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Judge Dismisses Prosecco Domain Suit

The ruling bolsters Italy’s effort to protect the sparkling wine’s geographic name in U.S. courts

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A federal judge in Virginia has dismissed a lawsuit brought by Best Drinks LLC, the owner of several Prosecco-related websites, after the Italian body that oversees the sparkling wine’s geographic labeling argued that the company’s domain registrations should not be recognized as valid under U.S. law.

Judge Patricia Tolliver Giles of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia issued a brief order on May 8 throwing out the case “for the reasons stated from the bench” during a hearing held the previous day. The ruling came after the court had warned that Best Drinks’ latest filing could be stricken from the record because it

contained “various legal” problems, according to the court docket referenced in the case.

The dispute centered on Prosecco.com and related web addresses, part of a broader fight over who can use the Prosecco name in commerce and online. The Italian standards body has long worked to protect Prosecco as a geographic indication tied to a specific region in northeastern Italy, where the wine is produced under rules meant to preserve its identity and reputation.

Best Drinks had asked the court for a declaration that its domain registrations were lawful under U.S. law. The dismissal leaves in place a legal victory for the Italian group and strengthens its position in U.S. litigation over geographic names used for wine and other food products.

The case reflects a larger tension between trademark-style domain ownership and international protections for place-based food and beverage names. In Europe, Prosecco is treated as a protected designation linked to origin. In the United States, those protections have often faced more uncertainty, especially when companies argue that names used online or in commerce have become generic or otherwise available for broader use.

The Virginia ruling may matter beyond this dispute because it could influence how courts handle similar challenges involving foreign geographic indications and internet domain names. For producers and trade groups that rely on place-based protections, the decision offers another example of a U.S. court siding with efforts to defend those names against private claims of ownership.