

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

Champagne A.R. Lenoble v. Yasutaka Sakatani, ThinKraft, Inc.
Case No. D2026-0611

1. The Parties

The Complainant is Champagne A.R. Lenoble, France, represented by Ormiga Security (BE Object), Belgium.

The Respondent is Yasutaka Sakatani, ThinKraft, Inc., Japan.

2. The Domain Name and Registrar

The disputed domain name <champagne-lenoble.com> is registered with GMO Internet, Inc. d/b/a Discount-Domain.com and Onamae.com (the "Registrar").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed in English with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on February 13, 2026. On February 13, 2026, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrar a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain name. On February 16, 2026, the Registrar transmitted by email to the Center its verification response disclosing registrant and contact information for the disputed domain name which differed from the named Respondent (Yasutaka Kanno) and contact information in the Complaint. The Center sent an email communication to the Complainant on February 17, 2026, providing the registrant and contact information disclosed by the Registrar, and requesting the Complainant to submit an amendment to the Complaint. The Complainant filed an amended Complaint on February 18, 2026.

On February 19, 2026, the Center informed the parties in Japanese and English, that the language of the registration agreement for the disputed domain name is Japanese. On the same day, the Complainant requested English to be the language of the proceeding. The Respondent did not submit any comment on the Complainant's submission.

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

In accordance with the Rules, paragraphs 2 and 4, the Center formally notified the Respondent of the Complaint in English and in Japanese, and the proceedings commenced on February 23, 2026. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was March 15, 2026. The Respondent did not submit any response. Accordingly, the Center notified the Respondent's default on March 17, 2026.

The Center appointed Erica Aoki as the sole panelist in this matter on March 23, 2026. The Panel finds that it was properly constituted. The Panel has submitted the Statement of Acceptance and Declaration of Impartiality and Independence, as required by the Center to ensure compliance with the Rules, paragraph 7.

On April 14, 2026, the Panel issued an Administrative Procedural Order in English and in Japanese requesting the Complainant to amend its Complaint as regards to the Mutual Jurisdiction selection according to paragraph 3(b)(xii) of the Rules. The Complainant sent its amendment on April 22, 2026. The Respondent did not comment.

4. Factual Background

The Complainant owns trademark rights in the mark LENOBLE, which has been used continuously and exclusively in connection with its champagne products and has acquired significant goodwill and recognition in the champagne industry. The Complainant owns the French trademark LENOBLE No. 4205436 registered on December 18, 2015, the French trademark ARL AR LENOBLE CHAMPAGNE No. 4205427 registered on March 25, 2016, and the International trademark AR LENOBLE No. 1744624 registered on June 28, 2023.

The disputed domain name <champagne-lenoble.com> was originally registered on February 23, 2000, by Mr. Antoine Malassagne at the Complainant's headquarters address.

The Complainant used the disputed domain name as its official website for over 16 years.

The disputed domain name expired in May, 2016. After the expiry, the disputed domain name was created on May 14, 2016. According to the historical WhoIs records provided by the Complainant, the disputed domain name was subsequently acquired by the Respondent in or after 2018.

According to the record, the disputed domain name no longer resolves to a website associated with the Complainant. Instead, it resolves to a website displaying wine-related articles under the name "ar lenoble de Spainwine". The Panel notes that certain webpages feature links to third-party wine sales websites. The Panel further notes that the disputed domain name has been resolving to such website since at least April 28, 2023.

The record further indicates that the Respondent initially used a privacy protection service. Registrar's verification later identified the underlying registrant as an individual located in Japan.

5. Parties' Contentions

A. Complainant

The Complainant contends that it has satisfied all three elements required under paragraph 4(a) of the Policy.

First, the Complainant asserts that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to its well-known LENOBLE trademark. The disputed domain name incorporates the LENOBLE trademark in its entirety, together with the descriptive term "champagne".

According to the Complainant, the addition of this term does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity and, on the contrary, reinforces the impression of an affiliation with the Complainant's champagne business.

Second, the Complainant submits that the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name. The Respondent is not affiliated with the Complainant and has never been authorized or licensed to use the LENOBLE trademark.

There is no evidence that the Respondent is commonly known by the disputed domain name.

The Complainant further argues that the composition of the disputed domain name creates a misleading impression of affiliation and does not constitute a bona fide offering of goods or services or a legitimate noncommercial or fair use.

Third, the Complainant contends that the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith. Given the Complainant's longstanding and well-known LENOBLE trademark, the Respondent must have been aware of the Complainant's rights at the time of registration.

The Complainant further submits that the Respondent acquired the disputed domain name shortly after its expiration, despite the domain name having been used by the Complainant for over 16 years as its official website.

The Complainant argues that such circumstances demonstrate opportunistic registration targeting the Complainant's mark.

The Complainant also points to the Respondent's use of the disputed domain name to display competing wine-related products while reproducing the Complainant's AR LENOBLE trademark and logo.

According to the Complainant, such use creates a clear likelihood of confusion as to source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement, and further supports a finding of bad faith.

The Complainant also argues that the Respondent is a serial cybersquatter as it has been involved in prior UDRP cases.

Accordingly, the Complainant requests that the disputed domain name be transferred to the Complainant.

B. Respondent

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

6. Discussion and Findings

Under paragraph 4(a) of the Policy, the Complainant must prove that:

- (i) the disputed domain name is identical or confusingly similar to a mark in which the Complainant has rights;
- (ii) the Respondent has no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name; and
- (iii) the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith.

A. Language of the Proceeding

The language of the Registration Agreement for the disputed domain name is Japanese.

Paragraph 11(a) of the Rules provides that, unless otherwise agreed by the Parties or specified in the Registration Agreement, the language of the administrative proceeding shall be the language of the

Registration Agreement, subject to the Panel's authority to determine otherwise having regard to the circumstances of the case.

As recognized by prior UDRP panels, paragraph 11 of the Rules must be applied in light of the principles set out in paragraphs 10(b) and 10(c) of the Rules, namely that the parties are treated with equality, that each party is given a fair opportunity to present its case, and that the proceeding takes place with due expedition.

In determining the appropriate language of the proceeding, the Panel considers all relevant circumstances, including whether the Respondent appears able to understand the language of the Complaint, whether requiring translation would result in undue delay or expense, and whether proceeding in a different language would cause prejudice to either party.

Section 4.5.1 of the WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Select UDRP Questions (["WIPO Overview 3.1"](#)) provides that panels may determine a language other than that of the registration agreement where appropriate.

In the present case, the Complainant has requested that English be the language of the proceeding. The Center notified the Respondent in both Japanese and English regarding the language of the proceeding and invited the Respondent to submit any objection. The Respondent did not object. The Panel further notes that the Complaint was notified to the Respondent in both Japanese and English, and that the Respondent was expressly informed that it could submit a Response in either language. The Respondent did not submit any Response.

In these circumstances, the Panel finds that proceeding in English would not unfairly prejudice the Respondent and would ensure an efficient resolution of the dispute.

Accordingly, the Panel determines that English shall be the language of the proceeding.

B. Identical or Confusingly Similar

The Panel finds that the Complainant has established rights in the LENOBLE trademark through its registered trademark rights.

The disputed domain name <champagne-lenoble.com> incorporates the Complainant's LENOBLE trademark in its entirety.

The addition of the descriptive term "champagne" does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity.. Panels have consistently held that the addition of a term does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity where the complainant's trademark remains clearly recognizable within the domain name ([WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.8).

The generic Top-Level Domain ("gTLD") ".com" is disregarded for the purposes of this comparison ([WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 1.11.1).

Accordingly, the Panel finds that the disputed domain name is confusingly similar to the Complainant's trademark.

The first element of the Policy has been established.

C. Rights or Legitimate Interests

The Panel finds that the Complainant has established a prima facie case where the Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name.

The Respondent is not affiliated with the Complainant and has not been authorized or licensed to use the LENOBLE trademark in any manner. There is no evidence that the Respondent has been commonly known by the disputed domain name.

The Panel considers that the composition of the disputed domain name carries a risk of implied affiliation with the Complainant ([WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 2.5.1). According to the available record, the disputed domain name has not been used in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services. Instead, it resolves to a website displaying wine-related articles while reproducing the Complainant's AR LENOBLE trademark. The Panel notes that certain webpages feature links to third-party wine sales websites. Such use creates a misleading impression of affiliation and does not confer rights or legitimate interests under the Policy.

The Panel finds that the Complainant has established a prima facie case that the Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain name, thereby shifting the burden of production to the Respondent ([WIPO Overview 3.1](#), section 2.1). The Respondent has not submitted any Response or evidence to rebut the Complainant's prima facie showing or to demonstrate any of the circumstances set out in paragraph 4(c) of the Policy.

The second element of the Policy has been established.

D. Registered and Used in Bad Faith

The Panel finds that the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith.

According to the Whois records provided by the Complainant, the Respondent acquired the disputed domain name in or after 2018, and most likely before 2023.

The Complainant's LENOBLE trademark is distinctive and has been used for decades, with rights dating back to at least 2015, well before the Respondent's acquisition of the disputed domain name.

In these circumstances, the Panel finds it implausible that the Respondent was unaware of the Complainant and its trademark at the time of registration.

The disputed domain name incorporates the Complainant's trademark in its entirety, together with the descriptive term "champagne", which reinforces an apparent association with the Complainant's champagne business.

The Panel further notes that the Respondent acquired the disputed domain name after its expiration, following many years of use by the Complainant as its official website.

The Panel considers that such circumstances indicate opportunistic registration targeting the Complainant's mark.

The Respondent's use of the disputed domain name further supports a finding of bad faith. The disputed domain name resolves to a website displaying wine-related articles while reproducing the Complainant's AR LENOBLE trademark. The Panel notes that certain webpages feature links to third-party wine sales websites.

Such use creates a likelihood of confusion as to source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement and constitutes evidence of bad faith under paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy.

The Respondent's failure to submit a Response further reinforces the inference of bad faith.

Accordingly, the Panel finds that the disputed domain name was registered and is being used in bad faith. The third element of the Policy has been established.

7. Decision

For the foregoing reasons, in accordance with paragraphs 4(i) of the Policy and 15 of the Rules, the Panel orders that the disputed domain name <champagne-lenoble.com> be transferred to the Complainant.

/Erica Aoki/

Erica Aoki

Sole Panelist

Date: April 23, 2026