

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

Civil Division

Central District, Stanley Mosk Courthouse, Department 224

22STCV06081

WILLIAM B. PITT, et al. vs ANGELINA JOLIE, et al.

May 6, 2026

11:38 AM

Judge: Honorable Cindy Pánuco
Judicial Assistant: Pedro Martinez
Courtroom Assistant: Deonna Jones

CSR: None
ERM: None
Deputy Sheriff: None

APPEARANCES:

For Plaintiff(s): No Appearances

For Defendant(s): No Appearances

NATURE OF PROCEEDINGS: Ruling on Submitted Matter

The Court, having taken the matter under submission on 05/01/2026 for Hearing on Motion to Quash Service of Summons for Lack of Jurisdiction and Dismiss or Stay; --- CRS #6007, now rules as follows:

FINAL RULING

Cross-Defendants Marc-Olivier Perrin, SAS Miraval Provence, and SAS Familles Perrin's Motion to Quash Service of the Summons and First Amended Cross-Complaint for lack of personal jurisdiction is DENIED. The alternative Motion to Sever and to Dismiss or Stay the Claims Against them on Grounds of Forum Non Conveniens is DENIED.

In accordance with CCP §418.10(b), Cross-Defendants Marc-Olivier Perrin, SAS Miraval Provence, and SAS Familles Perrin responsive pleading is due 15 days from service of written notice of this order.

ANALYSIS (Cross-Defendants Marc-Olivier Perrin, SAS Miraval Provence, and SAS Familles Perrin's Motion to Quash Service of the Summons and First Amended Cross-Complaint)

Introduction

On February 17, 2022, Plaintiffs William B. Pitt and Mondo Bongo, LLC ("Plaintiffs") filed a Complaint against Defendants Angelina Jolie and Nouvel, LLC alleging five causes of action for: (1) Tortious Interference with Contractual Relations; (2) Breach of Implied-in-Fact Contract; (3) Breach of Quasi-Contract, Pledged in the Alternative; (4) Breach of Implied Covenant of

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Good Faith and Fair Dealing; and (5) Constructive Trust. The case arises out of a dispute regarding the transfer of Defendant Jolie's interest in Château Miraval S.A., a French company comprising a home and vineyard in the south of France, without Plaintiff Pitt's consent.

On August 8, 2023, Nouvel, LLC filed its First Amended Cross-Complaint in this Action.

On September 20, 2023, Specially Appearing Cross-Defendants Marc-Olivier Perrin, Familles Perrin, And Miraval Provenches filed a Motion to Quash service of summons and the First Amended Cross-Complaint for Lack of Personal Jurisdiction.

On April 8, 2026, Defendant and Cross-Complainant Nouvel filed an Opposition to Cross-Defendants' Motion to Quash.

On April 24, 2026, Specially Appearing Cross-Defendants Marc-Olivier Perrin, Familles Perrin, And Miraval Provenches filed their Reply.

On May 1, 2026, this Court heard oral arguments and took this motion under submission. The Court, now rules as follows.

Burden on Motion

“When a motion to quash is properly brought, the burden of proof is placed upon the plaintiff to establish the facts of jurisdiction by a preponderance of the evidence.” (*Aquila, Inc. v. Sup. Ct.* (2007) 148 Cal.App.4th 556, 568.) When a nonresident defendant challenges personal jurisdiction the burden shifts to the plaintiff to demonstrate by a preponderance of the evidence that all necessary jurisdictional criteria are met. (*Jewish Defense Org. v. Superior Court* (1999) 72 Cal. App. 4th 1045, 1054-1055.) This burden must be met by competent evidence in affidavits and authenticated documentary evidence. (*Id.* at p. 1055.)

An unverified complaint does not serve as substantial evidence for meeting a plaintiff's burden to show personal jurisdiction in opposition to a motion to quash. (*See Sheard v. Sup. Ct.* (1974) 40 Cal.App.3d 207, 210-212.)

Personal Jurisdiction

A defendant may move to quash service of summons on the ground of lack of jurisdiction of the court over him or her. (Code Civ. Proc., § 418.10, subd. (a)(1).) The court may dismiss without prejudice the complaint in whole, or as to that defendant, when dismissal is made pursuant to

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Section 418.10. (Code Civ. Proc., § 581, subd. (h).)

"A court of this state may exercise jurisdiction on any basis not inconsistent with the Constitution of this state or of the United States." (Code Civ. Proc., § 410.10.) "The Due Process Clause protects an individual's liberty interest in not being subject to the binding judgments of a forum with which he has established no meaningful 'contacts, ties, or relations.'" (*Burger King Corp. v. Rudzewicz* (1985) 471 U.S. 462, 471-472.) A state court may not exercise personal jurisdiction over a party under circumstances that would offend "traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice." (*Asahi Metal Industry Co., Ltd., v. Superior Court of California, Solano County* (1987) 480 U.S. 102, 113.)

When a defendant moves to quash service of process on jurisdictional grounds, the plaintiff has the initial burden of demonstrating facts justifying the exercise of jurisdiction. (*Jayone Foods, Inc. v. Aekyung Industrial Co. Ltd.* (2019) 31 Cal.App.5th 543, 553.) Once facts showing minimum contacts with the forum state are established, the defendant has the burden to demonstrate the exercise of jurisdiction would be unreasonable. (*Ibid.*) "The plaintiff must provide specific evidentiary facts, through affidavits and other authenticated documents, sufficient to allow the court to independently conclude whether jurisdiction is appropriate. [Citation.] The plaintiff cannot rely on allegations in an unverified complaint or vague and conclusory assertions of ultimate facts. [Citation.]" (*Strasner v. Touchstone Wireless Repair & Logistics, LP* (2016) 5 Cal.App.5th 215, 222.)

A defendant is subject to a state's general jurisdiction if its contacts "are so continuance and systematic as to render [it] essentially at home in the forum State." (*Daimler AG v. Bauman* (2014) 571 U.S. 117, 127.) A nonresident defendant may be subject to the specific jurisdiction of the forum "if the defendant has purposefully availed himself or herself of forum benefits [citation], and the 'controversy is related to or 'arises out of' a defendant's contacts with the forum.' [Citations.]" (*Vons Companies, Inc. v. Seabest Foods, Inc.* (1996) 14 Cal.4th 434, 446.) This test does not require a "causal relationship between the defendant's in-state activity and the litigation." (*Ford Motor Co. v. Montana Eighth Judicial District Court* (2021) 141 S.Ct. 1017, 1026.) The "arise out" of standard "asks about causation," but "relate to" does not. (*Ibid.*) "[W]hen a corporation has 'continuously and deliberately exploited [a State's] market, it must reasonably anticipate being haled into [that State's] court[s]' to defend actions 'based on' products causing injury there." (*Id.* at p. 1027.)

General Jurisdiction

General jurisdiction over a corporate defendant exists when the corporation's "affiliations with

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the State are so ‘continuous and systematic’ as to render it essentially at home in the forum State.” (*Daimler, supra*, 571 U.S. 117, 139 [quoting *Goodyear Dunlop Tires Operations, S.A. v. Brown* (2011) 564 U.S. 915, 919].) For a corporation, the paradigmatic examples of such affiliations are the locations where the defendant is incorporated and of the defendant’s principal place of business. (*Daimler, supra*, 571 U.S. 117, 137.)

Cross-Complainants fail to demonstrate by a preponderance of evidence that Cross-Defendants has contacts with California that are so continuous and systematic for this Court to exercise general jurisdiction over them.

Perrin is a French citizen who resides and works in France. Familles Perrin and Miraval Provence are French entities organized under the laws of France with their registered offices in Orange, France. Their principal places of business are in France. The Court has carefully considered Nouvel's evidence, including its contention that Familles Perrin owns and operates Tablas Creek Vineyard in Paso Robles, California, and that the Perrin Cross-Defendants supply wine products into the United States, including California, with the United States described as the brand’s “biggest market.” These contacts, while substantial as to the United States generally, do not approach the rigorous standard required to render any of the Perrin Cross-Defendants “essentially at home” in California within the meaning of *Daimler*.

The Court therefore finds that Nouvel has not met its burden of demonstrating general jurisdiction over the Perrin Cross-Defendants.

Specific Jurisdiction

Specific jurisdiction can be exercised if: (1) the defendant has purposefully availed itself of forum benefits with respect to the matter in controversy; (2) the controversy is related to or arises out of the defendant's contacts with the forum; and (3) the assertion of jurisdiction would comport with fair play and substantial justice. (*Virtualmagic Asia, Inc., supra*, at p. 238.) Factors for purposeful availment include: (1) whether defendant directed activities at forum residents; or (2) defendant created continuing obligations with residents. (*Ibid.*)

Purposeful Availment

“If the nonresident defendant does not have substantial and systematic contacts in the forum sufficient to establish general jurisdiction, he or she still may be subject to the specific jurisdiction of the forum, if the defendant has purposefully availed himself or herself of forum

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benefits, and the ‘controversy is related to or ‘arises out of’ a defendant’s contacts with the forum.’” (*Id.* at pg. 446, citations omitted.) The purposeful availment test is only satisfied if the defendant purposefully and voluntarily directs its activities toward California so that the defendant should expect, because of the benefits it receives, to be subject to jurisdiction here based on its contacts with California. (*Snowney v. Harrah’s Entertainment, Inc.* (2005) 35 Cal.4th 1054, 1062.) Purposeful availment occurs when a nonresident defendant purposefully directs its activities at California residents, deliberately engages in significant activities here, or creates “continuing obligations” between itself and California residents. (*Id.* at pg. 1063.)

Each defendant's contacts with the forum state must be assessed individually. (*Calder v. Jones* (1984) 465 U.S. 783, 790; *Anglo Irish Bank Corp., PLC v. Superior Court* (2008) 165 Cal.App.4th 969, 980.) However, “[a] corporation or other business entity acts through authorized individuals, and the activities of its employees are attributed to the business entity for purposes of personal jurisdiction.” (*Anglo Irish Bank*, at pp. 983-984.)

The purposeful availment inquiry focuses on the defendant’s intentionality. (*Pavlovich v. Superior Court, supra*, 29 Cal.4th at 269.) This prong is only satisfied when the defendant purposefully and voluntarily directs his activities toward the forum so that he should expect, by virtue of the benefit he receives, to be subject to the court’s jurisdiction based on his contacts with the forum. (*Id.*) The purposeful availment requirement ensures that a defendant will not be haled into a jurisdiction solely as a result of random, fortuitous or attenuated contacts, or of the unilateral activity of a third person. (*Id.*) When a defendant purposefully avails itself of the privilege of conducting activities within the forum state, it has clear notice that it is subject to suit there and can act to alleviate the risk of burdensome litigation by procuring insurance, passing the expected costs onto consumers, or, if the risks are too great, severing its connection with the state. (*Id.*) Purposeful availment requires that the defendant have performed some type of affirmative conduct which allows or promotes the transaction of business within the forum state. (*Goehring v. Superior Court* (1998) 62 Cal.App.4th 894, 907.)

Nouvel has submitted, in the form of authenticated documentary evidence accompanying the Lesnick and Pepper Declarations, evidence of the following:

First, Perrin traveled to California on at least four occasions in October 2016, May 2017, February 2018, and April 2019 to meet with Pitt regarding the operations of Chateau Miraval. (Lesnick Decl. Exs. E, F, G.) In January 2022, Perrin advised Pitt that he "might go to LA" and stated that "it would be great to catch up on Stoli and the rest." (Lesnick Decl. Exh. I.) These visits were not “random” but in the context of, and for the purpose of, conducting Chateau Miraval business with Pitt in California. At oral argument, Cross-Defendants contended that the

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visits discussed, never occurred. Nonetheless, the discussions revolved around Chateau Miraval.

Second, Nouvel has produced documentary evidence that Perrin engaged in sustained communications with Pitt in California over a period of years concerning the management, branding, and trademark strategy of Chateau Miraval. (Lesnick Decl. Exh. D.) Perrin also communicated with Jolie and members of Jolie's California-based team between January 2019 and 2021 to provide updates on Chateau Miraval's business. (Lesnick Decl. Exh. C.) Perrin further caused funds to be transferred to a Los Angeles-based bank account on at least one occasion in connection with the business. (Lesnick Decl. Exh. J.)

Third, Familles Perrin and Miraval Provence supplied wine products to the United States, including California, and Perrin himself described the United States as the brand's "biggest market." (Lesnick Decl. Exh. K.)

Here, the evidence provided shows a sustained pattern of communications, in-person meetings, and financial transactions concerning the business at issue.

The Court is also persuaded that Perrin's contacts are properly attributed to Familles Perrin and Miraval Provence, because Perrin is the president of both entities and the evidence reflects that his California-directed conduct was undertaken in his corporate capacity and concerned the business operations of those entities. (*See Anglo Irish Bank, supra*, 165 Cal.App.4th at pp. 983-984 [activities of corporate officers and agents undertaken on behalf of the entity attributed to the entity for personal jurisdiction purposes]; *Rivelli v. Hemm* (2021) 67 Cal.App.5th 380, 393 [corporate officer's status as executive does not insulate him from jurisdiction; "each defendant's contacts with the forum state must be assessed individually"].)

In *Anglo Irish Bank Corp., PLC v. Superior Court*, the court found that a director's visit to California to solicit business for his company constituted purposeful availment, supported by evidence of meetings to discuss potential leveraged investments (*Anglo Irish Bank Corp., PLC v. Superior Court*, 165 Cal.App.4th 969 (2008).)

Like the directors in *Anglo Irish Bank*, who visited California to solicit and develop business relationships for the entities they served and were thereby found to have purposefully availed themselves of California, the documentary evidence supports the allegations that Perrin traveled to and corresponded with California regarding the management of a business in which Familles Perrin and Miraval Provence had a direct ongoing commercial interest.

The Court finds that Nouvel has met its burden of establishing purposeful availment as to each of

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the Perrin Cross-Defendants by a preponderance of the evidence.

Relatedness

To establish minimum contacts for specific jurisdiction, the plaintiff must show that its claim relates to or arises from the defendant's contacts with the forum. (*Bristol-Myers, supra*, 137 S. Ct. at p. 1780.) This is referred to as the "relatedness" requirement. (*Snowney v. Harrah's Entm't, Inc.* (2005) 35 Cal.4th 1054, 1067.) This requirement is satisfied if there is a substantial nexus or connection between the defendant's California contacts and the plaintiff's claim. (*Id.* at p. 1068.)

The Perrin Cross-Defendants contend that any communications and meetings with California-based parties were "ordinary-course" business activities concerning the operations of a French wine business and thus unrelated to the cross-claims, which they characterize as concerning conduct in France and Luxembourg. Even after oral argument, the Court is not persuaded on the present record.

The First Amended Cross-Complaint alleges that the Perrin Cross-Defendants coordinated with Pitt and Mondo Bongo – both California residents and entities – to (i) impose a shareholder deadlock at Quimicum that prevented Nouvel (a California LLC) from exercising its governance rights; (ii) divert Chateau Miraval's assets to side businesses in which Nouvel held no interest; and (iii) misappropriate Chateau Miraval's trademarks. (See FACC.) The communications and meetings between Perrin and Pitt in California were not contacts collateral to the cross-claims. Rather, they are alleged to have been the means by which the conduct giving rise to those claims was coordinated and advanced. Nouvel has additionally submitted evidence indicating that the Perrin Cross-Defendants were registering certain trademarks while simultaneously denying Nouvel its rights in those trademarks. (Lesnick Decl. Exh. L.) Exhibit L includes conversations directly related to the allegations in this matter, implicating the rights of a California LLC.

Here, the alleged California-directed contacts span the period and concern the subject matter of the alleged tortious conduct. Accordingly, the Court finds that the claims are related to the Cross-Defendants' contacts with California.

Fair Play and Substantial Justice

Once a plaintiff has established purposeful availment and relatedness, the burden shifts to the defendant to make a "compelling case" that the exercise of jurisdiction would be unreasonable. (*Vons, supra*, 14 Cal.4th at p. 449.) The relevant factors include the burden on the defendant, the

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interests of the forum state, the plaintiff's interest in obtaining relief, the interstate judicial system's interest in efficient resolution, and the shared interest of the several states in furthering fundamental substantive social policies. (*Burger King Corp. v. Rudzewicz* (1985) 471 U.S. 462, 476-477.)

Cross-Defendants have not made a compelling showing that exercising jurisdiction would be unreasonable. While the burden of litigating in California will not be trivial for parties domiciled in France, the Perrin Cross-Defendants are sophisticated commercial actors represented by experienced United States counsel, and the evidence shows they engaged extensively with California parties over many years concerning the business at issue. California has a substantial interest in providing a forum for alleged tortious interference with the rights and economic interests of a California limited liability company (Nouvel) and in adjudicating allegations of misconduct involving its own residents (Pitt) and entities (Mondo Bongo). Considerations of judicial efficiency favor retaining the claims in this Court, where related claims against numerous co-defendants are already pending and where substantial proceedings have already taken place. Severing the Perrin Cross-Defendants would risk inconsistent rulings on overlapping factual and legal issues.

Accordingly, the motion to quash service of summons for lack of personal jurisdiction is DENIED.

Alternative Request to Dismiss or Stay

Forum non conveniens is an equitable doctrine invoking the discretionary power of the court to decline to exercise its jurisdiction when it believes that the action may be more appropriately and justly tried in another forum. (*Stangvik v. Shiley Inc.* (1991) 54 Cal.3d 744, 751.) In deciding a forum non conveniens motion, the trial court must first determine whether the alternative forum is a suitable place for trial. (*American Cemwood Corp. v. American Home Assurance Co.* (2001) 87 Cal.App.4th 431, 436.) This is a nondiscretionary determination. (*Ibid.*) Only if a suitable alternative forum exists does the court proceed to balance the private and public interest factors. (*Ibid.*)

Here, the Perrin Cross-Defendants have indicated that they would consent to jurisdiction in France and would stipulate to toll any applicable statute of limitations during the pendency of this California action. However, they have not established that the other Cross-Defendants are subject to jurisdiction in France or have consented to litigate the related claims there. Nouvel cannot assert its overlapping claims against these other Cross-Defendants in France, and the

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Perrin Cross-Defendants have not demonstrated otherwise.

Pursuant to *American Cemwood*, France is not a suitable alternative for trial against each Cross-Defendant. Therefore, Forum Non Conveniens does not warrant dismissal or stay.

Cross-Defendants requested that the Court continue the hearing while the Perrin Cross-Defendants ascertained whether the other Cross-Defendants are subject to jurisdiction in France or have consented to litigate claims there. The cross-complaint at issue, and this motion, have now been pending since 2023. Trial is tentatively set for trial in August 2027. The Court DENIES the request for a continuance of this hearing.

Accordingly, the alternative motion to sever and to dismiss or stay the claims against the Perrin Cross-Defendants on grounds of forum non conveniens is DENIED.

Conclusion

Cross-Defendants Marc-Olivier Perrin, SAS Miraval Provence, and SAS Familles Perrin's Motion to Quash Service of the Summons and First Amended Cross-Complaint for lack of personal jurisdiction is DENIED. The alternative Motion to Sever and to Dismiss or Stay the Claims Against them on Grounds of Forum Non Conveniens is DENIED.

In accordance with CCP §418.10(b), Cross-Defendants Marc-Olivier Perrin, SAS Miraval Provence, and SAS Familles Perrin responsive pleading is due 15 days from service of written notice of this order.

Moving party to give notice.

Certificate of Service is attached.