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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

SIERA STRUMLAUF and BENJAMIN
ROBLES, individually and on behalf of all
others similarly situated,

Plaintiffs,

v.

STARBUCKS CORPORATION,

Defendant.

Case No. _____

CLASS ACTION COMPLAINT

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

Plaintiffs Siera Strumlauf and Benjamin Robles (collectively, “Plaintiffs”) bring this action on behalf of themselves and all others similarly situated against Defendant Starbucks Corporation (“Starbucks” or “Defendant”). Plaintiffs make the following allegations pursuant to the investigation of their counsel and based upon information and belief, except as to the allegations specifically pertaining to themselves, which are based on personal knowledge.

NATURE OF ACTION

1. This is a class action lawsuit on behalf of purchasers of Starbucks Caffè Lattes, Flavored Lattes, Pumpkin Spice Lattes, Egg Nog Lattes, Skinny Lattes, Skinny Flavored Lattes, Vanilla Lattes, and Skinny Vanilla Lattes (collectively, “Lattes”). At its retail locations, Starbucks represents on its menu that its Lattes contain “12 fl. oz.” for a Tall, “16 fl. oz.” for a Grande, and “20 fl. oz.” for a Venti:¹



¹ Technically, the menu represents that Venti beverages are “20/24 fl. oz.” This means that hot beverages (like Starbucks Lattes) are purportedly “20 fl. oz.,” while cold beverages are purportedly “24 fl. oz.” For ease of reference, this complaint will only refer to the relevant representation as being “20 fl. oz.” in the context of Lattes.

1 However, Starbucks Lattes are uniformly underfilled pursuant to a standardized recipe. Tall Lattes
2 are not 12 fluid ounces, Grande Lattes are not 16 fluid ounces, and Venti Lattes are not 20 fluid
3 ounces. Starbucks cheats purchasers by providing less fluid ounces in their Lattes than
4 represented. In fact, Starbucks Lattes are approximately 25% underfilled.

5 2. Starbucks Lattes are made from a standardized recipe, which Starbucks instituted in
6 2009 to save on the cost of milk – one of its most expensive ingredients. To create a Latte, the
7 standardized recipe requires Starbucks baristas to fill a pitcher with steamed milk up to an etched
8 “fill to” line that corresponds to the size of the customer’s order, pour shots of espresso into a
9 separate serving cup, pour the steamed milk from the pitcher into the serving cup, and top with ¼”
10 of milk foam, leaving ¼” of free space in the cup. However, Starbucks’ standardized recipes for
11 Lattes result in beverages that are plainly underfilled. Stated otherwise, the etched “fill to” lines in
12 the pitchers are too low, by several ounces.

13 3. Moreover, the serving cups used by Starbucks for its Lattes are simply too small to
14 accommodate the fluid ounces listed on Starbucks’ menu. For example, the serving cup used for
15 Grande beverages holds exactly 16 fluid ounces, when completely full. However, Starbucks’
16 standardized recipe for its Grande Latte calls to fill the serving cup up to “1/4 inch below cup rim.”
17 Thus, when used in conjunction with its standardized recipes, Starbucks’ serving cups do not
18 permit 12 ounce, 16 ounce, and 20 ounce Lattes.

19 4. By underfilling its lattes, thereby shortchanging its customers, Starbucks has saved
20 countless millions of dollars in the cost of goods sold and was unjustly enriched by taking payment
21 for more product than it delivers. Plaintiffs assert claims on behalf of themselves and a nationwide
22 class of purchasers of Starbucks Lattes for breach of express warranty, breach of the implied
23 warranty of merchantability, unjust enrichment, violation of California’s Consumers Legal
24 Remedies Act (“CLRA”), violation of California’s Unfair Competition Law (“UCL”), violation of
25 California’s False Advertising Law (“FAL”), negligent misrepresentation, and fraud.

26 **PARTIES**

27 5. Plaintiff Siera Strumlauf is a citizen of California who resides in San Francisco,
28 California. Prior to the filing of this complaint, Plaintiff Strumlauf visited her local Starbucks in

1 San Francisco approximately one to two times per week, where she would purchase Grande-sized
2 (16 fl. oz.) plain and vanilla-flavored Starbucks Lattes, which cost approximately \$3.95. Plaintiff
3 Strumlauf saw the representation on Starbucks' menu that her Grande-sized Starbucks Lattes
4 would be "16 fl. oz." prior to and at the time of purchase, and understood this to be a representation
5 and warranty that her Lattes would, in fact, contain 16 fluid ounces. Plaintiff Strumlauf relied on
6 this representation and warranty in deciding to purchase her Starbucks Lattes, and this
7 representation and warranty was part of the basis of the bargain, in that she would not have
8 purchased Grande-sized Starbucks Lattes on the same terms if she had known that they were not, in
9 fact, 16 fluid ounces.

10 6. Plaintiff Benjamin Robles is a citizen of California and has his permanent residence
11 in Carlsbad, California. In January 2015, Plaintiff Robles visited a Starbucks retail store in
12 Carlsbad, California, where he purchased a Grande-sized (16 fl. oz.) plain Starbucks Latte, which
13 cost approximately \$3.95. Plaintiff Robles saw the representation on Starbucks' menu that his
14 Grande-sized Starbucks Lattes would be "16 fl. oz." prior to and at the time of purchase, and
15 understood this to be a representation and warranty that his Lattes would, in fact, contain 16 fluid
16 ounces. Plaintiff Robles relied on this representation and warranty in deciding to purchase his
17 Starbucks Lattes, and this representation and warranty was part of the basis of the bargain, in that
18 he would not have purchased Grande-sized Starbucks Lattes on the same terms if he had known
19 that they were not, in fact, 16 fluid ounces.

20 7. Defendant Starbucks Corporation is a Washington corporation with its principal
21 place of business in Seattle, Washington. Starbucks is a leading American coffee company and
22 coffeehouse chain. Since its founding in 1971, Starbucks now operates 23,450 retail locations
23 worldwide, including 12,937 locations in the United States alone, which serve hot and cold drinks,
24 whole-bean coffee, espressos, teas, fresh juices, pastries, snacks, merchandise, and Starbucks
25 Lattes. In 2015, Starbucks realized approximately \$19.2 billion in revenue, and employed 191,000
26 workers.

27 8. Whenever reference is made in this Complaint to any representation, act, omission,
28 or transaction of Starbucks, that allegation shall mean that Starbucks did the act, omission, or

1 transaction through its officers, directors, employees, agents, and/or representatives while they
2 were acting within the actual or ostensible scope of their authority.

3 **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

4 9. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1332(d)(2)(A)
5 because this case is a class action where the aggregate claims of all members of the proposed class
6 are in excess of \$5,000,000.00, exclusive of interest and costs, and Plaintiffs, together with most
7 members of the proposed class, are citizens of states different from Defendant. This Court also has
8 supplemental jurisdiction over state law claims pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367.

9 10. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391, this Court is the proper venue for this action because
10 a substantial part of the events, omissions, and acts giving rise to the claims herein occurred in this
11 District. Plaintiff Strumlauf is a citizen of California, resides in this District, and purchased a
12 Starbucks Latte from Defendant in this District. Additionally, Starbucks distributed, advertised,
13 and sold its Lattes, which are the subject of the present complaint, in this District.

14 **FACTS COMMON TO ALL CAUSES OF ACTION**

15 **A Brief Background On Lattes**

16 11. A latte is a coffee drink made with espresso and steamed milk. The term as used in
17 English is a shortened form of the Italian *caffè latte*, *caffelatte*, or *caffellatte*, which means “milk
18 coffee.” The word is also sometimes spelled “latté” or “lattè” in English.

19 12. Traditionally, a latte is created by mixing steamed milk and espresso, which is then
20 topped with a thin layer of milk foam.

21 13. In America, lattes rose to popularity in the 1980s and 1990s, beginning in affluent
22 urban markets such as Seattle and New York City. Specialty coffee products are now a booming
23 industry, which is driven by lattes. For example, a 2013 article from Forbes reports that “about
24 83% of U.S. adults drink coffee in one form or another.” Of these consumers, “about a third of
25 them drink a ‘gourmet’ coffee each day,” of which “lattes and cappuccinos seem to be the kind
26
27
28

1 ordered most frequently.” That said, “[i]t’s neck-and-neck [whether lattes or cappuccinos] gets the
2 top spot, but lattes currently seem to have the slight edge.”²

3 14. While Starbucks does not release precise sales data on each of its products, there are
4 indications that its lattes constitute a substantial portion of its sales. For example, Starbucks
5 reported that it sold over 200 million pumpkin spice lattes (a limited seasonal offering) from 2003
6 to 2013, generating revenues of at least \$100 million per year in recent seasons, according to
7 Forbes.

8 **How Starbucks Lattes Are Created, Per The Company’s Standardized Recipe**

9 15. Starbucks Lattes are created according to a standardized recipe. As discussed in the
10 company’s Beverage Resource Manual, Starbucks Lattes are created with 4 simple steps, as shown
11 in the following diagram:

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27 ² See <http://www.forbes.com/sites/robertpassikoff/2013/09/16/u-s-consumers-drinking-a-latte-more-coffee/>
28

		SHORT	TALL	GRANDE	VENTI	QUALITY NOTES
1 steam milk	2% milk is the default.					Measure to appropriate line on pitcher. Aerate milk 3–5 seconds.
2 queue shots	Espresso	1 shot	1 shot	2 shots	2 shots	Pull shots directly into cup.
3 add syrup	Starbucks® syrup (from espresso bar if requested)	2 pumps	3 pumps	4 pumps	5 pumps	Full pumps
4 finish and connect	Fill with steamed milk. Top with ¼ inch of foam.					¼ inch below cup rim

16. First, pursuant to the standardized recipe, the barista fills a standardized pitcher with steamed milk up to an etched “fill to” line. Each pitcher has at least 3 lines: one each for Tall, Grande, and Venti beverages. By having these “fill to” lines, the barista has no discretion to individually determine how much milk to use in each Latte, nor is there any room for deviation.

17. Second, pursuant to the standardized recipe, the barista adds shots of espresso to a separate serving cup. One shot is used for Tall Lattes, while two shots are used for Grande and Venti Lattes. Again, the barista has no discretion to individually determine how much espresso to use. A calibrated machine dispenses each shot.

1 18. Third, pursuant to the standardized recipe, the barista adds flavoring syrup, if
2 requested, according to the diagram above. Yet again, the barista has no discretion to individually
3 determine how much flavoring syrup to use. Calibrated pumps dispense the syrup in measured
4 amounts.

5 19. Fourth, pursuant to the standardized recipe, the barista pours the steamed milk from
6 the pitcher into the serving cup with the espresso. The barista then tops the beverage with ¼” of
7 milk foam, leaving at least ¼” of space below the rim of the serving cup.

8 **Starbucks Lattes Are Underfilled**

9 20. When Starbucks Lattes are created pursuant to the company’s standardized recipe,
10 the resulting beverages are underfilled. Several categories of evidence support these allegations.

11 21. First, Plaintiffs’ counsel purchased and measured Starbucks Lattes at different
12 stores, in different states, in different sizes, and in different flavors. However, each Latte was
13 underfilled by approximately 25%. Additionally, no Starbucks Latte was actually filled to the fluid
14 ounces promised on Starbucks’ menu (*e.g.*, Tall should be “12 fl. oz.,” Grande should be “16 fl.
15 oz.,” and Venti should be “20 fl. oz.”).

16 22. Second, Plaintiffs’ counsel acquired several copies of the standardized pitcher
17 currently in use by Starbucks baristas to make Lattes. However, the etched “fill to” lines used to
18 measure the steamed milk are plainly set too low. For a Grande beverage, the “fill to” line
19 comprises less than 12 fluid ounces of milk. After adding 2 shots of espresso (2 fluid ounces), the
20 resulting beverage measures less than 14 fluid ounces at most. This falls far short of Starbucks’
21 “16 fl. oz.” representation.

22 23. Third, the serving cups used by Starbucks simply do not accommodate the promised
23 beverage sizes in fluid ounces, per the standardized recipe for Lattes. For example, when filled to
24 the brink, the serving cup used for Grande beverages holds *exactly* 16 fluid ounces (the same is true
25 for the Tall cup, which holds *exactly* 12 fluid ounces, and the Venti cup, which holds *exactly* 20
26 fluid ounces). However, Starbucks’ recipe for its Grande Latte calls to fill the serving cup up to
27 “1/4 inch below cup rim.” Thus, ¼” of empty cup space exists above ¼” of milk foam, which sits
28

1 atop the fluid Latte. Accordingly, per the recipe, the Grande serving cup is just too small to hold a
2 16 fluid ounce latte.

3 24. Moreover, Starbucks refuses to fill any hot beverage up to the brim of the cup.
4 Thus, under no circumstances will Starbucks ever serve a Grande Latte that actually meets the fluid
5 ounces represented on the menu.

6 25. The milk foam added to the top of Starbucks Lattes does not count toward the
7 volume of its beverages. In the food science community, as well as in the weights and measures
8 community, foam is not measured on a volumetric basis. Rather, it is measured by mass. When
9 food scientists – and weights and measures inspectors – measure a liquid with foam, the
10 industry-standard procedure is to let the foam dissipate or eliminate the foam, then measure the
11 resulting liquid. Under this analysis, milk foam cannot compensate for an otherwise underfilled
12 Latte.

13 **Starbucks Made A Conscious Decision To Underfill Its Lattes To Save Money On Milk**

14 26. Starbucks faced financial difficulty at the end of 2007. Its stock was down 42%,
15 and many of its stores were failing. In January 2008, Howard Schultz, Chairman of the board,
16 resumed his position as CEO (which he had left in 2000), and lead an effort to return the company
17 to profitability. As part of these efforts, Mr. Schultz made over \$500 million of permanent cuts in
18 costs by laying off 4,000 employees, closing 800 retail locations in the United States, and reducing
19 the cost of goods sold.

20 27. A key component to this cost-cutting effort was to reduce the amount of milk used
21 by baristas and in Starbucks beverages. As reported by Bloomberg in 2009, Starbucks
22 accomplished this objective by putting standardized, etched lines in its steaming pitchers. These
23 etched lines on the pitchers were made specifically for Starbucks, and are used by all Starbucks
24 retail locations. In doing so, barista discretion was eliminated, and the amount of milk in each latte
25 was standardized:

26 [T]he baristas were [previously] pouring millions of dollars of
27 leftover milk down the drain. As store managers for the first time
28 began thinking about how to operate more efficiently, an idea
emerged. It was simple, obvious, and made everyone wonder why

1 no one had thought of it before: They could put etched lines in the
2 steaming pitchers so that the baristas would know exactly how much
3 milk to use for each size drink. Before, they just guessed. “The
4 celebration of that line in the halls of Starbucks has become a
5 metaphor,” says Schultz. “How many other lines can we find?
6 We’ve found a lot because no one was ever looking. The people
7 who have found those lines have become part of the folklore.”

8 *See [http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2009-08-06/starbucks-howard-schultz-vs-dot-](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2009-08-06/starbucks-howard-schultz-vs-dot-howard-schultz)*
9 *howard-schultz (emphasis added).*

10 28. Simply put, milk is an expensive ingredient. As reported by ABC News in a piece
11 entitled “Record Milk Price Squeezing Starbucks,” “CEO Howard Schultz told reporters earlier
12 this week, following the company’s annual meeting in Seattle: ‘I am concerned about dairy
13 [prices], both domestically and around the world, and we are working feverishly with our
14 suppliers.’”

15 29. Accordingly, by etching “fill to” lines on its steaming pitchers and removing
16 employee discretion, Starbucks was able to reduce its daily costs, and the company eventually
17 made a soaring comeback. Its stock went from a low of 3.92 on November 21, 2008 to 62.61 on
18 October 23, 2015.

19 30. In the process, however, Starbucks cut too much milk. Stated otherwise, when a
20 standard recipe is used to create a drink that is purportedly 16 fluid ounces, the resulting beverage
21 should in fact be 16 fluid ounces. In connection with these cost-saving measures, Starbucks knew
22 that the etched “fill to” lines in its steaming pitchers resulted in underfilled beverages. Yet
23 Starbucks continued to advertise its Tall beverages as “12 fl. oz.,” its Grande beverages as “16 fl.
24 oz.,” and its Venti beverages as “20 fl. oz.”

25 **CLASS REPRESENTATION ALLEGATIONS**

26 31. Plaintiffs seek to represent a class defined as all persons in the United States who
27 purchased a Starbucks Latte (the “Class”). Excluded from the Class are persons who made such
28 purchase for purpose of resale.

31. Plaintiffs also seek to represent a subclass of all Class members who purchased a
Starbucks Latte in California (the “Subclass”).

1 33. Members of the Class and Subclass are so numerous that their individual joinder
2 herein is impracticable. On information and belief, members of the Class and Subclass number in
3 the millions. The precise number of Class members and their identities are unknown to Plaintiffs
4 at this time but may be determined through discovery. Class members may be notified of the
5 pendency of this action by mail and/or publication through the distribution records of Defendant
6 and third party retailers and vendors.

7 34. Common questions of law and fact exist as to all Class members and predominate
8 over questions affecting only individual Class members. Common legal and factual questions
9 include, but are not limited to: whether Starbucks Lattes are underfilled; whether Defendant
10 warranted that Starbucks Lattes contained a specific “fl. oz.” measurement for each size; whether
11 Defendant breached these warranties; and whether Defendant committed statutory and common
12 law fraud by doing so.

13 35. The claims of the named Plaintiffs are typical of the claims of the Class in that the
14 named Plaintiffs purchased Starbucks Lattes in reliance on the representations and warranties
15 described above and suffered a loss as a result of that purchase.

16 36. Plaintiffs are adequate representatives of the Class and Subclass because their
17 interests do not conflict with the interests of the Class members they seek to represent, they have
18 retained competent counsel experienced in prosecuting class actions, and they intend to prosecute
19 this action vigorously. The interests of Class members will be fairly and adequately protected by
20 Plaintiffs and their counsel.

21 37. The class mechanism is superior to other available means for the fair and efficient
22 adjudication of the claims of Class and Subclass members. Each individual Class member may
23 lack the resources to undergo the burden and expense of individual prosecution of the complex and
24 extensive litigation necessary to establish Defendant’s liability. Individualized litigation increases
25 the delay and expense to all parties and multiplies the burden on the judicial system presented by
26 the complex legal and factual issues of this case. Individualized litigation also presents a potential
27 for inconsistent or contradictory judgments. In contrast, the class action device presents far fewer
28 management difficulties and provides the benefits of single adjudication, economy of scale, and

comprehensive supervision by a single court on the issue of Defendant's liability. Class treatment of the liability issues will ensure that all claims and claimants are before this Court for consistent adjudication of the liability issues.

COUNT I

Breach Of Express Warranty

38. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate by reference the allegations contained in all preceding paragraphs of this complaint.

39. Plaintiffs bring this claim individually and on behalf of the proposed Class against Defendant.

40. Defendant, as the designer, manufacturer, marketer, distributor, and/or seller, expressly warranted that Starbucks Lattes contained "12 fl. oz." for a Tall, "16 fl. oz." for a Grande, and "20 fl. oz." for a Venti.

41. In fact, Starbucks Lattes are not fit for such purposes because each of these express warranties are false. Starbucks Lattes are underfilled. A Tall does not contain 12 fluid ounces, a Grande does not contain 16 fluid ounces, and a Venti does not contain 20 fluid ounces.

42. As a direct and proximate cause of Defendant's breach of express warranty, Plaintiffs and Class members have been injured and harmed because: (a) they would not have purchased Starbucks Lattes on the same terms if the true facts were known concerning the Lattes' quantity; (b) they paid a price premium for Starbucks Lattes due to Defendant's promises that its Lattes contained "12 fl. oz.," "16 fl. oz.," and "20 fl. oz.," respectively; and (c) Starbucks Lattes did not have the characteristics, ingredients, uses, benefits, or quantities as promised.

COUNT II

Breach Of The Implied Warranty Of Merchantability

43. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate by reference the allegations contained in all preceding paragraphs of this complaint.

44. Plaintiffs bring this claim individually and on behalf of the proposed Class against Defendant.

45. Defendant, as the designer, manufacturer, marketer, distributor, and/or seller, impliedly warranted that Starbucks Lattes contained “12 fl. oz.” for a Tall, “16 fl. oz.” for a Grande, and “20 fl. oz.” for a Venti.

46. Defendant breached the warranty implied in the contract for the sale of Starbucks Lattes because they could not pass without objection in the trade under the contract description, the goods were not of fair average quality within the description, and the goods were unfit for their intended and ordinary purpose because Starbucks Lattes are underfilled, in that a Tall does not contain 12 fluid ounces, a Grande does not contain 16 fluid ounces, and a Venti does not contain 20 fluid ounces. As a result, Plaintiffs and Class members did not receive the goods as impliedly warranted by Defendant to be merchantable.

47. Plaintiffs and Class members purchased Starbucks Lattes in reliance upon Defendant's skill and judgment and the implied warranties of fitness for the purpose.

48. Starbucks Lattes were not altered by Plaintiffs or Class members.

49. Starbucks Lattes were defective when they left the exclusive control of Defendant.

50. Defendant knew that Starbucks Lattes would be purchased and used without additional testing by Plaintiffs and Class members.

51. Starbucks Lattes were defectively designed and unfit for their intended purpose, and Plaintiffs and Class members did not receive the goods as warranted.

52. As a direct and proximate cause of Defendant's breach of the implied warranty, Plaintiffs and Class members have been injured and harmed because: (a) they would not have purchased Starbucks Lattes on the same terms if the true facts were known concerning the Lattes' quantity; (b) they paid a price premium for Starbucks Lattes due to Defendant's promises that its Lattes contained "12 fl. oz.," "16 fl. oz.," and "20 fl. oz.," respectively; and (c) Starbucks Lattes did not have the characteristics, ingredients, uses, benefits, or quantities as promised.

COUNT III

Unjust Enrichment

53. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate by reference the allegations contained in all preceding paragraphs of this complaint.

54. Plaintiffs bring this claim individually and on behalf of the proposed Class against Defendant.

55. Plaintiffs and Class members conferred benefits on Defendant by purchasing Starbucks Lattes.

56. Defendant has been unjustly enriched in retaining the revenues derived from Plaintiffs and Class members' purchases of Starbucks Lattes. Retention of those moneys under these circumstances is unjust and inequitable because Defendant misrepresented that Starbucks Lattes contained "12 fl. oz." for a Tall, "16 fl. oz." for a Grande, and "20 fl. oz." for a Venti. These misrepresentations caused injuries to Plaintiffs and Class members because they would not have purchased Starbucks Lattes on the same terms if the true facts were known.

57. Because Defendant's retention of the non-gratuitous benefits conferred on it by Plaintiffs and Class members is unjust and inequitable, Defendant must pay restitution to Plaintiffs and Class members for its unjust enrichment, as ordered by the Court.

COUNT IV

**Violation Of California's Consumers Legal Remedies Act,
California Civil Code §§ 1750, *et seq.***

58. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate by reference the allegations contained in all preceding paragraphs of this complaint.

59. Plaintiffs bring this claim individually and on behalf of the proposed Subclass against Defendant.

60. California's Consumers Legal Remedies Act, Cal. Civ. Code § 1770(a)(5), prohibits “[r]epresenting that goods or services have sponsorship, approval, characteristics, ingredients, uses, benefits, or quantities which they do not have or that a person has a sponsorship, approval, status, affiliation, or connection which he or she does not have.”

61. California’s Consumers Legal Remedies Act, Cal. Civ. Code § 1770(a)(9), prohibits “[a]dvertising goods or services with intent not to sell them as advertised.”

62. Defendant violated this provision by misrepresenting that Starbucks Lattes contained “12 fl. oz.” for a Tall, “16 fl. oz.” for a Grande, and “20 fl. oz.” for a Venti.

63. Plaintiffs and the Subclass suffered injuries caused by Defendant because: (a) they would not have purchased Starbucks Lattes on the same terms if the true facts were known concerning the Lattes' quantity; (b) they paid a price premium for Starbucks Lattes due to Defendant's promises that its Lattes contained "12 fl. oz.," "16 fl. oz.," and "20 fl. oz.," respectively; and (c) Starbucks Lattes did not have the characteristics, ingredients, uses, benefits, or quantities as promised.

64. On or about January 29, 2016, prior to filing this action, a CLRA notice letter was served on Defendant which complies in all respects with California Civil Code § 1782(a). Plaintiff Robles sent Starbucks a letter via certified mail, return receipt requested, advising Starbucks that it is in violation of the CLRA and demanding that it cease and desist from such violations and make full restitution by refunding the monies received therefrom. A true and correct copy of Plaintiff's letter is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

65. Wherefore, Plaintiffs seek damages, restitution, and injunctive relief for this violation of the CLRA.

COUNT V

**Violation Of California's Unfair Competition Law,
California Business & Professions Code §§ 17200, *et seq.***

66. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate by reference the allegations contained in all preceding paragraphs of this complaint.

67. Plaintiffs bring this claim individually and on behalf of the proposed Subclass against Defendant.

68. Defendant is subject to California’s Unfair Competition Law, Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code §§ 17200, *et seq.* The UCL provides, in pertinent part: “Unfair competition shall mean and include unlawful, unfair or fraudulent business practices and unfair, deceptive, untrue or misleading advertising”

69. Defendant's misrepresentations and other conduct, described herein, violated the "unlawful" prong of the UCL by violating the CLRA as described herein; the FAL as described herein; and Cal. Com. Code § 2607.

70. Defendant's misrepresentations and other conduct, described herein, violated the "unfair" prong of the UCL in that its conduct is substantially injurious to consumers, offends public policy, and is immoral, unethical, oppressive, and unscrupulous, as the gravity of the conduct outweighs any alleged benefits.

71. Defendant violated the “fraudulent” prong of the UCL by making misrepresentations about Starbucks Lattes, as described herein.

72. Plaintiffs and the Subclass lost money or property as a result of Defendant's UCL violations because: (a) they would not have purchased Starbucks Lattes on the same terms if the true facts were known concerning the Lattes' quantity; (b) they paid a price premium for Starbucks Lattes due to Defendant's promises that its Lattes contained "12 fl. oz.," "16 fl. oz.," and "20 fl. oz.," respectively; and (c) Starbucks Lattes did not have the characteristics, ingredients, uses, benefits, or quantities as promised.

COUNT VI

**Violation Of California's False Advertising Law,
California Business & Professions Code §§ 17500, *et seq.***

73. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate by reference the allegations contained in all preceding paragraphs of this complaint.

74. Plaintiffs bring this claim individually and on behalf of the proposed Subclass against Defendant.

75. California's False Advertising Law, Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code §§ 17500, *et seq.*, makes it “unlawful for any person to make or disseminate or cause to be made or disseminated before the public in this state, ... in any advertising device ... or in any other manner or means whatever, including over the Internet, any statement, concerning ... personal property or services, professional or otherwise, or performance or disposition thereof, which is untrue or misleading and which is known, or which by the exercise of reasonable care should be known, to be untrue or misleading.”

76. Defendant committed acts of false advertising, as defined by §17500, by misrepresenting that Starbucks Lattes contained “12 fl. oz.” for a Tall, “16 fl. oz.” for a Grande, and “20 fl. oz.” for a Venti.

77. Defendant knew or should have known, through the exercise of reasonable care that its representations about Starbucks Lattes were untrue and misleading.

78. Defendant's actions in violation of § 17500 were false and misleading such that the general public is and was likely to be deceived.

79. Plaintiffs and the Subclass lost money or property as a result of Defendant's FAL violations because: (a) they would not have purchased Starbucks Lattes on the same terms if the true facts were known concerning the Lattes' quantity; (b) they paid a price premium for Starbucks Lattes due to Defendant's promises that its Lattes contained "12 fl. oz.," "16 fl. oz.," and "20 fl. oz.," respectively; and (c) Starbucks Lattes did not have the characteristics, ingredients, uses, benefits, or quantities as promised.

COUNT VII

Negligent Misrepresentation

80. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate by reference the allegations contained in all preceding paragraphs of this complaint.

81. Plaintiffs bring this claim individually and on behalf of the proposed Class against Defendant.

82. As discussed above, Defendant misrepresented that Starbucks Lattes contained “12 fl. oz.” for a Tall, “16 fl. oz.” for a Grande, and “20 fl. oz.” for a Venti.

83. At the time Defendant made these representations, Defendant knew or should have known that these representations were false or made them without knowledge of their truth or veracity.

84. At an absolute minimum, Defendant negligently misrepresented and/or negligently omitted material facts about Starbucks Lattes.

1 85. The negligent misrepresentations and omissions made by Defendant, upon which
2 Plaintiffs and Class members reasonably and justifiably relied, were intended to induce and
3 actually induced Plaintiffs and Class members to purchase Starbucks Lattes.

4 86. Plaintiffs and Class members would not have purchased Starbucks Lattes on the
5 same terms if the true facts had been known.

6 87. The negligent actions of Defendant caused damage to Plaintiffs and Class members,
7 who are entitled to damages and other legal and equitable relief as a result.

8 **COUNT VIII**

9 **Fraud**

10 88. Plaintiffs hereby incorporate by reference the allegations contained in all preceding
11 paragraphs of this complaint.

12 89. Plaintiffs bring this claim individually and on behalf of the proposed Class against
13 Defendant.

14 90. As discussed above, Defendant provided Plaintiffs and Class members with false or
15 misleading material information and failed to disclose material facts about Starbucks Lattes,
16 including but not limited to the fact that they contained “12 fl. oz.” for a Tall, “16 fl. oz.” for a
17 Grande, and “20 fl. oz.” for a Venti.

18 91. The misrepresentations and omissions made by Defendant, upon which Plaintiffs
19 and Class members reasonably and justifiably relied, were intended to induce and actually induced
20 Plaintiffs and Class members to purchase Starbucks Lattes.

21 92. The fraudulent actions of Defendant caused damage to Plaintiffs and Class
22 members, who are entitled to damages and other legal and equitable relief as a result.

23 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

24 WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated, seek
25 judgment against Defendant, as follows:

- 26 a. For an order certifying the nationwide Class and the Subclass under Rule 23 of the
27 Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and naming Plaintiffs as the representatives of the
28

Class and Subclass and Plaintiffs' attorneys as Class Counsel to represent members of the Class and Subclass;

- b. For an order declaring the Defendant's conduct violates the statutes referenced herein;
- c. For an order finding in favor of Plaintiffs, the nationwide Class, and the Subclass on all counts asserted herein;
- d. For compensatory and punitive damages in amounts to be determined by the Court and/or jury;
- e. For prejudgment interest on all amounts awarded;
- f. For an order of restitution and all other forms of equitable monetary relief;
- g. For injunctive relief as pleaded or as the Court may deem proper; and
- h. For an order awarding Plaintiffs, the Class, and the Subclass their reasonable attorneys' fees and expenses and costs of suit.

DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY JURY

Plaintiffs demand a trial by jury of all issues so triable.

Dated: March 16, 2016

Respectfully submitted,

BURSOR & FISHER, P.A.

By: /s/ L. Timothy Fisher
L. Timothy Fisher

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Attorneys for Plaintiffs

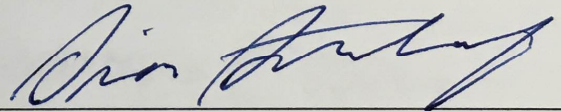
1
2 I, Siera Strumlauf, declare as follows:

3 1. I am a plaintiff in this action and a citizen of the State of California. I have personal
4 knowledge of the facts stated herein and, if called as a witness, I could and would testify
5 competently thereto.

6 2. The complaint filed in this action is filed in the proper place for trial under
7 California Civil Code Section 1780(d) in that Defendant conducts a substantial amount of business
8 in this District.

9 3. While living in San Francisco, California, I purchased one or more Grande
10 Starbucks Lattes for my household and my personal use. I purchased a Grande Starbucks Latte
11 after I read the representation that a Grande is "16 fl. oz." This representation was a substantial
12 factor influencing my decision to purchase a Grande Starbucks Latte. I would not have purchased
13 a Grande Starbucks Latte if I had known that it was underfilled.
14

15 I declare under the penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the
16 foregoing is true and correct, executed on February 29, 2016 at San Francisco, California.
17

18 

19 SIERA STRUMLAUF
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28



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L. TIMOTHY FISHER
Tel: 925.300.4455
Fax: 925.407.2700
ltfisher@bursor.com

January 29, 2016

Via Certified Mail – Return Receipt Requested

Starbucks Corporation
Attn: Legal Department
2401 Utah Avenue South
Seattle, WA 98134

*Re: Demand Letter Pursuant to California Civil Code § 1782 and
Violation of U.C.C. §§ 2-313, 2-314*

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter serves as a preliminary notice and demand for corrective action by Starbucks Corporation (“Starbucks”) pursuant to California’s Consumers Legal Remedies Act, California Civil Code § 1782, on behalf of our client, Benjamin Robles, and a class of all similarly situated purchasers (the “Class”) of Starbucks Caffè Latte, Flavored Latte, Skinny Latte, Skinny Flavored Latte, Vanilla Latte, and Skinny Vanilla Latte beverages (collectively, “Starbucks Lattes”). This letter also serves as notice pursuant to U.C.C. § 2-607(3)(A) concerning the breaches of express and implied warranties described herein.

Starbucks Lattes are sold to consumers in the following sizes: Short (8 fl. oz.), Tall (12 fl. oz.), Grande (16 fl. oz.), and Venti (20 fl. oz.). However, instead of receiving a latte with these represented fluid ounces, Starbucks systematically underfills its lattes. In short, Starbucks is cheating purchasers by providing less fluid ounces in their lattes than they are paying for. *See* U.C.C. §§ 2-313, 2-314.

By systematically underfilling Starbucks Lattes, Starbucks has violated and continues to violate numerous provisions of California law, including but not limited to subsections (a)(5) and (a)(9) of the Consumers Legal Remedies Act, Civil Code § 1770, which prohibits representing that goods or services have sponsorship, approval, characteristics, ingredients, uses, benefits, or quantities which they do not have, and advertising goods or services with intent not to sell them as advertised.

In 2015, Mr. Robles purchased Starbucks Grande Caffè Lattes in San Diego and Carlsbad, California. On behalf of our client and the putative class, we hereby demand that Starbucks immediately (a) cease and desist from continuing to underfill Starbucks Lattes, and (b) make full restitution to all purchasers of its mislabeled lattes of all purchase money obtained from the sales thereof.

It is further demanded that Starbucks preserve all documents and other evidence which refer or relate to any of the above-described practices including, but not limited to, the following:

1. All documents concerning recipes for Starbucks Lattes;
2. All documents concerning the advertisement, marketing, or sale of Starbucks Lattes; and
3. All communications with customers concerning complaints or comments concerning the practices described herein related to Starbucks Lattes.

This letter also serves as a thirty (30) day notice and demand requirement under California Civil Code § 1782 for damages. Accordingly, should Starbucks fail to rectify the situation on a class-wide basis within 30 days of receipt of this letter, we will seek actual damages, plus punitive damages, interest, attorneys' fees and costs.

Please contact me right away if you wish to discuss an appropriate way to remedy this matter. If I do not hear from you promptly, I will take that as an indication that you are not interested in doing so.

Very truly yours,



L. Timothy Fisher

Gerald R. Healy
Gerald R. Healy (Jan 29, 2016)

Mr. Gerald R. Healy
Owner/Managing Partner
Military Justice Attorneys, PLLC
gerry@militaryjusticeattorneys.com

CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS

SIERA STRUMLAUF and BENJAMIN ROBLES, individually and on behalf of all others similarly situated.

(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff **San Francisco**

(EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)

(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number)

L. Timothy Fisher, Bursor & Fisher, P.A.

1990 N. California Blvd., Suite 940

Walnut Creek, CA 94596 Tel: (925) 300-4455

DEFENDANTS

STARBUCKS CORPORATION

County of Residence of First Listed Defendant _____

(IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)

NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.

Attorneys (If Known)

II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

- ☐ 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff
- ☐ 2 U.S. Government Defendant
- ☐ 3 Federal Question
(U.S. Government Not a Party)
- ☒ 4 Diversity
(Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Item III)

III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES (Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff and One Box for Defendant)

- | | PTF | DEF | | PTF | DEF |
|---|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|---|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Citizen of This State | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | Incorporated or Principal Place of Business In This State | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 |
| Citizen of Another State | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | Incorporated and Principal Place of Business In Another State | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 |
| Citizen or Subject of a Foreign Country | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | Foreign Nation | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |

IV. NATURE OF SUIT (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

CONTRACT	TORTS		FORFEITURE/PENALTY	BANKRUPTCY	OTHER STATUTES
<input type="checkbox"/> 110 Insurance <input type="checkbox"/> 120 Marine <input type="checkbox"/> 130 Miller Act <input type="checkbox"/> 140 Negotiable Instrument <input type="checkbox"/> 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment <input type="checkbox"/> 151 Medicare Act <input type="checkbox"/> 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excludes Veterans) <input type="checkbox"/> 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits <input type="checkbox"/> 160 Stockholders' Suits <input type="checkbox"/> 190 Other Contract <input type="checkbox"/> 195 Contract Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 196 Franchise	PERSONAL INJURY <input type="checkbox"/> 310 Airplane <input type="checkbox"/> 315 Airplane Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 320 Assault, Libel & Slander <input type="checkbox"/> 330 Federal Employers' Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 340 Marine <input type="checkbox"/> 345 Marine Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 350 Motor Vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> 355 Motor Vehicle Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 360 Other Personal Injury <input type="checkbox"/> 362 Personal Injury - Medical Malpractice	PERSONAL INJURY <input type="checkbox"/> 365 Personal Injury - Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 367 Health Care/Pharmaceutical Personal Injury Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability PERSONAL PROPERTY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 370 Other Fraud <input type="checkbox"/> 371 Truth in Lending <input type="checkbox"/> 380 Other Personal Property Damage <input type="checkbox"/> 385 Property Damage Product Liability	<input type="checkbox"/> 625 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881 <input type="checkbox"/> 690 Other LABOR <input type="checkbox"/> 710 Fair Labor Standards Act <input type="checkbox"/> 720 Labor/Management Relations <input type="checkbox"/> 740 Railway Labor Act <input type="checkbox"/> 751 Family and Medical Leave Act <input type="checkbox"/> 790 Other Labor Litigation <input type="checkbox"/> 791 Employee Retirement Income Security Act IMMIGRATION <input type="checkbox"/> 462 Naturalization Application <input type="checkbox"/> 465 Other Immigration Actions	<input type="checkbox"/> 422 Appeal 28 USC 158 <input type="checkbox"/> 423 Withdrawal 28 USC 157 PROPERTY RIGHTS <input type="checkbox"/> 820 Copyrights <input type="checkbox"/> 830 Patent <input type="checkbox"/> 840 Trademark SOCIAL SECURITY <input type="checkbox"/> 861 HIA (1395ff) <input type="checkbox"/> 862 Black Lung (923) <input type="checkbox"/> 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g)) <input type="checkbox"/> 864 SSID Title XVI <input type="checkbox"/> 865 RSI (405(g)) FEDERAL TAX SUITS <input type="checkbox"/> 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff or Defendant) <input type="checkbox"/> 871 IRS—Third Party 26 USC 7609	<input type="checkbox"/> 375 False Claims Act <input type="checkbox"/> 400 State Reapportionment <input type="checkbox"/> 410 Antitrust <input type="checkbox"/> 430 Banks and Banking <input type="checkbox"/> 450 Commerce <input type="checkbox"/> 460 Deportation <input type="checkbox"/> 470 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations <input type="checkbox"/> 480 Consumer Credit <input type="checkbox"/> 490 Cable/Sat TV <input type="checkbox"/> 850 Securities/Commodities/Exchange <input type="checkbox"/> 890 Other Statutory Actions <input type="checkbox"/> 891 Agricultural Acts <input type="checkbox"/> 893 Environmental Matters <input type="checkbox"/> 895 Freedom of Information Act <input type="checkbox"/> 896 Arbitration <input type="checkbox"/> 899 Administrative Procedure Act/Review or Appeal of Agency Decision <input type="checkbox"/> 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes
REAL PROPERTY <input type="checkbox"/> 210 Land Condemnation <input type="checkbox"/> 220 Foreclosure <input type="checkbox"/> 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment <input type="checkbox"/> 240 Torts to Land <input type="checkbox"/> 245 Tort Product Liability <input type="checkbox"/> 290 All Other Real Property	CIVIL RIGHTS <input type="checkbox"/> 440 Other Civil Rights <input type="checkbox"/> 441 Voting <input type="checkbox"/> 442 Employment <input type="checkbox"/> 443 Housing/Accommodations <input type="checkbox"/> 445 Amer. w/Disabilities - Employment <input type="checkbox"/> 446 Amer. w/Disabilities - Other <input type="checkbox"/> 448 Education	PRISONER PETITIONS Habeas Corpus: <input type="checkbox"/> 463 Alien Detainee <input type="checkbox"/> 510 Motions to Vacate Sentence <input type="checkbox"/> 530 General <input type="checkbox"/> 535 Death Penalty Other: <input type="checkbox"/> 540 Mandamus & Other <input type="checkbox"/> 550 Civil Rights <input type="checkbox"/> 555 Prison Condition <input type="checkbox"/> 560 Civil Detainee - Conditions of Confinement			

V. ORIGIN (Place an "X" in One Box Only)

- ☒ 1 Original Proceeding
- ☐ 2 Removed from State Court
- ☐ 3 Remanded from Appellate Court
- ☐ 4 Reinstated or Reopened
- ☐ 5 Transferred from Another District (specify)
- ☐ 6 Multidistrict Litigation

VI. CAUSE OF ACTION

Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under which you are filing (Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity):
28 U.S.C 1332 (d)

Brief description of cause:

False and misleading advertising of Starbucks Lattes

VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:

☒ CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION UNDER RULE 23, F.R.Cv.P.

DEMAND \$

CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint:

JURY DEMAND: ☒ Yes ☐ No

VIII. RELATED CASE(S) IF ANY

(See instructions):

JUDGE _____

DOCKET NUMBER _____

DATE

03/16/2016

SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD

/s/ L. Timothy Fisher

IX. DIVISIONAL ASSIGNMENT (Civil L.R. 3-2)

(Place an "X" in One Box Only)



SAN FRANCISCO/OAKLAND



SAN JOSE



EUREKA