ARBITRATION
AND
MEDIATION CENTER

WIPO
WORLD
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
ORGANIZATION

ADMINISTRATIVE PANEL DECISION

William Grant & Sons Limited v. Shangguan Meihao, Renan Verri, Juliana azevedo, shangguan oyang, wen er hong, pggame gt, xiong xun liang
Case No. D2025-4496

1. The Parties

Complainant is William Grant & Sons Limited, United Kingdom (the "UK"), represented by Com Laude Limited, the UK.

Respondents are Shangguan Meihao, Hong Kong, China, Renan Verri, Brazil, Juliana azevedo, Curaçao, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), shangguan oyang, Hong Kong, China, wen er hong, Hong Kong, China, pggame gt, Hong Kong, China, and xiong xun liang, Hong Kong, China.

2. The Domain Names and Registrars

The disputed domain names <balvenepg.com>, and <91-balvenepg.com> are registered with GoDaddy.com, LLC.

The disputed domain names <balveniepg.cc>, <balveniepg.com>, <balveniepg.vip>, <91-balvenie-pg.com>, <91-balveniepg.com>, and <91balveniepg.com> are registered with Gname.com Pte. Ltd.

The disputed domain names <balvenipg.com> and <91-balvenipg.com> are registered with Hostinger Operations, UAB.

The disputed domain name <91-balvenie-pg.mom> is registered with NameSilo, LLC. (collectively referred to as the "Registrars").

3. Procedural History

The Complaint was filed in English with the WIPO Arbitration and Mediation Center (the "Center") on October 30, 2025. On October 31, 2025, the Center transmitted by email to the Registrars a request for registrar verification in connection with the disputed domain names. On October 31, November 3, 12, and 13, 2025, the Registrars transmitted by email to the Center their verification responses disclosing registrant and contact information for the disputed domain names which differed from the named Respondents (Redacted for privacy, Registration Private Domains By Proxy, LLC, Privacy User #3059c40e PrivacyGuardian.org llc) and contact information in the Complaint.

On November 13, 2025, the Center informed the Parties in Chinese and English, that the language of the Registration Agreement for the disputed domain names <91-balvenie-pg.com>, <91-balveniepg.com>, <91balveniepg.com>, <balveniepg.cc>, <balveniepg.com> and <balveniepg.vip> is Chinese. On November 18, 2025, Complainant requested English to be the language of the proceeding. Respondents did not submit any comment on Complainant's submission.

The Center sent an email communication to Complainant on November 13, 2025, with the registrant and contact information of nominally multiple underlying registrants revealed by the Registrars, requesting Complainant to either file separate complaint(s) for the disputed domain names associated with different underlying registrants or alternatively, demonstrate that the underlying registrants are in fact the same entity and/or that all domain names are under common control. Complainant filed an amended Complaint in English on November 18, 2025.

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 Respondents in Chinese and English of the Complaint, and the proceedings commenced on November 21, 2025. In accordance with the Rules, paragraph 5, the due date for Response was December 11, 2025. The proceeding was suspended once for settlement discussions, and the new due date for the Response was December 29, 2025, following reinstitution of the proceeding.[1] The Center commenced the panel appointment process on January 8, 2026.

The Center appointed Yijun Tian as the sole panelist in this matter on January 15, 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.

4. Factual Background

A. Complainant

Complainant, William Grant & Sons Limited, is a company incorporated in the UK, and located in Scotland, UK. Founded by William Grant in 1887, Complainant distils, markets and distributes Scotch whisky and other spirits worldwide. Its principal brands include GLENFIDDICH and BALVENIE (single malt Scotch whiskies), GRANT'S (blended Scotch whisky), HENDRICK'S gin and TULLAMORE DEW Irish whiskey. BALVENIE is a Speyside single malt Scotch whisky produced at the Balvenie Distillery in Dufftown, Scotland, established in 1892.

Complainant has rights in the BALVENIE mark. It owns numerous BALVENIE trademark registrations worldwide, including: UK Registration No. 885731 (October 19, 1965); Australian Registration No. 222688 (September 24, 1968); Canadian Registration No. TMA164355 (August 1, 1969); and United States of America Registration No. 888377 (March 24, 1970) (Annex 9 to the Complaint). These registrations long predate the disputed domain names.

B. Respondents

Respondents are Shangguan Meihao (Hong Kong, China), Renan Verri (Brazil), Juliana azevedo (Curaçao, Netherlands (Kingdom of the)), shangguan oyang (Hong Kong, China), wen er hong (Hong Kong, China), pggame gt (Hong Kong, China), and xiong xun liang (Hong Kong, China).

[1] The Panel notes that one domain name was settled, and therefore the domain name was removed from the proceeding.

The disputed domain names <balvenepg.com> and <91-balvenepg.com> were registered by Renan Verri (Brazil) on August 27, 2025, with GoDaddy.com, LLC.

The disputed domain names <balveniepg.com> (registered July 23, 2025 by xiong xun liang, Hong Kong, China); <91-balveniepg.com> (registered August 14, 2025 by wen er hong, Hong Kong, China); <91-balvenie-pg.com> (registered August 27, 2025 by shangguan oyang, Hong Kong, China); and <91balveniepg.com>, <balveniepg.cc>, and <balveniepg.vip> (all registered August 27, 2025 by pggame gt, Hong Kong, China) were registered with Gname.com Pte. Ltd.

The disputed domain names <balvenipg.com>, and <91-balvenipg.com> were registered by Juliana azevedo (Curaçao, Netherlands (Kingdom of the)) on August 18, 2025, with Hostinger Operations, UAB.

The disputed domain name <91-balvenie-pg.mom> was registered by Shangguan Meihao (Hong Kong, China) on August 27, 2025, with NameSilo, LLC.

The above entities are collectively referred to as the "Respondent" or the "Respondents," and the relevant registration service providers as the "Registrars."

According to the Complaint and relevant evidence, seven disputed domain names, namely <balveniepg.com>, <91-balveniepg.com>, <91balveniepg.com>, <balveniepg.cc>, <balveniepg.vip>, <91-balvenie-pg.com>, and <91-balvenie-pg.mom>, resolve to near-identical BALVENIE-branded gambling websites (Annex 8 to the Complaint).

Three disputed domain names, namely <balvenipg.com>, <91-balvenepg.com>, and <balvenepg.com>, redirect to <91-balvenipg.com>, which appears to be under construction, and are therefore passively held (Annex 8 to the Complaint).

5. Parties' Contentions

A. Complainant

Complainant contends that the disputed domain names incorporate its BALVENIE trademark in its entirety, either in identical form or with minor typographical variations, and that the applicable generic and country code Top-Level Domains (gTLD and ccTLD) should be disregarded for the purpose of assessing confusing similarity under the first element, as they constitute standard registration requirements.

Complainant contends that Respondents have no rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain names.

Complainant contends that the disputed domain names were registered and are being used in bad faith.

Complainant requests that the disputed domain names be transferred to it.

B. Respondents

Respondents did not reply to Complainant's contentions.

6. Discussion and Findings

6.1. Language of the Proceeding

The language of the Registration Agreements for the disputed domain names <91-balvenie-pg.com>, <91-balveniepg.com>, <91balveniepg.com>, <balveniepg.cc>, <balveniepg.com>, and <balveniepg.vip> is

Chinese. The language of the Registration Agreements for the disputed domain names <91-balvenepg.com>, <balvenepg.com>, <91-balvenipg.com>, <balvenipg.com> and <91-balvenie-pg.mom> is English.

Pursuant to the Rules, paragraph 11(a), in the absence of an agreement between the parties, or unless specified otherwise in the registration agreement, the language of the administrative proceeding shall be the language of the registration agreement.

From the evidence presented on the record, no agreement appears to have been entered into between Complainant and Respondents to the effect that the language of the proceeding should be English. Complainant initially filed its Complaint in English, and has requested that English be the language of the proceeding for the following reasons:

(a) The disputed domain names incorporate Complainant's English-language mark BALVENIE, either correctly spelled or as a typographical variation, and are composed entirely of Latin characters rather than Chinese script. The term "balvenie" has no meaning in Chinese.

(b) None of the disputed domain names are registered under the Chinese ccTLD ".cn". Instead, they are registered under gTLDs such as ".com" and ".vip", or under ".cc", which corresponds to the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, Australia where English and Malay — not Chinese — are spoken.

(c) In these circumstances, it is reasonable to conclude that Respondents are familiar with English and would not be prejudiced by the proceeding being conducted in English, whereas requiring translation would impose unnecessary cost and delay on Complainant.

Respondents did not make any submissions with respect to the language of the proceeding.

In exercising its discretion to use a language other than that of the registration agreement, the Panel has to exercise such discretion judicially in the spirit of fairness and justice to both parties, taking into account all relevant circumstances of the case, including matters such as the parties' ability to understand and use the proposed language, time and costs (see WIPO Overview of WIPO Panel Views on Select UDRP Questions ("WIPO Overview 3.1"), section 4.5.1).

According to the record, Respondents are Shangguan Meihao (Hong Kong, China), Renan Verri (Brazil), Juliana azevedo (Curaçao, Netherlands (Kingdom of the)), shangguan oyang (Hong Kong, China), wen er hong (Hong Kong, China), pggame gt (Hong Kong, China), and xiong xun liang (Hong Kong, China). Respondents are therefore located in multiple jurisdictions, including Brazil and Curaçao, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), and are not limited to a Chinese-speaking region.

The Panel further notes that: (a) all of the disputed domain names are composed of Latin characters and incorporate the English-language mark BALVENIE, either correctly spelled or as a typographical variation, rather than Chinese script; (b) the disputed domain names are registered under TLDs such as ".com," ".vip," and ".mom," as well as ".cc," rather than under the Chinese ccTLD ".cn," indicating an international orientation; (c) the term "balvenie" has no meaning in Chinese; (d) the Center notified Respondents of the Complaint and the language issue in both Chinese and English; and (e) the Center informed Respondents that a Response could be submitted in either English or Chinese, yet no Response was filed and no objection to Complainant's request was raised.

In light of these circumstances, the Panel considers that conducting the proceeding in English would not cause unfairness or prejudice to the Respondents. Accordingly, pursuant to paragraph 11(a) of the Rules, the Panel determines that the language of the proceeding shall be English.

6.2. Consolidation: Multiple Respondents

The amended Complaint was filed in relation to nominally different domain name registrants. Complainant alleges that, on balance, it is more likely than not that the disputed domain names are under common control and should therefore be treated as involving a single Respondent. A summary of the key registration data is provided in Annex 7 to the Complaint.

The disputed domain name registrants did not comment on Complainant's request.

Paragraph 3(c) of the Rules states that a complaint may relate to more than one domain name, provided that the domain names are registered by the same domain name holder.

In addressing Complainant's request, the Panel will consider whether (i) the disputed domain names or corresponding websites are subject to common control; and (ii) the consolidation would be fair and equitable to all Parties. See WIPO Overview 3.1, section 4.11.2.

As regards common control, the Panel finds that Complainant has provided sufficient evidence to establish that the disputed domain names or corresponding websites are subject to common control, for the following reasons:

(a) The disputed domain names were registered within a short period, from July 23, 2025 to August 27, 2025, with seven of them registered on August 27, 2025 across four different Registrars;

(b) All disputed domain names incorporate Complainant's BALVENIE mark, either identically or in close typographical variations, combined with the element "pg," and six of them additionally include the number "91";

(c) Seven disputed domain names resolve to near-identical gambling websites (Annex 8 to the Complaint), and

(d) Three disputed domain names, namely <balvenipg.com>, <91-balvenepg.com>, and <balvenepg.com>, redirect to <91-balvenipg.com>, which appears to be under construction (Annex 8 to the Complaint).

As regards fairness and equity, the Panel sees no reason why consolidation of the disputes would be unfair or inequitable to any Party.

Accordingly, the Panel decides to consolidate the disputes regarding the nominally different disputed domain name registrants (referred to below as "Respondent" or "Respondents") in a single proceeding.

6.3 Substantive Issues: Three Elements

A. Identical or Confusingly Similar

It is well accepted that the first element functions primarily as a standing requirement. The standing (or threshold) test for confusing similarity involves a reasoned but relatively straightforward comparison between Complainant's trademark and the disputed domain names. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 1.7.

Based on the available record, the Panel finds Complainant has shown rights in respect of a trademark or service mark for the purposes of the Policy. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 1.2.1.

The disputed domain names all incorporate Complainant's BALVENIE mark, either identically (e.g., <balveniepg.com>) or with minor typographical variations (e.g., <balvenipg.com>, <balvenepg.com>). The modifications consist of the addition of the letters "pg," the prefix "91" (in six cases), together with various TLDs (".com," ".cc," ".vip," and ".mom").

The Panel finds that such additions and minor alterations do not prevent a finding of confusing similarity. See stated in WIPO Overview 3.1, section 1.8, "Where the relevant trademark is recognizable within the disputed domain name, the addition of other terms (whether descriptive, geographical, pejorative, meaningless, or otherwise) would not prevent a finding of confusing similarity under the first element."

In the present case, the BALVENIE mark is clearly recognizable within each of the disputed domain names. The addition of "pg," or "91," or does not prevent a finding of confusing similarity.

Further, section 1.9 of the WIPO Overview 3.1 provides that a domain name which consists of a common, obvious, or intentional misspelling of a trademark is considered by panels to be confusingly similar to the relevant mark for purposes of the first element.

To the extent that certain disputed domain names reflect minor spelling variations of BALVENIE (e.g., omission or alteration of a letter), such variations constitute typosquatting, and are considered to be confusingly similar to Complainant's trademark.

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

B. Rights or Legitimate Interests

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

While the overall burden of proof in UDRP proceedings is on the complainant, panels have recognised that proving a respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in a domain name may result in the often impossible task of "proving a negative", requiring information that is often primarily within the knowledge or control of the respondent. As such, where a complainant makes out a prima facie case that the respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests, the burden of production on this element shifts to the respondent to come forward with relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the domain name. If the respondent fails to come forward with such relevant evidence, the complainant is deemed to have satisfied the second element. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 2.1.

Having reviewed the record, the Panel finds Complainant has established a prima facie case that Respondent lacks rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain names. Respondent has not rebutted Complainant's prima facie showing and has not come forward with any relevant evidence demonstrating rights or legitimate interests in the disputed domain names such as those enumerated in the Policy or otherwise.

More specifically:

(i) there has been no evidence adduced to show that Respondent used the disputed domain names in connection with a bona fide offering of goods or services. Several of the disputed domain names resolve to near-identical gambling websites. Respondent has not provided evidence of reasons to justify the choice of the term "balvenie", the distinctive part of Complainant's BALVENIE trademark, in the disputed domain names. There has been no evidence to show that Complainant has licensed or otherwise permitted Respondent to use the BALVENIE trademark or to apply for or use any domain name incorporating the BALVENIE marks;

(ii) there has been no evidence adduced to show that Respondent has been commonly known by the disputed domain names. There has been no evidence adduced to show that Respondent has any registered trademark rights with respect to the disputed domain names. Respondent registered the disputed domain names since 2025, after the BALVENIE mark was registered internationally (since 1965). The disputed domain names are identical or confusingly similar to Complainant's BALVENIE marks; and

(iii) there has been no evidence adduced to show that Respondent was making a legitimate noncommercial or fair use of the disputed domain name. By contrary, the disputed domain names resolve, or have resolved, to gambling websites evidently intended for commercial gain, or are passively held without any plausible legitimate purpose. Such use misleadingly diverts Internet users seeking Complainant's products and capitalises on the goodwill associated with the BALVENIE mark. It seems likely that Respondent was making profits through the Internet traffic attracted to the websites under the disputed domain names. (See *BKS Bank AG v. Jianwei Guo*, WIPO Case No. D2017-1041; and *Pet Plan Ltd. v. 权中俊 and 李金梁 (Li Jin Liang)*, WIPO Case No. D2020-3358).

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

C. Registered and Used in Bad Faith

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

In the present case, the Panel notes that Respondent has registered and used the disputed domain name in bad faith.

Paragraph 4(b) of the Policy sets out a list of non-exhaustive circumstances that may indicate that a domain name was registered and used in bad faith, but other circumstances may be relevant in assessing whether a respondent's registration and use of a domain name is in bad faith. WIPO Overview 3.1, section 3.2.1.

Based on the information provided by Complainant, the Panel finds that Complainant's BALVENIE mark is distinctive and well-known, at least within its sector. Complainant's trademark registrations date back to 1965 (United Kingdom), 1968 (Australia), 1969 (Canada), and 1970 (United States of America), decades prior to the registration of the disputed domain names in 2025. It is inconceivable that Respondent was unaware of Complainant's mark when registering domain names that wholly incorporate BALVENIE or obvious misspellings thereof.

Section 3.1.4 of the WIPO Overview 3.1 states that: "Panels have consistently found that the mere registration of a domain name that is identical or confusingly similar (particularly domain names comprising typos or incorporating the mark plus a descriptive term) to a famous or widely-known trademark by an unaffiliated entity can by itself create a presumption of bad faith."

The disputed domain names prominently incorporate the BALVENIE mark, combined with the elements "pg," or "91", or consist of typographical variations of the mark. Such a composition may mislead Internet users into assuming an affiliation with Complainant.

Seven disputed domain names resolve to near-identical gambling websites. The evidence shows that the logo displayed on those websites closely imitates Complainant's BALVENIE whisky bottle and packaging (Annex 8 to the Complaint). The Panel finds that Respondent has intentionally attempted to attract, for commercial gain, Internet users to its websites by creating a likelihood of confusion as to source, sponsorship, affiliation, or endorsement, within the meaning of paragraph 4(b)(iv) of the Policy.

As to the remaining disputed domain names, which are passively held, section 3.3 of the WIPO Overview 3.1 provides that non-use of a domain name does not prevent a finding of bad faith under the doctrine of passive holding. Relevant factors include the distinctiveness or reputation of the mark, the respondent's failure to respond, concealment of identity, or the use of false or inaccurate contact details. Taking the above factors into consideration, panels assess the overall plausibility of any (claimed) good faith use to which the domain name may be put in light of the composition of the domain name in relation to the relevant mark, such that, the more arbitrary or distinctive a mark the less plausible a claimed non-infringing good faith use is likely to be, and vice versa. In this case, the BALVENIE mark is distinctive; Respondent has failed to submit a

Response; Respondent's details were redacted from the public WhoIs; and no plausible good faith use of the disputed domain names is apparent.

In light of the totality of the circumstances, the Panel concludes that the disputed domain names were registered and are being used in bad faith. Accordingly, 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 names <balvenepg.com>, <balveniepg.cc>, <balveniepg.com>, <balveniepg.vip>, <balvenipg.com>, <91-balvenepg.com>, <91-balvenie-pg.com>, <91-balveniepg.com>, <91balveniepg.com>, <91-balvenie-pg.mom> and <91-balvenipg.com>, be transferred to Complainant.

/Yijun Tian/
Yijun Tian
Sole Panelist
Date: February 23, 2026