and even Mr. Beckstoffer admitted to doing research to find the
25 boundaries of Mr. Crabb’s original contiguous parcels.

26 Ironically, Mr. Mondavi himself may have added to the confusion as he worked to make
27 famous the trademark he had acquired. He repeatedly retold a story of the original significance of
28 the land remarking:

1 As I [Mondavi] narrowed my search, I considered three different
 2 properties in and around Oakville. There was one, though, that stood
 3 head and shoulders above the others. It was a vineyard with a
 4 distinguished history and a magical name, To Kalon. I had first
 5 encountered To Kalon during one of our early expansion phases at
 6 Krug. We needed more grapes to boost production, and were looking
 7 for a good vineyard to buy or lease. Old Louis M. Martini, Sr., one
 8 of the most knowledgeable and hardheaded vintners in the Napa
 9 Valley urged me to take a look at the To Kalon Vineyard in Oakville.
 “Bob,” he said, “that darn place at To Kalon is one of the finest places
 in California for Cabernet Sauvignon.” I went to see To Kalon, and
 Louis was right. It was a fine property producing first-rate grapes. So
 at my urging, we began buying grapes grown on the To Kalon
 property, and in 1958, I think it was, we went even further. We
 purchased a 325-acre parcel of To Kalon for Krug in the name of the
 parent company my father had formed, C. Mondavi & Sons.

10 (TX0356 pp. 57-58; *see also* TT, Vol. 2, pp. 254-256.) A review of the actual deed transfers
 11 indisputably demonstrates that Mr. Mondavi’s story was not true. As noted, one can reasonably
 12 presume that he created the story to heighten the stature of To Kalon.

13 Even from today’s perspective, the record is replete with conflicting evidence showing
 14 how narrow, or alternatively, how widespread, is the reference to To Kalon. Mr. Nickel himself
 15 testified that he (originally) and normal wine consumers generally do not know the origins of To
 16 Kalon. The Court finds, based on a complete review of all the evidence, that sophisticated wine
 17 consumers, merchants, and professionals immersed in the Northern California wine industry have
 18 a current understanding of To Kalon. However, that finding does not extend to the time prior to
 19 1988. Rather, prior to 1988, the Court finds that the knowledge was much more limited and
 20 certainly not widespread.

21 **D. Survey Evidence**

22 The survey evidence presented in this case was fundamentally flawed and provides
 23 virtually no useful evidence for resolving the issues of confusion in this action. Moreover, the
 24 manner in which the surveyor, Matthew G. Ezell, created and conducted the survey strains
 25 credulity and presents a cautionary tale for those who seek to provide courts with useful
 26 information.

27 The generic “EverReady” survey approach was intended to be used either in a specific
 28 context or requires modification to provide any useful insights. The use here revealed virtually

1 nothing. The critical presumption underlying the approach is that the respondents have been
2 exposed to the mark. This is necessary because they must make a “mental leap” to the senior
3 mark in order for there to be any revelation of confusion. Without the exposure, the survey does
4 not work, at least not without modification.

5 Where the query concerns marks for everyday products, used by vast majority of
6 consumers, such as Apple, Coca-Cola, or EverReady, the short simple survey can provide some
7 insights. That is not, and never was, this case.⁷ Here, the mark at issue concerned a very narrow
8 group of individuals. Mr. Nickel describes his clientele as “affluent connoisseurs, and collectors
9 of Napa cult cabernets.” That description can be reasonably expanded to include a consumer of
10 ultra-premium and luxury-premium wine, which are generally priced above \$100, and affluent
11 consumers of high-end Napa County red wines. (*See* Dkt. No. 239 at 11; Dkt. No. 240-4 at 53.)

12 The relevant universe is those who one reasonably believes are potential purchasers of the
13 juniors’ goods. Mr. Ezell did not sufficiently determine whether those surveyed were actually
14 prospective purchasers of the class of goods. Using a generic web-based survey pool, who are not
15 adequately screened, does little to find the relevant universe. In fact, it is unlikely that such a tool
16 could ever be used to find affluent consumers of Napa Valley wines willing to spend luxury prices
17 of over \$100 per bottle.

18 Mr. Ezell performed no validation to test, even at the highest level, the results of his
19 survey. For instance, extrapolating the survey data to the national framework suggests that 84
20 percent of wine drinking consumers have ordered one bottle of wine online or through a wine
21 club, which would be more than half of all Americans. Focusing solely on those who purchased a
22 bottle of wine of \$100 or more, the data suggests that 32 percent of wine consumers or 20 percent
23 of Americans bought such a bottle online or through a wine club.

24 Further, the questions were not particularly helpful to determine whether TVH’s use of To
25

26 ⁷ The notion that Mr. Ezell conducted the survey in this manner because Constellation
27 claimed it was a “strong source identifier” for “Constellation Brands” itself in an unverified
28 complaint strains credulity and elevates a technicality over substance. Rule 8 requires only notice
pleading. The belief that such a tactic would warrant any measure of serious consideration defies
logic.

1 Kalon as a vineyard designation would cause confusion with the use of To Kalon as a trademark.
 2 Remarkably, Mr. Ezell even miscategorized statements from respondents with respect to
 3 confusion.

4 Given the stark failures in conducting the survey, the Court finds Mr. Ezell’s credibility to
 5 be entirely lacking and affords his opinion little to no weight.

6 **II. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

7 **A. Claims at Issue in Both Actions**

8 Having issued a preliminary injunction in this action, the Court begins with Constellation’s
 9 claim that TVH’s use of the name To Kalon constitutes trademark infringement under the Lanham
 10 Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1114.

11 TVH is liable for infringement under 15 U.S.C. § 1114 for using the To Kalon marks if:
 12 (1) Constellation owns a valid, protectable trademark; (2) TVH used the name To Kalon on wine
 13 products without Constellation’s consent; and (3) such use was in a manner likely to cause
 14 confusion among ordinary consumers as to the source, sponsorship, affiliation, or approval of such
 15 wine. *See Pom Wonderful LLC v. Hubbard*, 775 F.3d 1118, 1124 (9th Cir. 2014) (trademark
 16 infringement claim requires trademark owner to show (1) it has a protected ownership interest in
 17 the subject mark, and (2) the accused infringer’s use of a similar mark is likely to cause consumer
 18 confusion, thereby infringing the trademark owner’s rights.); *Dep’t of Parks & Rec. v. Bazaar Del*
 19 *Mundo Inc.*, 448 F.3d 1118, 1124 (9th Cir. 2006); *E & G Gallo Winery v. Gallo Cattle Co.*, 967
 20 F.2d 1280, 1290 (9th Cir. 1992).

21 When assessing confusion, courts in the Ninth Circuit generally use the eight “*Sleekcraft*
 22 factors” to guide their analysis, namely (1) the similarity of the marks; (2) the relatedness of the
 23 goods; (3) the marketing channels used; (4) the strength of the senior mark; (5) the degree of care
 24 likely to be exercised by purchasers; (6) the defendant’s intent in selecting its mark; (7) any
 25 evidence of actual confusion; and (8) the likelihood the parties will expand their product lines.
 26 *E & G Gallo Winery*, 967 F.2d at 1290. The factors are not exhaustive, some are more important
 27 than others, and not all are necessarily relevant in each case. *See E & G Gallo*, 967 F.2d at 1290;
 28 *cf. also GoTo.com, Inc. v. Walt Disney Co.*, 202 F.3d 1199, 1209 (9th Cir. 2000) (“[w]e have

United States District Court
Northern District of California

1 previously emphasized the minimal importance of the intent factor”); *Brookfield Comm., Inc. v.*
2 *West Coast Ent. Corp.*, 174 F.3d 1036, 1060 (9th Cir. 1999) (“an intent to confuse customers is
3 not required”).

4 Here, no material dispute exists as to the first two elements: First, Constellation owns a
5 valid, protectable trademark in the term To Kalon. Whether it should be cancelled is a separate
6 and distinct inquiry. Second, TVH not only used the mark without consent, but it did so in
7 violation of this Court’s preliminary injunction and steadfastly maintains that it should be able to
8 use it. Thus, the Court focuses on the final element, that is, likelihood of confusion. The evidence
9 strongly shows likelihood of confusion under *Sleekcraft*. First, TVH used the precise words of the
10 trademark on both sides of the bottle which establishes similarity: To Kalon and To Kalon
11 Vineyard.



28 (TX0085, TX0086.)

1 Second, the goods overlap: both parties sell high end luxury wines. The wines at issue do
2 not just retail for over \$100. The highest end “cult” wines sell for over \$300 including TVH wines.

3 Next, the marketing channels overlap: both use wine clubs and online sales. Further, TVH
4 wants to expand to include sales at the vineyard itself as is shown by its application to the Napa
5 County Planning Commission for a tasting room.

6 With respect to the strength of the mark and degree of care by consumers, the Court notes
7 that while the clock cannot be turned back 33 years to determine with surgical precision the extent
8 of the market’s historical knowledge of To Kalon, what *is* known is that in the last 33 years, the
9 mark has gained substantial notoriety in the wine market among consumers and those in the trade.
10 The mark is understood to be connected to the alluvial fields in the Oakville American Viticultural
11 Area, but even experts in the field cannot easily distinguish between, on the one hand, the Home
12 Place parcel or the Lewelling parcel (which TVH calls “historic To Kalon”), or on the other hand,
13 the contiguous additional acreage which has the same geologic characteristics, such as the I-Block.
14 That RMW, and now Constellation, use the term as a both a brand and a reference to all of their
15 alluvial fields in the Oakville AVA does not weaken the mark. Rather, it is the combined effect
16 that has strengthened the mark.

17 Further, there is no credible evidence to show, nor is it logical to believe, that consumers
18 would be able to distinguish the infringing wine from those which appropriately bear the
19 trademark given how the label creates the source of confusion. Said differently, while the wine
20 from the hilly Baldrige parcel may taste differently than the wine from the alluvial valley parcels,
21 one first encounters the product by looking at a label. The use of To Kalon has meaning and the
22 precise location of parcels is difficult to discern, whether it be a valley parcel or a nearby hillside
23 parcel. (*See e.g.* TX1413, TX1414 (maps denoting different vineyard blocks on the valley floor).)
24 Nothing on a label can explain to a consumer the lines on a parcel map which have changed with
25 ownership, nor the geological differences of valley versus hillside land, all of which took many
26 hours of trial time to unravel. It is not reasonable to expect consumers to read TVH’s label and
27 understand the historic and geological differences in the various parcels at play. Rather, confusion
28 is much more likely if “To Kalon” is allowed on the label. Further, and as noted above, TVH’s

1 attempt to show lack of confusion fails entirely given the significant inadequacies of the purported
2 survey.⁸

3 Finally, TVH's intent is unambiguous. TVH wants consumers to associate its wine with
4 the wine which they understand to be sourced from those formerly belonging to the H.W. Crabb's
5 To Kalon Vineyard. According to Nova Cadamatre, the issue and price of "cult" wines is largely
6 a function of access. The more demand for a limited production of wines, the higher the price.
7 For instance, TVH sells 75 percent of the grapes from the Baldrige property to Harlan Estates
8 whose wine is widely known as a cult wine. Those are priced between \$350 to \$750 per bottle.
9 (TT, Vol. 3, p. 509:15-18.) While Mr. Nickel may be truthful when he claims not to want to be
10 affiliated with "Mondavi," increasing the prestige of his wine by affiliating it with To Kalon is a
11 wholly different motivation. If TVH can increase the prestige of its wine, then it can increase
12 demand, and over time, increase the price of a self-admitted "cult wine."

13 Thus, the Court finds all the *Sleekcraft* factors are satisfied and the risk of confusion
14 substantial. Constellation has proved a prima facie case of trademark infringement.

15 TVH asserts numerous affirmative defenses including that (i) TVH used the name To
16 Kalon fairly and in good faith only to describe the goods and their geographic origin and not as a
17 trademark, (ii) the trademark registrations should be cancelled, (iii) Constellation has unclean
18 hands, and (iv) Constellation abandoned the trademark. The Court addresses each.

19 **B. Affirmative Defenses**

20 *i. Fair Use*

21 TVH claims fair use in referencing To Kalon on its wine bottles because H. W. Crabb
22 owned the Baldrige Parcel for the last ten years of his life and produced wine from grapes grown
23 thereon. The Court disagrees.

24 In general, the first requirement of the "fair use" defense is that the use a party seeks to
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26 ⁸ Interestingly, the one person in the survey who revealed knowledge of the senior mark
27 (as is necessary for the efficacy of the survey) indicated that there *was* confusion. Many others
28 also identified confusion, though not credited by the "expert," and only acknowledged in post-trial
briefing by the lawyers.

1 exclude from a claim of infringement must be “otherwise than as a mark.” 15 U.S.C. § 1115(b)(4).
 2 A phrase functions as a trademark if it is used to “identify and distinguish” a party’s goods from
 3 those sold by others and to indicate source. *See id.*, § 1127; *see also TMEP*, § 1202. In some
 4 circumstances, however, a junior user can use another’s registered trademark so long as it is in a
 5 non-trademark, geographical sense. 2 McCarthy on Trademarks and Unfair Competition § 14:17
 6 (5th ed. September 2020 Update) (hereafter “McCarthy on Trademarks”). Producers of goods that
 7 are located in a specific place have a limited right to tell purchasers of their location. McCarthy
 8 on Trademarks, at § 14:12; *see Sazerac Brands, LLC v. Peristyle, LLC*, 892 F.3d 853, 855 (6th
 9 Cir. 2018) (affirming judgment for defendant who used Old Taylor Distillery to describe its
 10 location). 15 U.S.C. § 1115(b)(4) allows a fair use for trademarks that describe “the geographic
 11 origin” of a junior trademark user’s product. *See* 15 U.S.C. § 1115(b)(4); *see also Sazerac*
 12 *Brands, LLC v. Peristyle, LLC*, 892 F.3d at 855-859 (references were descriptive and geographic
 13 because they “referred to Old Taylor to pinpoint the historic location where [the distiller] planned
 14 to make a new bourbon, not to brand that bourbon.”).

15 As referenced above, the Court does not find that the historical record supports TVH’s
 16 claim that Mr. Crabb grew wine grapes on the Baldrige Parcel. TVH’s hired historian
 17 manipulated a sentence in a historic report to conclude incredulously that such a vineyard was not
 18 only possible, but likely.⁹ Counsel’s post hoc attempt to rehabilitate Dr. Miltenberger does not
 19 persuade where he was adamant in his trial testimony and unflinching in his resolve with respect
 20 to his opinion. The Court agrees that Mr. Crabb was an innovator and a businessman, but one
 21 must strain to suggest that he used the Baldrige parcel to grow grapes given the probate records.
 22 At most, one might surmise that the parcel contained a source of water which he piped to the
 23 valley.

24
 25 ⁹ “A: I -- I still believe that it's more -- more likely, given the description, that it was at the
 26 Baldrige property. You know, what's been laid out is a possible -- is a possible reading. I can see
 27 a reading where in terms of experimentation and because in the 1890s there was some notion that
 28 perhaps the hillsides produced better fruit, more resistant fruit, that you could have it both ways,
 experiment on the valley floor and experiment at Baldrige. I see that as a possibility as well.”
 (TT Vol. 1, p. 95:14-22.)

1 TVH's theory does not have support in even less historic times. Mr. Beckstoffer himself
2 testified that he only knew the land as a forest dating back to the late 1960s. TVH's own wine
3 expert Doug Frost conceded that the wine industry *did not* consider the reference to To Kalon to
4 include hillside vineyards and the ARG report submitted for the TVH's tasting room also
5 concluded the same.

6 Given the overwhelming lack of evidence to support this theory, to allow TVH to make
7 such a representation on its wine would itself mislead the wine consuming public. The affirmative
8 defense of fair use fails. Similarly, TVH's claim for declaratory relief of non-infringement due to
9 fair use also fails.

10 *ii. Cancellation*

11 Next TVH requests cancellation of the mark. Here, TVH claims that RMW
12 misrepresented a material fact to the USPTO in the trademark application process, RMW knew
13 that these representations were false when it made them, RMW made such misrepresentations
14 intending to induce the USPTO to rely on them, and the USPTO reasonably relied thereon. 15
15 U.S.C. § 1115(b)(1); *Intellimedia Sports, Inc. v. Intellimedia Corp.*, 43 U.S.P.Q.2D (BNA) 1203,
16 1206 (Trademark Trial & App. Bd. May 20, 1997) (fraud on the USPTO as basis for cancellation
17 of registered mark); *see, Int'l House of Pancakes v. Elca, Corp.*, 1982 TTAB LEXIS 17, *9
18 (Trademark Trial & App. Bd. November 30, 1982) (same). Cancellation on the basis of fraud on
19 the USPTO requires "clear and convincing evidence for the elements of fraud on the [US]PTO."
20 *OTR Wheel Engineering, Inc. v. West Worldwide Services, Inc.*, 897 F.3d 1008, 1020 (9th Cir.
21 2018). For a claim for cancellation based on fraud, a party must establish the following elements:
22 "1) a false representation regarding a material fact; 2) the registrant's knowledge or belief that the
23 representation is false; 3) the registrant's intent to induce reliance upon the misrepresentation; 4)
24 actual, reasonable reliance on the misrepresentation; and 5) damages proximately caused by that
25 reliance." *Id.* at 1019.

26 RMW's application shows that RMW explicitly advised the USPTO that To Kalon had
27 previously had a historical usage, stating: "[p]rior to the turn of the 20th Century, there was a
28 winery in the Napa Valley which used the name 'Tokalon.'" This was true, as is the fact that the

1 “use of the name was discontinued.” Had the name been as famous in the 1980s as it is today, it
2 would have been unnecessary for Mr. Mondavi to commission a historical report on the land
3 which compiled all the historic information. The context of the commission increases the
4 reliability of its findings and provides circumstantial evidence of Mr. Mondavi’s state of mind.
5 Notably, TVH identifies no motive for the alleged misrepresentation or need to have skewed the
6 historical record. Nor does the Court discern one. Rather it is much more likely that the name was
7 known to some but not all. Moreover, the representation to the USPTO was accurate.

8 In terms of whether RMW could have been more complete in its response to the USPTO,
9 the Court agrees with Mr. Robert Cissel who credibly testified that this historic information is not
10 the type of material information which is determinative of whether the “primary significance” of a
11 term is geographic. To Kalon does not refer to an AVA or a town or any other primary geographic
12 location. The record is replete with evidence showing that Mr. Crabb used To Kalon both as a
13 brand *and* as a reference to his vineyard. TVH’s attempt to make a stark distinction which did not
14 exist historically fails.

15 The weight of the evidence supports the finding that RMW provided the USPTO with
16 sufficient information and did not represent the then-current historical view of To Kalon, and, in
17 any event, given that historic use of the term as both a brand and a vineyard, there was no need for
18 the USPTO to reject the application on the basis that the “primary significance” of the term was
19 geographic. The affirmative defense of cancellation fails. Similarly, TVH’s claim for declaratory
20 relief of non-infringement due to cancellation also fails.

21 *iii. Unclean Hands*

22 TVH argues that it should have no liability for infringement of Constellation’s “To Kalon”
23 marks because Constellation has unclean hands, in that it has misrepresented the origin, nature,
24 characteristics, qualities, or geographic origins of its goods by selling wine labeled “To Kalon”
25 that is not at least 95 percent sourced from the “Home Place” and “Lewelling Place” parcels. 15
26 U.S.C. § 1125(a). The Court disagrees.

27 To prevail on an unclean hands defense, the party “must demonstrate that the [opposing
28 party’s] conduct is inequitable and that the conduct relates to the subject matter of its claims.”

1 *Fuddruckers, Inc. v. Doc's B.R. Others, Inc.*, 826 F.2d 837, 847 (9th Cir.1987). “[E]quity requires
2 that those seeking its protection shall have acted fairly and without fraud or deceit as to the
3 controversy in issue.” *Id.* A party must demonstrate unclean hands in a trademark action by
4 “clear, convincing evidence.” *TrafficSchool.com, Inc. v. Edriver Inc.*, 653 F.3d 820, 833 (9th Cir.
5 2011).

6 Here, Constellation not only has an incontestable mark which it can use accordingly, but,
7 the manner in which it has used the mark does not misrepresent the origin, nature, characteristics,
8 qualities or geographic origins of the wine on the labels. All of the wines at issue originate from
9 either the Home Place or Lewelling Place parcels or those areas contiguous thereto which have the
10 same alluvial geographic structure and the same microclimate which contribute to the flavor of the
11 grapes. There is no misrepresentation. Nor is there a requirement, given the incontestable mark,
12 that Constellation only use the mark on the wines originating from those two parcels.

13 The lawsuit between Mondavi and Beckstoffer which ended in a settlement and license
14 agreement resolved any issues which may have existed by specifying labeling practices to protect
15 against any legitimate concern. There is no evidence that Constellation is in violation of those
16 practices. The affirmative defense of unclean hands fails. Similarly, TVH’s claim for relief based
17 on false advertising and false designation of origin under 15 U.S.C. 1125(a) also fails.¹⁰

18 *iv. Abandonment and Naked Licensing*

19 Finally, TVH argues that Constellation has effectively abandoned the mark by failing to
20 control licensing adequately—in other words, Constellation has issued naked licenses to its
21 sublicensees and has effectively abandoned the To Kalon trademark.

22 To prove abandonment, TVH must show that Constellation licensed the use of the To
23 Kalon and To Kalon Vineyard trademarks and then failed to control the quality of goods produced
24 by its licensees and sub-licensees in an adequate manner. *Barcamerica Int’l USA Tr. v. Tyfield*
25 *Importers, Inc.*, 289 F.3d 589, 595-96 (9th Cir. 2002). “[T]he proponent of a naked license theory
26

27 _____
28 ¹⁰ Accordingly, to the extent not otherwise addressed in this Order, the Court declines to
address Constellation’s affirmative defenses to TVH’s affirmative claims for relief.

1 of trademark abandonment must meet a stringent standard of proof.” *FreecycleSunnyvale v.*
 2 *Freecycle Network*, 626 F.3d 509, 514-15 (9th Cir. 2010).¹¹ As the Ninth Circuit has explained:

3 Naked licensing occurs when the licensor fails to exercise adequate
 4 quality control over the licensee. . . . Naked licensing may result in
 5 the trademark's ceasing to function as a symbol of quality and a
 6 controlled source. . . . We have previously declared that naked
 7 licensing is inherently deceptive and constitutes abandonment of any
 8 rights to the trademark by the licensor. . . . Consequently, where the
 9 licensor fails to exercise adequate quality control over the licensee, a
 10 court may find that the trademark owner has abandoned the
 11 trademark, in which case the owner would be estopped from asserting
 12 rights to the trademark. . . .

13 *Id.* at 515-16 (internal quotation marks and citations omitted). The purpose of “controlling” the
 14 “quality of goods” is to protect the trademark.

15 Trial evidence demonstrated that the fundamental approach to marketing of wines has
 16 remained relatively consistent for decades. The focus on quality is preeminent.

17 This is all promotion. It did not happen overnight, nor by accident.
 18 Greater affluence, with the consequent increase in travel and social
 19 occasions, has opened new vistas on the world of wine. The “new”
 20 consumer with an informed taste for good wine did not just suddenly
 21 appear, as Agricultural Economist Dr. Kirby Moulton says, “like
 22 Venus on the half-shell.” He is the result of quiet but persistent
 23 industry promotion. . . . Quality is still and above all the answer.
 24 Nobody needs a crystal ball to predict that quality wines will never be
 25 oversupplied.

26 California Wineries, Napa Valley, Volume One, p.79 (1975) (TX0312). Thus, in the wine
 27 industry and the maintenance of one’s trademark, the focus is on quality and, perhaps, for lower-
 28 end wines consistency. In this way, the issue of quality differs given the nature of the wine.
 29 Importantly, the question of commercial adequacy, in terms of control, cannot be untethered from
 30 the realities of the industry itself nor arbitrarily tied to stale generic requirements as TVH would
 31 have the Court do.

32 Even assuming TVH could argue abandonment as an affirmative defense, the facts do not

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1 support TVH's position. Undisputedly, Constellation has licensed the trademark to Beckstoffer
 2 who has sub-licensed to wineries who buy grapes from Beckstoffer's vineyards. Here,
 3 Constellation and Beckstoffer are operating in an electronic age. Hard files do not exist as they
 4 did in the past so the lack thereof does not prove abandonment. Informality does not necessarily
 5 mean lack of control in a close-knit environment. Everyone of import to the question, that is
 6 Constellation, Beckstoffer, and all the sublicensees, have an incentive to ensure the quality of the
 7 goods, and by extension, the strength of the trademark as it is the trademark that adds value and
 8 goodwill to the goods. Thus, the fact that Constellation receives reports with hyperlinks showing
 9 the wine ratings of wine critics for wines using the To Kalon trademarks is evidence of control.
 10 The acknowledgement and informal monitoring that wines being produced from these grapes are
 11 done so by some of the most prominent wine makers in the industry and sold at luxury prices is
 12 evidence of control. The periodic tasting of the wines also evidences control.

13 Had a formal program been implemented, this issue would never have been raised, but to
 14 claim abandonment strains credulity. There is no need to overregulate quality where no evidence
 15 exists that quality is in peril. The process of producing luxury wines is organic, artistic and
 16 extends over many years. The day-to-day informal monitoring of these wines evidences control.
 17 Mr. Beckstoffer admitted that at least once, he had to discuss concerns with a sublicensee over
 18 which he would have terminated the license due to quality issues.¹² The law does not demand
 19 documentation, although documentation often resolves issues without the need of litigation.

20 That Gallo Wineries conducts chemical experiments to monitor its mass produced, low-
 21 end wines does not serve as useful corollary. Again, issues regarding adequate control need not be
 22 formulaic. Mr. Paul Reidl credibly testified as to the process used by Gallo Wineries, but the
 23 concern about a consistent flavor or any health effects from a low-end product does not mean that
 24 its approach is commercially reasonable for luxury wines. Even Mr. Reidl's template for a license

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 26 ¹² Counsel's cross-examination of Mr. Beckstoffer did not persuade. Mr. Beckstoffer
 27 credibly testified that under his sublicense agreement he was entitled to terminate for failure to
 28 comply with the requirements therein including quality issues. Counsel's attempt to corner him on
 certain technical language in the sublicense failed and did not result in any evidence to support
 plaintiff's theory.

1 tied to quality control (*see* TX00011D) is consistent with the actions taken by Constellation and
 2 Beckstoffer. Moreover, the informal approach used here has, in fact, worked. There is not even a
 3 hint of a suggestion that the wines produced by the licensees and sub-licensees were not of high
 4 quality.

5 In short, it appears that the “defense” was raised merely as a hail-Mary attempt to cancel a
 6 mark so TVH could capitalize on it. Notably, the claim was never made until after the Court
 7 issued its preliminary injunction and the prospect of an award of attorneys’ fees became more
 8 realistic. The claim of abandonment fails.

9 C. Constellation’s State Law Claims

10 Constellation’s three state law claims turn on essentially the same tests as do their federal
 11 law counterpart claims. *See Cleary v. News Corp.*, 30 F.3d 1255, 1262-63 (9th Cir. 1994) (“This
 12 Circuit has consistently held that state common law claims of unfair competition and actions
 13 pursuant to California Business and Professions Code § 17200 are ‘substantially congruent’ to
 14 claims made under the Lanham Act.”) (quoting *International Order of Job’s Daughters v.*
 15 *Lindeburg & Co.*, 633 F.2d 912, 916 (9th Cir. 1980)). The elements of the state law count for
 16 trademark infringement¹³ (Fourth Claim), unfair competition¹⁴ (Fifth Claim) and Section 17200 of
 17 California Business and Professions Code¹⁵ (Sixth Claim) overlap with that of the federal claim.

18
 19 ¹³ TVH shall be liable for infringement under California common law if: (i) Constellation
 20 made prior use of the TO KALON or TO KALON VINEYARD trademarks, and (ii) there is a
 21 likelihood that TVH’s uses of the name To Kalon will be confused with Constellation’s use of
 those marks. *See Wood v. Apodaca*, 375 F. Supp. 2d 942, 947-48 (N.D. Cal. 2005).

22 ¹⁴ TVH shall be liable for unfair competition under California common law if: (i) TVH
 23 wrongly exploited Constellation’s TO KALON and/or TO KALON VINEYARD trademarks,
 24 and/or reputation, and (ii) Constellation suffered a “competitive injury” as a result of TVH’s
 25 conduct. *Walter v. Mattel, Inc.*, 210 F.3d 1108, 1111 (9th Cir. 2000) (“Claims for false
 26 designation of origin under the Lanham Act and unfair competition under California common law
 both share a single test: likelihood of confusion.”); *Microsoft Corp. v. Buy More, Inc.*, No. 15-
 56544, 703 F. App’x 476, 480 (9th Cir. June 27, 2017) (“The analysis for these claims is therefore
 identical to the analysis for [the trademark owner’s] trademark infringement claim.”) (internal
 citations omitted).

27 ¹⁵ TVH shall be liable under California Business & Professions Code § 17200 *et seq.* if TVH
 28 committed either (i) an unlawful business practice, or (ii) a fraudulent business practice, or (iii) an
 unfair business practice, or (iv) an act prohibited by Bus & Prof. Code 17500 *et seq.*, and

1 The Court relies on the prior analysis except as is noted herein. The Fourth Claim for
 2 trademark infringement under state law is the same as the federal claim and the Court finds in
 3 favor of Constellation on the same grounds as discussed above. With respect to Fifth Claim for
 4 unfair competition, the first element is satisfied for the same reasons as discussed above. With
 5 respect to the second element regarding “competitive injury,” the Court finds it is satisfied by
 6 TVH’s acts of selling wine with the good will which accompanied the use of Constellation’s
 7 trademark. The Court finds in Constellation’s favor on this claim. However, with respect to the
 8 Sixth Claim, while the Court finds the first element satisfied for the same reasons referenced
 9 above, Constellation failed to provide any evidence that it lost money or property. This claim fails
 10 for lack of proof.

11 **III. RELIEF**

12 The Court acknowledges that Constellation has withdrawn its claims for damages (*see* Dkt.
 13 No. 236, n.16), but seeks injunctive relief. Given the findings of fact and conclusions of law, a
 14 permanent injunction is aptly supported.

15 Under Ninth Circuit law, an injunction should issue upon proof that the plaintiff (1)
 16 “suffered an irreparable injury; (2) that remedies available at law . . . are inadequate to compensate
 17 for that injury; (3) that . . . the balance of hardships between the [parties] [warrants] a remedy in
 18 equity; and (4) that the public interest would not be disserved by a permanent injunction.” *eBay*
 19 *Inc. v. MercExchange LLC*, 547 U.S. 388, 391 (2006); *see also Herb Reed Enter., LLC v. Florida*
 20 *Enter. Mgmt., Inc.*, 736 F.3d 1239, 1249 (9th Cir. 2013). Each of those factors has unquestionably
 21 been met.

22 The loss of control over one’s trademarks, reputation, and goodwill is “a quintessentially
 23 irreparable injury.” *Adidas Am., Inc. v. Skechers USA, Inc.*, 149 F. Supp. 3d 1222, 1249 (D. Or.
 24 2016) (citing *Herb Reed*, 736 F.3d at 1250); *see also Toyo Tire & Rubber Co. v. Kabusikiki*

26 Constellation has suffered injury in fact and has lost money or property as a result of the unfair
 27 competition. Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17200; *Kearns v. Ford Motor Co.*, 567 F.3d 1120, 1127
 28 (9th Cir. 2009); *Saunders v. Superior Court*, 27 Cal. App. 4th 832, 838-39 (1994) (explaining
 what “unlawful” and “fraudulent” business practices are).

1 *Kaisha Tokyo Nihoon Rubber Corp*, 2015 WL 6501228, *4 (D. Nev. Oct. 26, 2015) (finding
2 irreparable harm where trademark owner had “spent considerable time and effort building its
3 reputation”); McCarthy on Trademarks, § 30:47.70 (“A likelihood of damage to reputation is by
4 its nature ‘irreparable.’ Like trying to un-ring a bell, trying to ‘compensate’ after the fact for
5 damage to business goodwill and reputation cannot constitute a just or full compensation.”).¹⁶

6 As trial evidence showed, To Kalon has become a fixture in Northern California’s wine
7 industry. Attempting to quantify the goodwill which would be lost, especially amongst the narrow
8 luxury wine market, is incredibly difficult. Without an injunction, The Vineyard House, LLC will
9 continue to try and use the term for its own benefit and such use will not only be a violation of
10 Constellation’s trademark rights but will harm the public as it will suggest an inference regarding
11 the origin of the wine that is unsupported in any credible manner. The Vineyard House, LLC will
12 suffer no hardship as it has no right, or credible basis, to use the term.

13 Further, the evidence demonstrated convincingly that Mr. Nickel, as the sole owner of The
14 Vineyard House, LLC, has acted in a manner to combine and leverage his various commercial
15 pursuits and does not maintain boundaries. In a vacuum, such conduct may be reasonable from a
16 small business perspective. However, given the context here, the Court has little to no confidence
17 that Mr. Nickel will be able to keep separate his horse, or stock, farm business which caters to the
18 billionaires of Wellington, Florida from his wine business as run by The Vineyard House, LLC
19 which caters to consumers of luxury cult wines. Relief is issued given that context.

20
21
22 ¹⁶ The Trademark Modernization Act of 2020 (codified as part of the Consolidated
23 Appropriations Act, 2021, Pub. L. 116-260) was signed into law on December 27, 2020. That
24 law, *inter alia*, modified the text of 15 U.S.C. § 1116(a) relating to awarding injunctive relief in
25 trademark infringement actions by inserting the following sentence after the first sentence:

26 A plaintiff seeking any such injunction shall be entitled to a rebuttable
27 presumption of irreparable harm upon a finding of a violation
28 identified in this subsection in the case of a motion for a permanent
injunction or upon a finding of likelihood of success on the merits for
a violation identified in this subsection in the case of a motion for a
preliminary injunction or temporary restraining order.

Pub. L. 116-260. Here, in light of the Court’s analysis, the insertion of the above sentence only
reinforces the appropriateness of a permanent injunction requested by Constellation.

United States District Court
Northern District of California

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Accordingly, the requested relief shall be granted and The Vineyard House, LLC and any and all of its agents, members, officers, directors, employees, and/or principals shall be permanently enjoined from using the words To Kalon or To Kalon Vineyard or any variation thereof in any manner on any wine, wine-related product, reference to a wine product, or event or activity where such wine is present or referenced. The permanent injunction extends to any affiliate of The Vineyard House, LLC and its principal Jeremy Nickel including without limitation the To-Kalon Farm.¹⁷

The Clerk of the Court is directed to enter judgment accordingly and to close this matter.¹⁸

This Order terminates Docket Numbers 236, 237, and 240.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Dated: January 26, 2021


YVONNE GONZALEZ ROGERS
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

¹⁷ The Court defers any finding on attorneys’ fees until further briefing from the parties.

¹⁸ Additionally, for the good cause shown therein, the Court **GRANTS** the parties’ administrative motions to seal with respect to the parties’ post-trial briefing.