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NOT FOR PUBLICATION

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS

FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT

SHEILA CRUZ; DEBORAH
ESPARAZA; CATHERINE SILAS,

Plaintiffs-Appellants,

v.

ANHEUSER-BUSCH COMPANIES,
LLC,

Defendant-Appellee.

No. 15-56021

D.C. No.

2:14-cv-09670-AB-AS

MEMORANDUM*

Appeal from the United States District Court
for the Central District of California
Andre Birotte, Jr., District Judge, Presiding

Argued and Submitted February 7, 2017
Pasadena, California

Before: GRABER, BYBEE, and CHRISTEN, Circuit Judges.

Plaintiffs Sheila Cruz, Deborah Esparza, and Catherine Silas sued Defendant Anheuser-Busch, LLC, on behalf of themselves and a proposed class of California consumers, for false advertising, omission, and breach of warranty under California law. Plaintiffs allege that the labels on cartons containing cans of "Rita"

* This disposition is not appropriate for publication and is not precedent except as provided by Ninth Circuit Rule 36-3.

malt beverages, including Lime-a-Rita, are misleading by using the word "Light," because the products contain considerably more calories and carbohydrates per ounce than other Budweiser products. The district court dismissed the action with prejudice under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6). On de novo review, accepting all facts alleged in the complaint as true and construing them in Plaintiffs' favor, Ebner v. Fresh, Inc., 838 F.3d 958, 962 (9th Cir. 2016), we affirm.

We assume, without deciding, that Plaintiffs' claims are not preempted by federal law, 27 U.S.C. § 205(e), and that California's "safe harbor" doctrine does not bar their claims. We hold that no reasonable consumer would be deceived by the label on the carton into thinking that "Bud Light Lime Lime-a-Rita," which the label calls a "Margarita With a Twist," is a low-calorie, low-carbohydrate beverage or that it contains fewer calories or carbohydrates than a regular beer. It is clear from the label that the beverage is not a normal beer. In addition to describing the product prominently as a "Margarita With a Twist," the Lime-a-Rita label pictures a bright green drink, served over ice, in a margarita glass.

A reasonable consumer, seeing that label, might compare "Bud Light Lime Lime-a-Rita" to one of two other products: (a) a hypothetical product "Budweiser Lime-a-Rita," made with Budweiser instead of with Bud Light, or (b) a tequila

margarita. The hypothetical product would contain more calories and carbohydrates than does the beverage at issue, because the hypothetical beer component (Budweiser) has more calories and carbohydrates than the actual ingredient (Bud Light). And a tequila margarita typically contains at least as many calories and carbohydrates as a "Bud Light Lime Lime-a-Rita." The same reasoning applies to the cartons containing the other "Rita" products. Accordingly, Plaintiffs' claims for misrepresentation and omission fail.

With respect to the claim for breach of express warranty, Plaintiffs have not pleaded facts showing a "specific and unequivocal written statement" of warranty, as required under California law. Maneely v. Gen. Motors Corp., 108 F.3d 1176, 1181 (9th Cir. 1997). Therefore, this claim also was properly dismissed.

AFFIRMED.

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CHRISTEN, Circuit Judge, dissenting in part:

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I write separately because I conclude that the label on the carton of this product could deceive reasonable consumers into thinking that Bud Light Lime Lime-a-Rita is a “light” beverage. In fact, in my view that result is likely because the most natural comparison is between Bud Light Lime Lime-a-Rita and Bud Light Lime. If those two products are compared, Bud Light Lime has far fewer calories and carbohydrates. I do not agree that reasonable consumers would compare Bud Light Lime Lime-a-Rita with “Budweiser Lime-a-Rita” or with a margarita; the former does not exist and the latter is made with tequila—and is decidedly not a malt beverage.

Reasonable consumers buying Bud Light Lime Lime-a-Rita could be misled by the “light” label on the packaging because the calorie and carbohydrate counts of Lime-A-Ritas only exist in small print on the side of the cans and this information is not visible to a shopper looking at the outside of the cartons. *See Williams v. Gerber Products Co.*, 552 F.3d 934, 949 (9th Cir. 2008) (“We disagree with the district court that reasonable consumers should be expected to look beyond misleading representations on the front of the box to discover the truth from the ingredient list in small print on the side of the box.”). I agree with my colleagues that plaintiffs did not adequately plead facts showing an express

warranty claim, but I would hold the plaintiffs adequately pleaded
misrepresentation and omission claims and would reverse the district court's
dismissal of plaintiffs' complaint.

United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

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Information Regarding Judgment and Post-Judgment Proceedings

Judgment

- This Court has filed and entered the attached judgment in your case. Fed. R. App. P. 36. Please note the filed date on the attached decision because all of the dates described below run from that date, not from the date you receive this notice.

Mandate (Fed. R. App. P. 41; 9th Cir. R. 41-1 & -2)

- The mandate will issue 7 days after the expiration of the time for filing a petition for rehearing or 7 days from the denial of a petition for rehearing, unless the Court directs otherwise. To file a motion to stay the mandate, file it electronically via the appellate ECF system or, if you are a pro se litigant or an attorney with an exemption from using appellate ECF, file one original motion on paper.

Petition for Panel Rehearing (Fed. R. App. P. 40; 9th Cir. R. 40-1)

Petition for Rehearing En Banc (Fed. R. App. P. 35; 9th Cir. R. 35-1 to -3)

(1) A. Purpose (Panel Rehearing):

- A party should seek panel rehearing only if one or more of the following grounds exist:
 - ▶ A material point of fact or law was overlooked in the decision;
 - ▶ A change in the law occurred after the case was submitted which appears to have been overlooked by the panel; or
 - ▶ An apparent conflict with another decision of the Court was not addressed in the opinion.
- Do not file a petition for panel rehearing merely to reargue the case.

B. Purpose (Rehearing En Banc)

- A party should seek en banc rehearing only if one or more of the following grounds exist:

- ▶ Consideration by the full Court is necessary to secure or maintain uniformity of the Court's decisions; or
- ▶ The proceeding involves a question of exceptional importance; or
- ▶ The opinion directly conflicts with an existing opinion by another court of appeals or the Supreme Court and substantially affects a rule of national application in which there is an overriding need for national uniformity.

(2) Deadlines for Filing:

- A petition for rehearing may be filed within 14 days after entry of judgment. Fed. R. App. P. 40(a)(1).
- If the United States or an agency or officer thereof is a party in a civil case, the time for filing a petition for rehearing is 45 days after entry of judgment. Fed. R. App. P. 40(a)(1).
- If the mandate has issued, the petition for rehearing should be accompanied by a motion to recall the mandate.
- *See* Advisory Note to 9th Cir. R. 40-1 (petitions must be received on the due date).
- An order to publish a previously unpublished memorandum disposition extends the time to file a petition for rehearing to 14 days after the date of the order of publication or, in all civil cases in which the United States or an agency or officer thereof is a party, 45 days after the date of the order of publication. 9th Cir. R. 40-2.

(3) Statement of Counsel

- A petition should contain an introduction stating that, in counsel's judgment, one or more of the situations described in the "purpose" section above exist. The points to be raised must be stated clearly.

(4) Form & Number of Copies (9th Cir. R. 40-1; Fed. R. App. P. 32(c)(2))

- The petition shall not exceed 15 pages unless it complies with the alternative length limitations of 4,200 words or 390 lines of text.
- The petition must be accompanied by a copy of the panel's decision being challenged.
- An answer, when ordered by the Court, shall comply with the same length limitations as the petition.
- If a pro se litigant elects to file a form brief pursuant to Circuit Rule 28-1, a petition for panel rehearing or for rehearing en banc need not comply with Fed. R. App. P. 32.

- The petition or answer must be accompanied by a Certificate of Compliance found at Form 11, available on our website at www.ca9.uscourts.gov under *Forms*.
- You may file a petition electronically via the appellate ECF system. No paper copies are required unless the Court orders otherwise. If you are a pro se litigant or an attorney exempted from using the appellate ECF system, file one original petition on paper. No additional paper copies are required unless the Court orders otherwise.

Bill of Costs (Fed. R. App. P. 39, 9th Cir. R. 39-1)

- The Bill of Costs must be filed within 14 days after entry of judgment.
- See Form 10 for additional information, available on our website at www.ca9.uscourts.gov under *Forms*.

Attorneys Fees

- Ninth Circuit Rule 39-1 describes the content and due dates for attorneys fees applications.
- All relevant forms are available on our website at www.ca9.uscourts.gov under *Forms* or by telephoning (415) 355-7806.

Petition for a Writ of Certiorari

- Please refer to the Rules of the United States Supreme Court at www.supremecourt.gov

Counsel Listing in Published Opinions

- Please check counsel listing on the attached decision.
- If there are any errors in a published opinion, please send a letter **in writing within 10 days** to:
 - ▶ Thomson Reuters; 610 Opperman Drive; PO Box 64526; St. Paul, MN 55164-0526 (Attn: Jean Green, Senior Publications Coordinator);
 - ▶ and electronically file a copy of the letter via the appellate ECF system by using “File Correspondence to Court,” or if you are an attorney exempted from using the appellate ECF system, mail the Court one copy of the letter.

United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit

BILL OF COSTS

This form is available as a fillable version at:

<http://cdn.ca9.uscourts.gov/datastore/uploads/forms/Form%2010%20-%20Bill%20of%20Costs.pdf>.

Note: If you wish to file a bill of costs, it MUST be submitted on this form and filed, with the clerk, with proof of service, within 14 days of the date of entry of judgment, and in accordance with 9th Circuit Rule 39-1. A late bill of costs must be accompanied by a motion showing good cause. Please refer to FRAP 39, 28 U.S.C. § 1920, and 9th Circuit Rule 39-1 when preparing your bill of costs.

v. 9th Cir. No.

The Clerk is requested to tax the following costs against:

Cost Taxable under FRAP 39, 28 U.S.C. § 1920, 9th Cir. R. 39-1	REQUESTED <i>(Each Column Must Be Completed)</i>				ALLOWED <i>(To Be Completed by the Clerk)</i>				
	No. of Docs.	Pages per Doc.	Cost per Page*	TOTAL COST	No. of Docs.	Pages per Doc.	Cost per Page*	TOTAL COST	
Excerpt of Record	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	
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Answering Brief	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	
Reply Brief	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	
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TOTAL:				\$ <input type="text"/>	TOTAL:				\$ <input type="text"/>

* *Costs per page:* May not exceed .10 or actual cost, whichever is less. 9th Circuit Rule 39-1.

** *Other:* Any other requests must be accompanied by a statement explaining why the item(s) should be taxed pursuant to 9th Circuit Rule 39-1. Additional items without such supporting statements will not be considered.

Attorneys' fees **cannot** be requested on this form.

Continue to next page

Form 10. Bill of Costs - Continued

I, , swear under penalty of perjury that the services for which costs are taxed were actually and necessarily performed, and that the requested costs were actually expended as listed.

Signature

("s/" plus attorney's name if submitted electronically)

Date

Name of Counsel:

Attorney for:

(To Be Completed by the Clerk)

Date

Costs are taxed in the amount of \$

Clerk of Court

By: , Deputy Clerk