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**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

MOROCCANOIL, INC., a California
corporation; and MOROCCANOIL
ISREAL LTD., an Israeli limited company,
Plaintiffs,

v.

ZOTOS INTERNATIONAL, INC., a New
York corporation; and DOES 1 through 20,
inclusive,
Defendants.

Case No. CV 16-7004 DMG (AGR_x)

**ORDER RE PLAINTIFFS’ MOTION
FOR PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION
[17]**

I.

PROCEDURAL BACKGROUND

On September 16, 2016, Plaintiffs Moroccanoil, Inc. and Moroccanoil Israel Ltd. (collectively, “Moroccanoil”) filed their Complaint against Defendant Zotos International, Inc. (“Zotos”) alleging (1) trademark infringement under 15 U.S.C. § 1114; (2) trademark infringement and unfair competition under 15 U.S.C. § 1125(a); (3) common law trademark infringement and unfair competition; (4) breach of contract; (5)

1 false advertising under 15 U.S.C. § 1125(a); (6) unfair business practices under Cal. Bus.
2 and Prof. Code §§ 17200 and 17500; (7) trade secret misappropriation under 18 U.S.C. §
3 1836(b); and (8) trade secret misappropriation under Cal. Civil Code § 3426. [Doc. # 1.]
4

5 On November 10, 2016, Moroccanoil filed a motion for a preliminary injunction
6 (“Mot.”). [Doc. # 17.] On November 18, 2016, Zotos filed its opposition. [Doc. # 23.]
7 On November 23, 2016, Moroccanoil filed its reply. [Doc. # 26.] On December 7, 2016,
8 with the Court’s leave, Zotos filed a sur-reply. [Doc. # 42.]
9

10 On December 9, 2016, the Court held a hearing and requested the parties file
11 simultaneous supplemental briefing on the amount of bond necessary to safeguard Zotos
12 in the event the preliminary injunction is determined to be improvidently granted. [Doc.
13 # 46.] On December 16, 2016, the parties filed supplemental briefs (“First Suppl.”).
14 [Doc. ## 56, 57.] On December 23, 2016, the parties filed responses to the supplemental
15 briefs (“Second Suppl.”). [Doc. ## 64, 70.]
16

17 Having duly considered the parties’ written submissions and oral argument, the
18 Court **GRANTS** Moroccanoil’s motion for preliminary injunction for the reasons set
19 forth below.

20 **II.**
21 **FACTUAL BACKGROUND¹**
22

23 Launched in 2007, Moroccanoil distributes hair and body care products in the
24 United States featuring “argan oil to revitalize and replenish hair.” Compl. ¶¶ 12, 15.
25

26 ¹ The Court does not address Moroccanoil’s objections to Exhibit 4 to the Declaration of Diana
27 Hughes Leiden because it did not consider the document in resolving the Motion. [Doc. # 31.]
28

1 Each of its products bear one or more trademarks, including: (a) the word “Moroccanoil”
2 – United States Patent and Trademark Office (“USPTO”) Registration No. 3,478,807; (b)
3 “M Moroccanoil Design” – with the word Moroccanoil in white vertical lettering next to
4 the letter M in copper orange on a turquoise blue background, USPTO Registration No.
5 3,684,910 (“Vertical Design Mark”); and “M Moroccanoil Design” – with the word
6 Moroccanoil in white horizontal lettering through the letter M in copper orange on a
7 turquoise blue background, USPTO Registration No. 3,684,909 (“Horizontal Design
8 Mark”) (the “Vertical Design Mark” and “Horizontal Design Mark” collectively, the
9 “Moroccanoil Trademarks”). *Id.* ¶ 18; *see also* Declaration of Nicole Sands in support of
10 Pls.’ Mot. (“Sands Decl.”) ¶¶ 4-5, Exs. 3-4 [Doc. # 17-1 at p. 22]. The Moroccanoil
11 Trademarks were registered on September 22, 2009, and a declaration of incontestability
12 for each of the trademarks was accepted by the USPTO on January 9, 2015. *Id.* The
13 Moroccanoil Trademarks are displayed in the images below.

14
15 Vertical Design Mark
16 (Reg. No. 3,684,910)



Horizontal Design Mark
(Reg. No. 3,684,909)



Mot. at 5.

Moroccanoil has sold its products in packaging that includes at least each of the following elements individually or in combination with one another: (1) a distinctive turquoise blue color; (2) copper orange lettering, graphics and background design

1 elements; (3) copper orange and white letting, the word “MOROCCANOIL” in vertical
2 and horizontal orientation, graphics and background design elements on a turquoise blue
3 background; and (4) an amber bottle packaged in a rectangular blue box (the
4 “Moroccanoil Trade Dress”). Compl. ¶ 20. Moroccanoil’s product packaging is
5 displayed in the images below.



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16 Sands Decl. ¶ 3, Ex. 2.

17
18 Moroccanoil is known as a “high-quality, premium hair care brand” and takes
19 “significant steps to ensure that it controls and maintains its high-end, high-quality status
20 in the marketplace.” Declaration of Jay Elarar in support of Pls.’ Mot. (“Elarar Decl.”) ¶
21 3 [Doc. 17-1 at p. 6]. Since 2007, it has spent a substantial amount of money in
22 advertising directed to the United States. Declaration of Allan Weizmann in support of
23 Pls.’ Mot. (“Weizmann Decl.”) ¶ 4 [Doc. # 17-1 at p. 30]. Its products are sold on its
24 own website as well as “premium” salons and spas, “high-end” retailers such as Saks,
25 Neiman Marcus, Barneys, Nordstrom and Sephora, and “upscale” beauty supply stores
26 such as Planet Beauty and Design Collection. Elarar Decl. ¶¶ 3-5, 7-8.

1 Zotos is a “professional beauty industry leader that manufactures and markets a
2 range of hair care products.” Compl. 14; *see also* Declaration of Elizabeth Kenny in
3 support of Def.’s Mot. (“Kenny Decl.”) ¶ 3 [Doc. # 23-2]. In 2014, Zotos and
4 MoroccanOil explored a possible business relationship whereby Zotos would manufacture
5 certain hair care products for MoroccanOil. Compl. ¶¶ 49, 51; *see also* Declaration of
6 Gloria Hoo (“Hoo Decl.”) in support of Pls.’ Mot. ¶ 2 [Doc. # 17-1 at p. 13]; Declaration
7 of Laura Salley in support of Def.’s Mot. (“Salley Decl.”) ¶ 4 [Doc. # 23-3]. On October
8 1, 2014, the parties signed a Non-Disclosure Agreement regarding the potential business
9 arrangement. *Id.* MoroccanOil and Zotos had no substantive communications from late
10 2014 through early 2016. Salley Decl. ¶ 5. In September of 2016, MoroccanOil advised
11 Zotos that it was not moving forward with any potential business opportunity. *Id.* ¶ 9.

12
13 In or around July, 2016, Zotos began to market and sell a line of hair care products
14 featuring argan oil known as “Luxe Majestic Oil” (“Majestic Oil). Compl. ¶ 14; *see also*
15 Declaration of Bruce Selan in support of Def.’s Mot. (“Selan Decl.”) ¶ 4 [Doc. # 23-4].
16 Zotos sells its products in packaging that includes the term “MAJESTIC OIL” in vertical
17 white lettering with an orange fleur-de-lis symbol in front of a blue background, as
18 displayed in the images below.



28 Kenny Decl. ¶ 7.

1 The largest seller of its hair care products is Sally Beauty Supply, a retailer chain
2 that sells beauty supplies at value prices. *Id.* ¶ 4. Zotos’ products appeal to consumers in
3 the market for “a lower-priced alternative to hair care brands that are typically sold at
4 higher price points at high-end department stores and salons.” *Id.* ¶ 5. Zotos promotes its
5 “Luxe Majestic Oil” line of products with flyers, in-store displays and emails that state:
6 “Compare to MoroccanOil® and Save” and “If you like MoroccanOil® products, you’ll
7 LOVE our new Luxe Majestic Oil line.” *Id.* ¶¶ 11-13, Exs. 1- 3.

8
9 MoroccanOil alleges that Zotos’ line of products appear to be designed
10 “specifically to mimic and poach the MoroccanOil Trademarks and the MoroccanOil
11 Trade Dress.” Compl. ¶ 21. It seeks a preliminary injunction “to preserve the status quo
12 that preceded Zotos’ infringement of MoroccanOil’s longstanding trademarks and trade
13 dress.” Mot. at 1; *see also* Compl. ¶¶ 31, 39.

14
15 **III.**
16 **LEGAL STANDARD**
17

18 Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 65 governs the issuance of preliminary
19 injunctions. Fed. R. Civ. P. 65(a). Plaintiffs seeking injunctive relief must show that (1)
20 they are likely to succeed on the merits; (2) they are likely to suffer irreparable harm in
21 the absence of preliminary relief; (3) the balance of equities tips in their favor; and (4)
22 that an injunction is in the public interest. *Toyo Tire Holdings of Ams. Inc. v. Cont’l Tire*
23 *N. Am., Inc.*, 609 F.3d 975, 982 (9th Cir. 2010) (citing *Winter v. Natural Res. Def.*
24 *Council, Inc.*, 555 U.S. 7 (2008)).

25
26 Under the Ninth Circuit’s “sliding scale” approach to preliminary injunctions, the
27 four “elements of the preliminary injunction test are balanced, so that a stronger showing
28 of one element may offset a weaker showing of another.” *Alliance For The Wild Rockies*

1 v. *Cottrell*, 632 F.3d 1127, 1131 (9th Cir. 2011). Thus, “a preliminary injunction could
2 issue where the likelihood of success is such that ‘serious questions going to the merits
3 were raised and the balance of hardships tips sharply in [plaintiff’s] favor.’ ” *Id.* at 1131-
4 32. Put differently, “ ‘serious questions going to the merits’ and a hardship balance that
5 tips sharply toward the plaintiff can support issuance of an injunction, assuming the other
6 two elements [likelihood of irreparable injury and public interest] of the *Winter* test are
7 also met.” *Id.* at 1132.

8
9 **III.**

10 **DISCUSSION**

11
12 **A. Likelihood of Success on the Merits**

13
14 **1. Whether The Marks Are Valid and Enforceable**

15 To succeed on a claim for trademark infringement, the plaintiff must demonstrate:
16 (1) the presence of a valid and protectable trademark; and (2) that defendant's use of the
17 mark “is likely to cause consumer confusion.” *Aurora World, Inc. v. Ty Inc.*, 719 F.
18 Supp. 2d 1115, 1141 (C.D. Cal. 2009) (citing *Dep't of Parks & Rec. v. Bazaar Del*
19 *Mundo, Inc.*, 448 F.3d 1118, 1124 (9th Cir. 2006)). “[R]egistration of the mark on the
20 Principal Register in the Patent and Trademark Office [USPTO] constitutes prima facie
21 evidence of the validity of the registered mark” *Brookfield Commc'ns, Inc. v. W.*
22 *Coast Entm't Corp.*, 174 F.3d 1036, 1047 (9th Cir. 1999). Here, Moroccanoil proffered
23 evidence that its Trademarks are registered and incontestable. Mot. at 9; Sands Decl. ¶¶
24 4-5, Exs. 3-4. Zotos does not dispute the validity of the Moroccanoil Trademarks, but
25 does challenge whether the Moroccanoil Trade Dress is valid and enforceable.
26
27
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1 “In contrast to a trademark, ‘trade dress’ refers to the ‘total image of a product’ and
2 may include features such as size, shape, color, color combinations, texture or graphics.”
3 *Int’l Jensen, Inc. v. Metrosound U.S.A., Inc.*, 4 F.3d 819, 822 (9th Cir. 1993) (citation
4 omitted). In order to state a valid claim for relief, the plaintiff must show the alleged
5 trade dress is (1) nonfunctional, (2) distinctive, and (3) creates a likelihood of consumer
6 confusion. *Id.* at 823.

7 8 **i. Functionality**

9 A plaintiff’s trade dress must be nonfunctional to be protected. *TrafFix Devices v.*
10 *Mktg. Displays, Inc.*, 532 U.S. 23, 30 (2001). A product feature is functional “if it is
11 essential to the use or purpose of the article or if it affects the cost or quality of the article,
12 that is, if exclusive use of the feature would put competitors at a significant non-
13 reputation-related disadvantage.” *Disc Golf Ass’n, Inc. v. Champion Discs, Inc.*, 158 F.3d
14 1002, 1006 (9th Cir. 1998) (citing *Qualitex Co. v. Jacobson Prods. Co.*, 514 U.S. 159,
15 165 (1995)). “[F]unctional elements that are separately unprotectable can be protected
16 together as part of a trade dress.” *Fuddruckers, Inc. v. Doc’s B.R. Others, Inc.*, 826 F.2d
17 837, 842 (9th Cir. 1987).

18
19 Zotos argues the Moroccanoil Trade Dress is functional because elements such as
20 (1) “white lettering on colored packaging;” (2) “placing letters vertically on products;”
21 (3) use of an amber bottle for liquid products; and (4) use of the turquoise color are
22 “common in hair care products.” *Opp.* at 12. As noted above, however, the focus of a
23 trade dress claim is not on the individual elements, but on the “overall visual impression
24 that the combination and arrangement of those elements create.” *Clicks Billiards, Inc. v.*
25 *Sixshooters, Inc.*, 251 F.3d 1252, 1259 (9th Cir. 2001). Here, Moroccanoil’s arrangement
26 of the individual elements of its Trade Dress appears to serve a purely aesthetic purpose
27 comprised of specific colors, fonts and styles. *Id.* at 1260 (findings purely aesthetic
28

1 features cannot be functional). There is also no evidence that Moroccanoil’s packaging is
 2 essential to the “cost or quality” of the product such that exclusive use would put a
 3 competitor at a “non-reputation-related disadvantage.” Thus, taken as a whole, the
 4 Moroccanoil Trade Dress is nonfunctional.²

5
 6 **ii. Distinctiveness**

7
 8 Distinctiveness requires the trade dress be “capable of distinguishing the
 9 applicant’s goods from the goods of others.” *Kendall-Jackson Winery, Ltd. v. E. & J.*
 10 *Gallo Winery*, 150 F.3d 1042, 1047 (9th Cir. 1998). Suggestive, arbitrary, or fanciful
 11 trade dresses are inherently distinctive, while descriptive trade dress can satisfy this
 12 element if it acquires secondary meaning. *Two Pesos, Inc. v. Taco Cabana, Inc.*, 505
 13 U.S. 763, 768-69 (1992). Thus, to establish that the mark is capable of being protected,
 14 plaintiff must establish that the mark is “either (1) inherently distinctive or (2) has
 15 acquired distinctiveness through secondary meaning.” *Id.* at 769 (emphasis omitted).

16
 17 Here, Moroccanoil contends that its Trade Dress is suggestive and therefore
 18 inherently distinctive because “it requires imagination, thought and perception to reach a
 19 conclusion as to the nature of goods.” Mot. at 11 (quoting *Surgicenters of Am., Inc. v.*
 20 *Med. Dental Surgeries, Co.*, 601 F.2d 1011, 1019 (9th Cir. 1979)). Zotos does not
 21 address the element of distinctiveness except to state Moroccanoil’s arguments are
 22 conclusory. Opp. at 14. The Court agrees with Moroccanoil. The Moroccanoil Trade
 23

24
 25 ² Zotos requests that the Court take judicial notice of the Notice of Opposition filed on March 7,
 26 2016 by Tiffany (NJ) LLC with the USPTO challenging the Moroccanoil Trade Dress regarding the use
 27 of the color turquoise blue. [Doc. # 24.] As noted above, trade dress refers to the “total image, design,
 28 and appearance of a product” and therefore opposition to one element of the Moroccanoil Trade Dress is
 irrelevant to the disposition of this Motion. *Clicks Billiards*, 251 F.3d at 1257. Accordingly, the Court
DENIES Zotos’ request.

1 Dress is based on packaging which does not appear to have any inherent meaning and
2 does not describe the product. Instead, its function is identification. A mark is inherently
3 distinctive if “[its] intrinsic nature serves to identify a particular source.” *Wal-Mart*
4 *Stores, Inc. v. Samara Bros., Inc.*, 529 U.S. 205, 210 (2000) (citation omitted). Thus, a
5 showing of secondary meaning is not required.

6
7 In sum, the Court finds Moroccanoil establishes evidence that its Trademarks and
8 Trade Dress are valid and enforceable marks.

9 10 **2. Likelihood of Confusion**

11
12 Likelihood of confusion exists whenever “consumers are likely to assume that a
13 product or service is associated with a source other than its actual source because of
14 similarities between the two sources' marks or marketing techniques.” *Nutri/System, Inc.*
15 *v. Con–Stan Indus., Inc.*, 809 F.2d 601, 605 (9th Cir. 1987) (citation omitted). Whether a
16 mark is confusingly similar is determined by the eight-factor “likelihood of confusion”
17 test from the Ninth Circuit's decision in *AMF Inc. v. Sleekcraft Boats*, 599 F.2d 341, 348-
18 49 (9th Cir. 1979). The eight factors are: (1) strength of the mark; (2) proximity of the
19 goods; (3) similarity of the marks; (4) evidence of actual confusion; (5) marketing
20 channels used; (6) type of goods and the degree of care likely to be exercised by the
21 purchaser; (7) defendant's intent in selecting the mark; and (8) likelihood of expansion of
22 the product lines. *Sleekcraft*, 599 F.2d at 348-49. These factors “are intended as an
23 adaptable proxy for consumer confusion, not a rote checklist.” *Network Automation, Inc.*
24 *v. Advanced Sys. Concepts, Inc.*, 638 F.3d 1137, 1145 (9th Cir. 2011). “[S]ome factors—
25 such as the similarity of the marks and whether the two companies are direct
26 competitors—will always be important,” but the relative importance of each individual
27 factor will be case-specific. *Brookfield Commc'ns*, 174 F.3d at 1054.

1 Here, as discussed more fully below, after balancing the eight *Sleekcraft* factors,
2 the Court finds there are “serious questions” as to whether a likelihood of confusion
3 exists between Moroccanoil’s marks and Zotos’ Majestic Oil products.

4
5 **i. Strength of Marks**

6 “The stronger a mark—meaning the more likely it is to be remembered and
7 associated in the public mind with the mark's owner—the greater the protection it is
8 accorded by the trademark laws.” *Network Automation*, 638 F.3d at 1149 (citing
9 *Brookfield Commc'ns*, 174 F.3d at 1058). In analyzing the strength of a mark, the Court
10 weighs both conceptual strength and commercial strength. *Id.* “Marks can be
11 conceptually classified along a spectrum of generally increasing inherent distinctiveness
12 as generic, descriptive, suggestive, arbitrary, or fanciful.” *Brookfield Commc'ns*, 174
13 F.3d at 1058. “Arbitrary or fanciful marks (*i.e.*, Kodak) are called ‘strong’ marks,
14 whereas descriptive or suggestive marks are ‘weak.’ ” *Nutri/Sys.*, 809 F.2d at 605.
15 “Commercial strength is based on actual marketplace recognition, and thus advertising
16 expenditures can transform a suggestive mark into a strong mark.” *Network Automation*,
17 638 F.3d at 1149 (internal quotations omitted).

18
19 Here, Moroccanoil’s marks appear to be suggestive because a consumer must
20 make a “mental leap” to understand the term “Moroccanoil” refers to hair and body
21 products that contain argan oil. *Brookfield Commc'ns*, 174 F.3d at 1058 (A mark is
22 “suggestive” when it “requires a mental leap from the mark to the product.”). Although
23 suggestive marks are presumptively weak, Moroccanoil has presented evidence that its
24 marks are commercially strong. Since 2007, it has made a significant investment in
25 advertising and enforcement of its brand. Weizmann Decl. ¶ 4. Its products have had
26 tremendous success and received recognition from celebrities, runway stylists and
27 consumers throughout the world. Mot. at 2; Weizmann Decl. ¶¶ 2-3; Sand Decl. ¶¶ 12-
28

1 13, Exs. 14, 16. MoroccanOil has also been featured in widely circulated magazines such
2 as Vogue, Elle, Marie Claire, People, US Weekly, and CNN featured a segment on its
3 history and success. Mot. at 3; Sand Decl. ¶¶ 10-11, Exs. 12-13; Declaration of David
4 Krzypow in support of Pls.’ Mot. ¶ 9, Ex. 15 [Doc. # 17-1 at p. 15]. In contrast, Majestic
5 Oil products recently launched at Sally Beauty in August, 2016. Selan Decl. ¶ 4.
6 Although it has promoted its products with print and online advertisements provided to
7 Sally Beauty, it has not received the same brand recognition as MoroccanOil. Kenny
8 Decl. ¶¶ 11-13, Exs. 1-3. Given the strong commercial strength of the MoroccanOil
9 marks, this factor favors MoroccanOil.

10 11 **ii. Proximity of Goods**

12
13 Goods are proximate if consumers are “likely to associate” the two product lines.
14 *Survivor Media, Inc. v. Survivors Prods.*, 406 F.3d 625, 633 (9th Cir. 2005) (citation
15 omitted). To that end, courts also “consider whether the buying public could reasonably
16 conclude that the products came from the same source.” *Id.* The Ninth Circuit has held
17 that goods as dissimilar as movies and sci-fi merchandise are proximate goods.
18 *Dreamwerks Prod. Group Inc. v. SKG Studio*, 142 F.3d 1127, 1131 (9th Cir.1998); *see*
19 *also Fleischmann Distilling Corp. v. Maier Brewing Co.*, 314 F.2d 149, 159–60 (9th Cir.
20 1963) (whiskey and beer are proximate goods). Here, both companies sell hair products
21 containing argan oil. Thus, this factor favors MoroccanOil.

22 23 **iii. Similarity of the Marks**

24
25 “[T]he similarity of the marks—has always been considered a critical question in
26 the likelihood-of-confusion analysis.” *GoTo.com v. Walt Disney Co.*, 202 F.3d 1199,
27 1205 (9th Cir. 2000). “[T]he more similar the marks in terms of appearance, sound, and
28 meaning, the greater the likelihood of confusion.” *Brookfield Commc'ns*, 174 F.3d at

1 1054. When comparing the two marks, courts follow three guiding principles: (1) “the
2 marks must be considered in their entirety and as they appear in the marketplace”; (2)
3 “similarity is adjudged in terms of appearance, sound, and meaning”; and (3) “similarities
4 are weighed more heavily than differences.” *GoTo.com*, 202 F.3d at 1206 (citations
5 omitted).

6
7 Moroccanoil argues that its Trademarks and Trade Dress are substantially similar
8 to the Zotos’ Majestic Oil line of products. Mot. at 13-14. On the shampoo, conditioner,
9 oil treatment and styling cream, Moroccanoil contends the term “Majestic Oil” arranged
10 vertically in white letters with an orange symbol in front of a blue background is similar
11 to Moroccanoil’s Vertical Design Mark as well as its Trade Dress. *Id.* at 14. On the
12 mask product, Moroccanoil contends the term “Majestic Oil” arranged horizontally in
13 white lettering over an orange symbol in front of a blue background is similar to
14 Moroccanoil’s Horizontal Design Mark and its Trade Dress. *Id.* at 14-15.

15
16 Zotos disagrees. It argues the name “Majestic Oil” is distinct from the
17 “Moroccanoil” name, with the only common elements being the first letter and the
18 generic word “oil.” Opp. at 15. Moreover, “Majestic” and “Morocco” do not invoke the
19 same meaning because majestic is an adjective used to describe impressive beauty or
20 dignity, while Morocco is a noun that describes a specific place in the world. *Id.* at 16.
21 Zotos also points out that its products do not contain an “orange M” and make no
22 particular emphasis on the letter “M” of Majestic Oil. *Id.* at 15. Although its products
23 have vertical lettering and a blue background, Zotos claims that vertical lettering is
24 functional and common in hair care products, and that the shades of blue are clearly
25 distinct. *Id.* at 15-16. Zotos also contends that an amber bottle is functional for liquid
26 products. *Id.* at 17.

1 Here, the Court agrees with Zotos that the product names “Moroccanoil” and
2 “Majestic Oil” are sufficiently distinct, and thus an injunction will not issue as to the
3 name “Majestic Oil.” The appearance of the Zotos products, however, is strikingly
4 similar to the Moroccanoil products. Zotos’ marks consist of similar white vertical
5 lettering, similar placement of an orange symbol, and a similar blue background. While
6 an amber bottle by itself may be functional, the Majestic Oil product is similarly
7 packaged as the Moroccanoil product with the vertical white lettering and orange symbol
8 against a blue box background.

9
10 Thus, after reviewing the parties’ arguments and the products themselves, the
11 Court finds there are more similarities in the marks than differences when considered in
12 their entirety and as they appear in the marketplace. This factor therefore favors
13 Moroccanoil.

14 15 **iv. Evidence of Actual Confusion**

16
17 Evidence of “actual confusion among significant numbers of consumers provides
18 strong support for the likelihood of confusion.” *Network Automation*, 638 F.3d at 1151
19 (quotation omitted). Here, there is no evidence of actual confusion. Mot. at 18 n. 3; *see*
20 *also* Selan Decl. ¶ 8, Kenny Decl. ¶ 17. However, “[b]ecause of the difficulty in
21 garnering such evidence . . . [s]urvey evidence may establish actual confusion.” *Fortune*
22 *Dynamic, Inc. v. Victoria's Secret Stores Brand Mgmt., Inc.*, 618 F.3d 1025, 1035 (9th
23 Cir. 2010) (citation omitted); *see also Brookfield Commc'ns*, 174 F.3d at 1050 (“The
24 failure to *prove* instances of actual confusion is *not* dispositive against a trademark
25 plaintiff, because actual confusion is hard to prove; difficulties in gathering evidence of
26 actual confusion make its absence generally unnoteworthy.”) (citation omitted, emphasis
27 in original).

1 MoroccanOil provides a survey conducted by Dr. Michael A. Kamins, currently the
2 Director of Research, Full Professor and Area Head of Marketing with tenure at the
3 Harriman School of Business at Stony Brook University-SUNY. Expert Report of Dr.
4 Michael A. Kamins (“Kamins Report”) in support of Pls.’ Mot. ¶ 7 [Doc. 17-1 at p. 45.]
5 Dr. Kamins was asked to “conduct an empirical study designed to examine whether or
6 not consumers, or potential consumers of hair care products who purchase such items
7 either on the internet or at a beauty supply store would be confused” between
8 MoroccanOil products and Majestic Oil products. *Id.* ¶ 1. Dr. Kamins’ survey found that
9 41% of respondents believed that Majestic Oil products were manufactured by or
10 associated with MoroccanOil. *Id.* ¶¶ 43-45.

11
12 Zotos contends that Kamins’ survey is flawed. Opp. at 20. Zotos provides the
13 expert report of Eugene P. Ericksen (“Ericksen Report”), an Emeritus Professor of
14 Sociology and Statistics at Temple University and Special Consultant with NERA
15 Economic Consulting, who opines that Dr. Kamins used the “wrong survey design, and,
16 as a result, produced an artificially high estimate of the confusion rate.” Declaration of
17 Diana Hughes Leiden in support of Def.’s Mot. ¶ 8, Ex. 7 at ¶¶ 1, 8 [Doc. # 23-1.] Dr.
18 Ericksen points out the following “critical errors” in Dr. Kamins’ use of the Squirt
19 design: (1) the products at issue are not sold in the same stores nor at the same price
20 point; (2) the “survey design did not appropriately reflect market conditions”; (3) the
21 failure to consider the “impact of price” meant that Dr. Kamins studied “the wrong
22 universe”; and (4) the survey failed to “use appropriate control stimuli.” Opp. at 20;
23 Ericksen Report ¶¶ 8-10.

24
25 The Squirt design is “most appropriate where a product with a weak mark is sold in
26 close proximity to the alleged infringer in the marketplace.” *Isle of Capri Casinos, Inc. v.*
27 *Flynt*, 2016 WL 6495380, at *6 (C.D. Cal. Nov. 1, 2016). Here, consumers may
28 encounter both marks in close proximity on the Internet on the same websites, such as

1 Amazon, eBay, Sears, Wal-Mart and Sleekhair Beauty. *See Sands* Decl. ¶¶ 17, 21, Exs.
2 21, 25. Moroccan oil products have been featured on the very same page on the Internet
3 as Majestic Oil products. *Id.* ¶ 21, Ex. 25 at pp. 11, 19, 22, 31-32. Nonetheless, because
4 the products sold on these websites are non-authorized and it is unclear if a significant
5 number of consumers would encounter the marks in close proximity, the Court gives the
6 survey less weight. The survey is still some evidence of actual confusion. *CytoSport,*
7 *Inc. v. Vital Pharm., Inc.*, 617 F. Supp. 2d 1051, 1075-76 (E.D. Cal. 2009) (“It is
8 sufficient for a preliminary injunction motion that plaintiff has proffered survey evidence
9 as *some* evidence of actual confusion.”) Accordingly, this factor slightly favors
10 Moroccan oil.

11 **v. Marketing Channels Used**

12
13 “Convergent marketing channels increase the likelihood of confusion.” *Sleekcraft*,
14 599 F.2d at 353. The *Sleekcraft* court considered the locations where the goods were
15 sold, the price range of the goods, and the types of advertising used. *Id.* Courts also
16 consider “whether the parties’ customer bases overlap.” *Pom Wonderful LLC v.*
17 *Hubbard*, 775 F.3d 1118, 1130 (9th Cir. 2014). “Marketing channels can converge even
18 when different submarkets are involved so long as ‘the general class of . . . purchasers
19 exposed to the products overlap.’ ” *Id.* (quoting *Sleekcraft*, 599 F.2d at 353).

20
21 Here, Zotos argues that the products serve entirely distinct markets. *Opp.* at 18.
22 Moroccan oil sells its products in high-end stores such as Saks, Neiman Marcus, Barney’s
23 and Nordstrom. *Elarar* Decl. ¶ 8. On the other hand, Zotos sells its products at the Sally
24 Beauty Supply chain, which serves consumers seeking lower prices. *Kenny* Decl. ¶ 5.
25 Moroccan oil disagrees, contending the parties’ marketing channels overlap because the
26 parties target the same general class of purchasers – female consumers of hair care
27 products. *Reply* at 8. This is evidenced by Zotos’ “efforts to target and capture
28

1 Moroccanoil customers” through its comparative advertising, such as “If you like
2 Moroccanoil, you’ll LOVE Luxe Majestic Oil!” *Id.* at 7. Moroccanoil is also concerned
3 about the sale of both products on non-authorized Internet websites, such as Amazon,
4 eBay, Sears, Wal-Mart and Sleekhair Beauty. *Mot.* at 16.

5
6 The fact that both parties sell products online adds little weight in the overall
7 likelihood of confusion analysis. *Network Automation*, 638 F.3d at 1151 (“[T]his factor
8 becomes less important when the marketing channel is less obscure. Today, it would be
9 the rare commercial retailer that did not advertise online, and the shared use of a
10 ubiquitous marketing channel does not shed much light on the likelihood of consumer
11 confusion.”); *Playboy Enterprises, Inc. v. Netscape Commc'ns Corp.*, 354 F.3d 1020,
12 1028 (9th Cir. 2004) (“Given the broad use of the Internet today, the same could be said
13 for countless companies. Thus, this factor merits little weight.”).

14
15 Notwithstanding that the parties sell their products in different marketing channels,
16 the “similarities between the products suggest an overlapping general class of
17 consumers.” *See Pom Wonderful*, 775 F.3d at 1131 (“T]he absence of identical channels
18 does not, by itself, undermine [plaintiff’s] likelihood of proving that the marketing
19 channels converge.”); *Sleekcraft*, 599 F.2d at 353 (finding convergent marketing channels
20 where both companies sold boats to authorized dealers in diverse localities).

21 Thus, this factor favors Moroccanoil.

22
23 **vi. Type of Goods and Degree of Care Likely to be Exercised by**
24 **Purchaser**

25 When purchasing inexpensive products, courts generally assume that consumers
26 will exercise less care. *Brookfield Commc'ns*, 174 F.3d at 1060 (“[W]hen dealing with
27 inexpensive products, customers are likely to exercise less care, thus making confusion
28

1 more likely.”). “Low consumer care, in turn, increases the likelihood of confusion.”
2 *Playboy*, 354 F.3d at 1028.

3
4 Moroccanoil argues that this factor favors likelihood of confusion because Zotos’
5 products are inexpensive and therefore consumers are not likely to exercise a heightened
6 degree of care. Mot. at 18. In response, Zotos contends consumers will notice a
7 distinction between the products because Zotos “expressly distinguished the products in
8 its marketing.” Opp. at 22. As Moroccanoil points out, however, Zotos products are sold
9 on the Internet without the “comparative advertising.” Reply at 6; Sands Decl. ¶ 21, Ex.
10 25; Declaration of Eric S. Engel in support of Pls.’ Mot. ¶ 2, Ex. 26 [Doc. 17-1 at p. 11].
11 Moreover, the term “our” in Zotos’ advertisement - “If you like Moroccanoil® products,
12 you’ll LOVE our new Luxe Majestic Oil line” – may appear ambiguous to consumers as
13 to whether the companies are associated with each other. Kenny Decl. ¶ 11, Ex. 1. Thus,
14 this factor favors Moroccanoil.

15 **vii. Defendant’s Intent in Selecting the Marks**

16
17 The Ninth Circuit has previously “emphasized the minimal importance of the
18 intent factor.” *GoTo.com*, 202 F.3d at 1208 (citing *Brookfield Commc’ns*, 174 F.3d at
19 1059). Nonetheless, where “one party knowingly adopts a mark similar to another’s . . .
20 courts presume that the defendant will accomplish its purpose, and that the public will be
21 deceived.” *Acad. of Motion Picture Arts & Scis. v. Creative House Promotions, Inc.*, 944
22 F.2d 1446, 1456 (9th Cir. 1991).

23
24 Here, it is undisputed that Zotos was aware of the Moroccanoil Trademarks and
25 Trade Dress when it began selling its Majestic Oil products. In 2014, Zotos and
26 Moroccanoil explored a possible business relationship whereby Zotos would manufacture
27 certain hair care products for Moroccanoil. *See* Hoo Decl. ¶ 2; Salley Decl. ¶ 4. The fact
28

1 that Zotos was “aware” of MoroccanOil, without more, “provides no *direct* evidence of
2 [Zotos’] judgment concerning likely confusion.” *Entrepreneur Media, Inc. v. Smith*, 279
3 F.3d 1135, 1148 (9th Cir. 2002) (“The inference from knowledge and similarity,
4 however, does not add much in answering the ultimate question here, likelihood of
5 confusion.”). Neither side has produced evidence of Zotos’ intent in selecting its mark.
6 Thus, the Court cannot make a determination as to Zotos’ intent at this time. This factor
7 is therefore neutral.

8 9 **viii. Likelihood of Expansion of the Product Lines**

10
11 “The likelihood of expansion in product lines is relatively unimportant where two
12 companies already compete to a significant extent.” *GoTo.com*, 202 F.3d at 1209
13 (quoting *Brookfield Commc'ns*, 174 F.3d at 1060); *see also Playboy*, 354 F.3d at 1029
14 (“Because the [defendants’] goods and [plaintiffs’] are already related . . . this factor is
15 irrelevant”). Here, both parties concede that they sell similar hair care products and
16 therefore this factor favors neither MoroccanOil nor Zotos. Mot. at 15; Opp. at 17.

17 18 **B. Irreparable Harm**

19 A plaintiff must “demonstrate a likelihood of irreparable injury—not just a
20 possibility—in order to obtain preliminary relief.” *Winter*, 555 U.S. at 21. “Those
21 seeking injunctive relief must proffer evidence sufficient to establish a likelihood of
22 irreparable harm.” *Herb Reed Enterprises, LLC v. Florida Entm't Mgmt., Inc.*, 736 F.3d
23 1239, 1251 (9th Cir. 2013). “Evidence of threatened loss of prospective customers or
24 goodwill certainly supports a finding of the possibility of irreparable harm.” *Stuhlbarg*
25 *Int'l Sales Co., Inc. v. John D. Brush & Co., Inc.*, 240 F.3d 832, 841 (9th Cir. 2001).
26 “Loss of goodwill may include a change in the marketplace resulting from customers
27
28

1 establishing relationships with low-cost infringers.” *QBAS Co., Ltd. v. C Walters*
2 *Intercoastal Corp.*, 2010 WL 7785955, at *12 (C.D. Cal. Dec. 16, 2010).

3
4 Moroccanoil argues it is likely to be irreparably harmed by “Zotos’ interference
5 with Moroccanoil’s ability to maintain its image as a premium brand by selecting its price
6 points and sales and marketing channels.” Mot. at 22. In support, Moroccanoil points to
7 the fact that Zotos is clearly targeting Moroccanoil customers with its advertisements:
8 “Compare to Moroccanoil® and Save” and “If you like Moroccanoil® products, you’ll
9 LOVE our new Luxe Majestic Oil line.” Reply at 13; Kenny Decl. ¶¶ 11-13, Exs. 1-3.
10 Moroccanoil also submits the expert report of William Decker, an independent consultant
11 in the professional beauty industry, who opines that once the public perceives a brand is
12 no longer “premium,” it is “difficult, if not impossible, to reinstate the premium
13 position.” Expert Report of William Decker (“Decker Report”) in support of Pls.’ Mot.
14 ¶¶ 1, 12 [Doc. 17-1 at p. 36]. Mr. Decker provides examples of beauty brands such as
15 Miss Clairol and Sebastian Shaper whose “premium” products declined in sales once
16 such products entered the mass market consumer retail channel. *Id.* ¶¶ 12-13. He
17 concludes that if consumers mistakenly believe that the Majestic Oil products are
18 connected or associated with the Moroccanoil products, Moroccanoil will lose its
19 reputation as a premium brand and consumers will no longer purchase the product. *Id.* ¶
20 19. Moroccanoil’s evidence indicates that at least some surveyed consumers believed
21 that Majestic Oil products were manufactured by or associated with Moroccanoil.
22 Kamins Report ¶ 2. As a result, the Court finds there is a risk of irreparable injury to
23 Moroccanoil’s customer good will and reputation.

24
25 Accordingly, Moroccanoil will likely suffer irreparable reputational injury without
26 the issuance of an injunction enjoining Zotos from distributing its Majestic Oil products
27 in their current packaging.
28

1 **C. Balance of Equities**

2
3 Before issuing a preliminary injunction, courts must weigh “the competing claims
4 of injury and [] consider the effect on each party of the granting or withholding of the
5 requested relief.” *Amoco Prod. Co. v. Village of Gambell, AK*, 480 U.S. 531, 542 (1987).
6 Here, the Court is aware of the impact an injunction will have on a segment of Zotos’
7 business. As discussed above, however, Zotos’ Majestic Oil line of products has been on
8 the market for a relatively short time, whereas Moroccanoil will likely suffer irreparable
9 reputational injury for which it cannot be adequately compensated with money damages.
10 Accordingly, the balance of hardships tips sharply in favor of Moroccanoil.

11 **D. Public Interest**

12
13 “The public interest analysis for the issuance of a preliminary injunction requires
14 [district courts] to consider whether there exists some critical public interest that would
15 be injured by the grant of preliminary relief.” *Alliance for the Wild Rockies*, 632 F.3d at
16 1138 (citation omitted). “Trademarks protect the public from confusion by accurately
17 indicating the source of a product.” *State of Idaho Potato Comm’n v. G & T Terminal*
18 *Packaging, Inc.*, 425 F.3d 708, 715 (9th Cir. 2005). In this case, because the Court has
19 “serious questions” as to whether consumers will likely be confused between the
20 products, the public interest factor weighs in favor of issuing an injunction.

21 **E. Bond³**

22
23 Under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 65(c), “[t]he court may issue a preliminary
24 injunction . . . only if the movant gives security in an amount that the court considers

25 _____
26 ³ In connection with the parties’ supplemental briefing on the issue of the bond amount,
27 Moroccanoil has filed objections to the Declarations of Elizabeth Kenny and Ronald M. Krassin. [Doc.
28 ## 65, 85.] The Court OVERRULES the evidentiary objections to the declarations upon which the
Court relied.

1 proper to pay the costs and damages sustained by any party found to have been
2 wrongfully enjoined or restrained.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 65(c). The Ninth Circuit has
3 recognized that Rule 65 “invests the court with discretion as to the amount of security
4 required, *if any*.” *Jorgensen v. Cassidy*, 320 F.3d 906, 919 (9th Cir. 2003) (emphasis in
5 original) (quoting *Barahona-Gomez v. Reno*, 167 F.3d 1228, 1237 (9th Cir. 1999)).
6 Thus, the purpose of the bond is to safeguard a defendant if the Court later determines
7 that a defendant has been wrongfully enjoined.

8
9 Zotos contends it will suffer “very significant financial and reputational harm” if it
10 is required to recall all existing Majestic Oil products and redesign and repackage its
11 product line. Def.’s First Suppl. at 2 [Doc. # 56.] It claims it will need to recall a
12 substantial number of cases of products from more than 3,000 retail stores and
13 warehouses nationwide. *Id.*; *see also* Suppl. Declaration of Elizabeth Kenny in support
14 of Def.’s Mot. (“Suppl. Kenny Decl.”) ¶¶ 4-5 [Doc. # 56-1.] Thus, Zotos requests a bond
15 in the amount of \$2.5 million, consisting of costs associated with recalling the products,
16 redesigning the packing, destroying unsellable units, storing the remaining units, and
17 other costs if Zotos is unable to sell warehoused inventory. Def.’s First Suppl. at 4-5;
18 Suppl. Kenny Decl. ¶¶ 6-16. Zotos also requests lost profits over the next six months.
19 Def.’s Second Suppl. at 3 [Doc. # 70.]; Second Suppl. Declaration of Elizabeth Kenny in
20 support of Def.’s Mot. ¶ 6 [Doc. # 70-1.] In response, Moroccanoil argues that Zotos
21 fails to base its requested amount on “actual harm demonstrated by admissible evidence”
22 and that “no bond or at most a bond in the amount of \$25,000 is appropriate.” Pls.’ First
23 Suppl. at 1 [Doc. # 64.]

24 Based on the record before it, the Court finds that a bond in the amount of
25 **\$250,000** is reasonable, which takes into account tangible costs Zotos would incur as a
26 result of the preliminary injunction, including costs to (a) ship its product currently in
27 Sally Beauty’s brick-and-mortar stores and distribution centers, and (b) store current
28

1 Majestic Oil products that could potentially be re-sold. Although Zotos claims that it is
2 not “commercially viable” to resell Majestic Oil products currently on the shelves at
3 Sally Beauty, it does not appear that all of the product must be destroyed. Suppl. Kenny
4 Decl. ¶ 10. Moroccanoil’s expert, Mr. Decker, opines that “it is common for beauty
5 product manufactures to resell products that have been returned to the manufacturer by a
6 retailer and reworked for resale.” Supplemental Report of William Decker in support of
7 Pls.’ Mot. ¶ 6 [Doc. # 64 at p. 8]. Thus, the Court declines to order “buy back” costs
8 since it appears Zotos may recoup such amounts if it resumes selling its product with a
9 non-infringing trade dress. *Fiji Water Co., LLC v. Fiji Mineral Water USA, LLC*, 741 F.
10 Supp. 2d 1165, 1183 (C.D. Cal. 2010) (finding defendant can also repackage its bottled
11 water and can resume selling water in the United States using a non-infringing trade
12 dress). The Court also declines to order lost profits because such damages are
13 speculative. *Interlink Int’l Fin. Servs., Inc. v. Block*, 145 F. Supp. 2d 312, 315 (S.D.N.Y.
14 2001) (finding a district court need not order security with respect to potential economic
15 damages that are “speculative at best.”).


16
17 **V.**

18 **CONCLUSION**

19 In light of the foregoing, the Court **GRANTS** Moroccanoil’s motion for
20 preliminary injunction.

21 **IT IS SO ORDERED.**

22 DATED: January 19, 2017

23 
24 _____
25 DOLLY M. GEE
26 UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE
27
28