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11	FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION	
12	VALUED OF A THE DI	CTDICT COURT
13 14	UNITED STATES DI FOR THE SOUTHERN DIST	
15 16	FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION,	
17	Plaintiff,) Case No
18	V.) Control Programme
19	AAFE Products Corp., a California corporation,) Complaint For Permanent) Injunction and Other Equitable) Relief
20. 21	JBE International, LLC, a California limited liability company,))
22	BSDC, Inc., a California corporation,)
23	KADC, Inc., a California corporation,))
24	Purestrike, Inc., a California corporation,)
25	BNRI Corp., fka Bernheim & Rice, Inc., a)
26	California corporation,)
27)
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1	BRIAN BERNHEIM, individually, and as an) owner and officer of BNRI Corp.,)	
2) JOSHUA BERNHEIM, individually and as an)	
3	owner and officer of AAFE, JBEI, BSDC,	
4	KADC, and Purestrike,)	
5	JARED COATES, individually and as an officer or) managing member of AAFE, JBEI, and Purestrike,)	
6	and	
7 8	ROBERT KOCH, individually and as an owner and) officer of AAFE Products Corp.,	
9) Defendants.)	
10)	
11		
12	Plaintiff, the Federal Trade Commission ("FTC"), for its Complaint alleges:	
13	1. The FTC brings this action under Section 13(b) of the Federal Trade Commission	
14	Act ("FTC Act"), 15 U.S.C. § 53(b), and Section 5 of the Restore Online Shoppers' Confidence	
15	Act ("ROSCA"), 15 U.S.C. § 8404, to obtain permanent injunctive relief, rescission or	
16 17	reformation of contracts, restitution, the refund of monies paid, disgorgement of ill-gotten	
18	monies, and other equitable relief for Defendants' acts or practices in violation of Section 5(a) of	
19	the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 45(a), and Section 4 of ROSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 8403, in connection with	
20		
21	Defendants' online marketing of cooking and golf-related products.	
22	JURISDICTION AND VENUE	
23	2. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331, 1337(a).	
24	and 1345, 15 U.S.C. §§ 45(a), 53(b), and Section 5(a) of ROSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 8404(a).	
25	3. Venue is proper in this district under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1391(b)(2), (b)(3), (c)(2), and	
26	(c)(3), and 15 U.S.C. § 53(b).	
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PLAINTIFF

- 4. The FTC is an independent agency of the United States Government created by statute. 15 U.S.C. §§ 41-58. The FTC enforces Section 5(a) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 45(a), which prohibits unfair or deceptive acts or practices in or affecting commerce. The FTC also enforces ROSCA, 15 U.S.C. §§ 8401-8405. ROSCA prohibits the sale of goods or services on the Internet through negative option marketing without meeting certain requirements to protect consumers. A negative option is an offer in which the seller treats a consumer's silence—their failure to reject an offer or cancel an agreement—as consent to be charged for goods or services.
- 5. The FTC is authorized to initiate federal district court proceedings, by its own attorneys, to enjoin violations of the FTC Act and ROSCA and to secure such equitable relief as may be appropriate in each case, including rescission or reformation of contracts, restitution, the refund of monies paid, and the disgorgement of ill-gotten monies. 15 U.S.C. §§ 53(b), 56(a)(2)(A), and 8404.

DEFENDANTS

- 6. Defendant AAFE Products Corp. is a California corporation with its principal place of business at 929 Poinsettia Avenue, Suite 102, Vista, California. AAFE wholly owns Defendants JBE International ("JBEI"), BSDC, KADC, and Purestrike (collectively, the "AAFE Defendants"). AAFE transacts or has transacted business in this district and throughout the United States.
- 7. Defendant JBEI is a California limited liability company with its principal place of business at 929 Poinsettia Avenue, Suite 102, Vista, California. JBEI transacts or has transacted business in this district and throughout the United States.

- 8. Defendant BSDC, Inc. is a California corporation with its principal place of business at 929 Poinsettia Avenue, Suite 102, Vista California. BSDC transacts or has transacted business in this district and throughout the United States.
- 9. Defendant KADC, Inc. is a California corporation with its principal place of business at 929 Poinsettia Avenue, Suite 102, Vista, California. KADC transacts or has transacted business in this district and throughout the United States.
- 10. Defendant Purestrike, Inc. is a California corporation with its principal place of business at 929 Poinsettia Avenue, Suite 102, Vista, California. Purestrike transacts or has transacted business in this district and throughout the United States.
- 11. Defendant BNRI Corp., formerly known as Bernheim & Rice, Inc., is a California corporation with its principal place of business at 170 Eucalyptus Avenue, Vista, California.

 BNRI and JBEI (collectively, the "BNRI Defendants") have done business under the name Medicus and Medicus Golf. BNRI transacts or has transacted business in this district and throughout the United States.
- owner of AAFE. At all times material to this Complaint, acting alone or in concert with others, he has formulated, directed, controlled, had the authority to control, or participated in the acts and practices of the BNRI Defendants and the AAFE Defendants, including the acts and practices set forth in this Complaint. Defendant Brian Bernheim, in connection with the matters alleged herein, transacts or has transacted business in this district and throughout the United States.
- 13. Defendant Joshua Bernheim is an owner and officer of each of the AAFE Defendants, and an officer of BNRI. He is the chief operating officer and vice president of sales and marketing for AAFE, and the chief operating officer of BNRI. At all times material to this

Complaint, acting alone or in concert with others, he has formulated, directed, controlled, had the authority to control, or participated in the acts and practices of the BNRI Defendants and the AAFE Defendants, including the acts and practices set forth in this Complaint. Defendant Joshua Bernheim, in connection with the matters alleged herein, transacts or has transacted business in this district and throughout the United States.

- 14. Defendant Jared Coates is an owner of AAFE, was the owner of KADC and Purestrike, and was an officer or managing member of AAFE, JBEI, and Purestrike. He was the vice president of finance and administration for AAFE, managing member of JBEI, and president of Purestrike. At all times material to this Complaint, acting alone or in concert with others, he has formulated, directed, controlled, had the authority to control, or participated in the acts and practices of the BNRI Defendants and the AAFE Defendants, including the acts and practices set forth in this Complaint. Defendant Jared Coates, in connection with the matters alleged herein, transacts or has transacted business in this district and throughout the United States.
- AAFE. At all times material to this Complaint, acting alone or in concert with others, he has formulated, directed, controlled, had the authority to control, or participated in the acts and practices of the AAFE Defendants and BNRI, including the acts and practices set forth in this Complaint. Defendant Robert Koch, in connection with the matters alleged herein, transacts or has transacted business in this district and throughout the United States.

COMMON ENTERPRISE

16. From 2010 through 2012, the BNRI Defendants conducted the business practices described below through an interrelated network of companies that had common ownership, officers, managers, business functions, employees, and office locations.

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Since 2012, the AAFE Defendants – with AAFE as the holding company since 17. 2013- have conducted the business practices described below through an interrelated network of companies that have common ownership, officers, managers, business functions, employees, and office locations. Further, the companies commingled funds, used the same sales techniques, and had a centralized recordkeeping system. Because the BNRI Defendants and the AAFE Defendants operated as common enterprises, each of them is jointly and severally liable for the acts and practices alleged below as to the BNRI Defendants and the AAFE Defendants, respectively.

COMMERCE

18. At all times material to this Complaint, Defendants have maintained a substantial course of trade in or affecting commerce, as "commerce" is defined in Section 4 of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 44.

DEFENDANTS' BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

- 19. From 2010 to 2014, the BNRI Defendants sold golf-related products through negative option marketing under various names, including Tour Partner Rewards and Medicus Video. Since 2012, the AAFE Defendants have sold cooking and golf-related products through negative option marketing under various names, including: Kitchen Advance; Gourmet Cooking Online; Gourmet Cooking Rewards; Medicus Golf; Kick X Tour Z Golf Balls; Golf Online Academy; Golf Tour Partners; and Purestrike Swing Clinic.
- 20. Defendants have owned and operated numerous websites making negative option offers, including: shopcheftv.com; gourmetcookingonline.com; gourmetcookingrewards.com; shopmaxtv.com; golfonlineacademy.com; GolfTourPartners.com; getkickxballs.com; medicus.com; and TourPartnerRewards.com.

21. Defendants have advertised their websites through infomercials broadcast on television and streamed on the Internet–including websites optimized for mobile, and bulk email solicitations.

Defendants' Websites

- 22. All of Defendants' websites referenced in ¶¶ 19-21 have similar layouts, user interfaces, and other web design elements.
- 23. These websites contain two types of negative option offers: (a) continuity plans, where Defendants bill a consumer's credit card for goods or services on a recurring basis until the consumer cancels the plan; and (b) trial offers, where a consumer receives goods or services for free—or for a nominal fee—for a trial period, and Defendants charge them when the trial period ends if the consumer fails to return the product or cancel the plan. In numerous instances, Defendants combine both negative option features by offering continuity plans on a trial basis.
- 24. Defendants represent that they offer a 100% money back guarantee, and that their trial offers are risk-free.
- 25. In initial offers for single products on their websites, Defendants typically offer goods or services for a 30 to 60 day trial period, either for free or for a nominal shipping and handling charge. Consumers sign up by clicking an "Add to Cart" or similar button on the initial web page, and then by clicking through a series of linked pages where they submit their shipping and credit card billing information.
- 26. In numerous of these instances described in ¶ 25, Defendants include "bundled" negative option offers in their websites, by packaging multiple products in a single offer.
- 27. In numerous instances, after consumers submit their billing information for an initial purchase, the AAFE Defendants solicit a separate purchase of additional products through

negative option marketing ("upsell"). Consumers often must click through as many as 14 upsell web pages before reaching a final confirmation page for the initial purchase.

28. In numerous instances, Defendants: (1) fail to obtain consumers' express informed consent before charging their credit card accounts for goods and services; (2) misrepresent that consumers can receive trial shipments for free or for a nominal shipping or handling fee;, (3) do not adequately disclose the terms of their offers; or (4) make it difficult to return trial products, cancel continuity plans, and obtain refunds.

Defendants' Hidden Disclosures

- 29. Defendants fail to disclose adequately the material terms of negative option offers in their websites, including initial offers for single products, bundled offers, and upsell offers.

 After touting "free" and "no risk" offers, Defendants do not disclose their material terms where consumers are likely to see them. Consumers who happen to see disclosures are unlikely to read and understand them.
- 30. In numerous instances, Defendants place material disclosures: (a) outside the proximity to the "Add to Cart" button, or the billing information section where a consumer finishes checking out; (b) "below the fold," *i.e.*, below the portion of a web page a user can see on a typical computer monitor without scrolling down the page; or (c) at the bottom of the last page of the online checkout process, far beneath the "Submit" button for consumers' billing information.
- 31. Even consumers who can locate Defendants' disclosures are not likely to read and understand them because Defendants bury them in small print, at the bottom of a web page, and in densely worded hyperlinked web pages addressing other issues such as company privacy policies, product availability, and warranty terms.

32. Numerous consumers also would not see the disclosures because they are surrounded by distracting graphics or advertising claims that are more prominent than the disclosures.

Deceptive Initial Offers for Single Products

- 33. Numerous of Defendants' initial offers for single products in their negative option websites are substantially similar.
- 34. For example, the Tour Z Golf Balls website's first page makes a prominent claim that consumers can try the product for "FREE!" Below this claim Defendants place a prominent "Add to Cart" button. Exhibit A, p. 1 (attached). The trial offer, however, is not free if consumers do not cancel and return the balls within a prescribed time. This requirement and other material terms of the negative option offer are not disclosed in a manner that many consumers would see, read, and understand.
- 35. The AAFE Defendants place material terms –such as the length of the trial period, an initial shipping charge, and the charge for keeping the product after that period ends—"below the fold" of the first page, and provide no visual cue to consumers to scroll down to look for those material terms of the offer. *See* Exhibit A, pp. 1-2 (screen shots of first page). When consumers click the "Add to Cart" button, their browser goes to a new webpage where they continue the checkout process. Thus, consumers would not see this disclosure unless they scroll to the bottom of the page, before clicking that button.
- 36. Moreover, the disclosures located below the fold are: (a) in small print; (b) at the very bottom of the web page; (c) beneath another prominent banner ad ("Order Now") and "Add to Cart" button; and (d) obscured by advertising claims about the product, and other text unrelated to the offer's material terms such as the webpage's copyright year. Exhibit A, p. 2.

- 37. When consumers click an "Add to Cart" button on the initial offer page, their browser goes to the website's second page to continue the checkout process. This page provides shipping information. Defendants place an order form entirely on the right half of the page, below another prominent pitch to try the golf balls for "FREE!" The only disclosure on this page is a statement located beneath the "Submit" button in the order form, in small print, stating, "Other terms, conditions, and modifications may apply." *See* Exhibit A, p. 3.
- 38. When consumers click the "Submit" button on the shipping information page, their browser goes to a third page, where consumers complete the checkout process by providing their billing information. The order form is again located entirely on the right half of the page.

 The only disclosure near this section appears above the first field ("Card Type") where the AAFE Defendants request entry of a card number to cover a nominal shipping charge for their "free" trial offer: "What card would you prefer for the \$.99 S&H today?" Exhibit A, p. 4.
- 39. The AAFE Defendants place disclosures in two other locations on the billing information page. As illustrated in Exhibit A at p. 4, one set of disclosures is located "above the fold," but on the left side of the web page, between graphics and advertising claims. Here the website states: "Try the TourZ balls FREE with \$0.99 S&H for 30 Days! Love it or you'll never even be charged! Keep it and it's just 39.95 with free S&H for the dozen premium balls!! You can cancel anytime and best of all each dozen balls has a 100%, 60 day money back guarantee!" This language appears under a headline touting the attributes of the golf balls. Consumers who have already decided to accept the "free" offer touted earlier would not expect to find the terms of a negative option offer here.
- 40. The disclosure also states that the shipping and handling fee is \$0.99 and later states that shipping and handling is free. It also fails to disclose when or how the consumer will

be charged or how to avoid the charge. Finally, it seemingly refers to multiple shipments ("... each dozen balls...") without explaining their cost or how or when the consumer will be charged for them, and refers to a right to cancel without indicating what it applies to, or how to cancel. Exhibit A, p. 4.

41. As illustrated in Exhibit A at p. 5, another set of disclosures on the billing information page appears both below the fold and far beneath the billing information section of the order form, after a redundant shipping information section. When consumers click the "Submit" button beneath the billing information section, their browser goes to the next linked page in the AAFE Defendants' website. Thus, consumers would not see those disclosures unless they scrolled to the bottom of the web page before clicking the "Submit" button. However, they have no reason to do so.

Deceptive Bundled Offers

- 42. Defendants' negative option websites often make "bundled" offers that include one product combined with free trial offers for one or more continuity plans. Consumers who accept the bundled offer receive the initial product and are automatically enrolled in at least one continuity plan. For example, one website offers a free trial for five DVDs on how to play golf. By accepting, Defendants sign up consumers for a continuity plan featuring online golf lessons.
- 43. From 2010 to 2012, the BNRI Defendants bundled offers to purchase golf-related products with free trial offers for continuity plans known as Medicus Video, an online subscription program for golf training videos, and Tour Partner Rewards, an online subscription program for golf-related coupons and discounts.
- 44. Since 2012, the AAFE Defendants have bundled offers to purchase cookingrelated products with free trial offers for online subscription programs known as Gourmet

Cooking Online (recipes and instructional materials) and Gourmet Cooking Rewards (coupons and discounts). For example, as illustrated in Exhibit B (attached), in one website Defendants bundle an offer to sell their Culinary Torch product, with free trial offers for both of these online subscription programs. The AAFE Defendants have also bundled offers to purchase golf-related products with free trial offers for online subscription programs known as Golf Online Academy (training materials), Purestrike Swing Clinic (same), and Golf Tour Partners (coupons and discounts).

- 45. Without adequately disclosing the terms of the programs and obtaining the consumers' consent, Defendants typically enroll consumers in online subscription programs on a free trial basis for 30 to 60 days, and then charge consumers \$9.95 per program every 30 days until consumers cancel the programs. *See* Exhibit B, pp. 1-2, 5 (claiming programs are "Free Gifts!" on first page of website, burying trial period and monthly charge terms on last page of checkout process).
- 46. In numerous instances, as with their single product/continuity plan offers,
 Defendants fail to place material disclosures regarding their bundled offers where consumers are
 likely to see them. Specifically, Defendants: (a) fail to place them in proximity to the "Add to
 Cart" button a consumer clicks to begin checking out, or to the billing information section where
 a consumer finishes checking out, *see* Exhibit B, pp. 1-2, 3-5 ("Add to Cart" and billing
 information pages for bundled offer); (b) place them below "the fold," *i.e.*, in the portion of a
 web page a user cannot see on a typical computer monitor without scrolling down, and in a
 location where many consumers would not expect to find material terms of the offer due to the
 absence of visual cues or indicators; or (c) place them at the bottom of the last page of the online

checkout process, beneath the "Submit" button for consumers' billing information. *See* Exhibit B, pp. 3-5 (screen shots of last page of checkout process for bundled offer).

- 47. Even if consumers happen to see Defendants' disclosures, they are unlikely to read and understand them because Defendants bury them in small print, at the bottom of a web page, and in densely worded hyperlinked web pages addressing other issues such as company privacy policies, product availability, and warranty terms.
- 48. Defendants also reduce the likelihood that consumers will see the disclosures by surrounding them with distracting graphics or advertising claims that are more prominent than the disclosures.

Deceptive Upsell Offers

- 49. In numerous instances, after submitting their billing information for an initial purchase on Defendants' websites, consumers must click through as many as 14 upsell pages making negative option offers before reaching the final confirmation page.
- 50. The upsell pages offer additional products or services on a negative option basis.

 They have substantially similar offers and web design.
- 51. In numerous instances, Defendants' upsell pages offer to let consumers try additional products for \$1 on a trial basis. Depending on the offer, Defendants then bill consumers for a single payment or 3-6 monthly installment payments after the trial period if the consumer does not cancel and return the product(s).
- 52. In some instances, the upsell pages bundle one free item (*e.g.*, a free book, free priority shipping) with one or two continuity plans.
- 53. Defendants obscure the terms of negative option offers and make it more difficult to decline the offers in their upsell pages by: (a) requiring consumers to click either a prominent

"YES!" button to accept the offer, or a "No thanks" sentence in much smaller print to decline the offer; (b) failing to place disclosures in proximity to the prominent "YES! I want it for \$1 NOW!" or "YES! I want it!" button; (c) placing the terms in dense paragraphs of text; (d) burying the terms in small print, beneath the "Submit" button, at the bottom of an upsell page, and in densely worded hyperlinked web pages; and (e) surrounding the terms by more distracting graphics or more prominent advertising claims.

54. Defendants do not disclose the terms of their upsell pages' negative option offers before obtaining consumers' billing information for upsell charges. Rather, they charge the same credit card that consumers submitted for the initial transaction.

Websites More Deceptive When Viewed Using Mobile Devices

- 55. Consumers who view Defendants' offers on a mobile device are unlikely to see, read, and understand their terms because such devices have a significantly smaller screen size than the typical computer monitor.
- 56. For example, the negative option offers for golf products on the AAFE

 Defendants' shopmaxtv.com website appear to be optimized for viewing on mobile devices, with
 the same content as the full size version. However, a consumer must scroll or click through more
 than 15 screens before reaching the end of the checkout process. The "Add to Cart" buttons,
 which jump to the checkout process pages when a consumer clicks on them, appear before any
 disclosures regarding the terms of the offer appear on a different screen.
- 57. Moreover, like the full size version, the final checkout page is linked to a series of upsell offer pages, but those pages are not optimized for mobile viewing. Consequently, a consumer must repeatedly scroll up, down, and side to side to view those pages. To successfully

decline an upsell offer on a mobile device, a consumer must repeatedly stretch and zoom the page to accurately press the "No thanks" text-only button.

Defendants' Cancellation and Refund Practices

- 58. Defendants make it difficult for consumers to return a product, cancel recurring charges, and obtain refunds.
- 59. Defendants' return policy is contained within densely worded, hyperlinked web pages, which are typically over two pages long when printed. The policy typically states: "If you call us within thirty (30) days of receipt of shipment to obtain a return authorization, and return the product per instructions, during that time, we will refund you the purchase price, minus shipping and handling charges." The text containing the hyperlink is buried in microprint at the very bottom of Defendants' web pages. The links have general titles such as "Terms and Conditions" that many consumers are not likely to associate with material cancellation and refund terms.
- 60. When consumers complete a transaction, the confirmation page does not disclose:

 (a) the name of the seller; (b) the amount the consumer will be charged; (c) when the consumer will be charged; (d) when applicable, the fact that the consumer has been enrolled in a continuity program; and (e) the steps a consumer must take to return a product, cancel a continuity plan, and obtain a refund. Defendants do not disclose this information either in confirmation emails or in packing slips enclosed with products shipped to consumers.
- 61. In numerous instances, consumers are not aware that Defendants have billed them until they detect charges on their credit card statements with cryptic billing descriptions such as "JBEI," "KAVI," or "RMC," and trace them to Defendants by contacting their card issuer.

- 62. When consumers call Defendants' customer service numbers to return a product, cancel recurring charges, or obtain refunds, Defendants' representatives initially make multiple attempts to "save the sale" by offering free products and discounts and by extending trial periods. In many instances, these attempts make the process more complex and substantially increase the duration of the call and the consumers' cost to cancel.
- 63. In numerous instances, until they call Defendants' customer service number, consumers who have received products on a free trial basis do not learn that they must pay substantial shipping costs if they want to return a product.
- 64. For continuity plans, Defendants' policy is to limit refunds to charges from the last 30 days. If consumers demand more, Defendants' policy is to limit refunds to charges from the last 90 days.

VIOLATIONS OF THE FTC ACT

- 65. Section 5(a) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 45(a), prohibits "unfair or deceptive acts or practices in or affecting commerce."
- 66. Misrepresentations or deceptive omissions of material fact constitute deceptive acts or practices prohibited by Section 5(a) of the FTC Act.

COUNT I Misrepresentation of Trial Offers

67. In numerous instances, in connection with the advertising, marketing, promotion, offering for sale, or sale of cooking and golf-related goods or services, Defendants represented, directly or indirectly, expressly or by implication, that consumers who enter their billing information into Defendants' websites will receive a risk-free trial shipment of Defendants' products for free, or for a nominal shipping and handling fee.

- 68. In truth and in fact, consumers do not receive a risk-free trial shipment for free or for a nominal shipping and handling fee because they must return the shipment at their own expense before the trial period ends to avoid additional charges for the product.
- 69. Therefore, Defendants' representations described in Paragraph 67 are false, and constitute a deceptive act or practice in violation of Section 5(a) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 45(a).

COUNT II Failure to Disclose Negative Option Offer TermsFree Trial Conversion Offers

- 70. In numerous instances, in connection with the advertising, marketing, promotion, offering for sale, or sale of cooking and golf-related goods or services, Defendants represented, directly or indirectly, expressly or by implication, that consumers who enter their billing information into Defendants' websites will receive a risk-free trial shipment of Defendants' products for free, or for a nominal shipping and handling fee.
- 71. In numerous instances in which Defendants have made the representations set forth in Paragraph 70, Defendants failed to disclose adequately to consumers the material terms and conditions of the offer, including:
 - a. That the trial shipment is not free;
 - b. That consumers must call Defendants and return the product before the trial period ends to avoid additional charges for the product; and
 - c. That consumers must pay substantial return shipping costs themselves.
- 72. Defendants' failure to disclose adequately the material information described in Paragraph 71 above, in light of the representation described in Paragraph 70 above, constitutes a deceptive act or practice in violation of Section 5(a) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 45(a).

COUNT III

Failure to Disclose Negative Option Offer Terms-Continuity or Subscription Plan Offers

- 73. In numerous instances, in connection with the advertising, marketing, promotion, offering for sale, or sale of cooking and golf-related goods or services, Defendants represented, directly or indirectly, expressly or by implication, that consumers who enter their billing information into Defendants' websites will receive a free trial for golf or cooking-related continuity plans.
- 74. In numerous instances in which Defendants have made the representations set forth in Paragraph 73, Defendants failed to disclose adequately to consumers the material terms and conditions of the offer, including:
 - a. That Defendants would automatically enroll consumers in continuity plans with additional recurring charges;
 - b. That consumers must affirmatively cancel the continuity plans before the end of a trial period to avoid additional charges;
 - c. That Defendants would use consumers' credit card information to charge consumers monthly for the continuity plans;
 - d. The costs associated with the continuity plans; and
 - e. The steps consumers must take to cancel the continuity plans to avoid additional charges.
- 75. Defendants' failure to disclose adequately the material information described in Paragraph 74 above, in light of the representation described in Paragraph 73 above, constitutes a deceptive act or practice in violation of Section 5(a) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 45(a).

COUNT IV

Failure to Disclose Terms of Return, Refund, and Cancellation Policy

- 76. In numerous instances, in connection with the advertising, marketing, promotion, offering for sale, or sale of cooking and golf-related goods or services, Defendants represented, directly or indirectly, expressly or by implication, that Defendants offer a 100% money back guarantee, and that their trial offers are risk-free.
- 77. In numerous instances in which Defendants have made the representations set forth in Paragraph 76, Defendants failed to disclose adequately to consumers the material terms and conditions of their refund and cancellation policy, including:
 - a. That consumers must call Defendants before the end of a trial period to cancel continuity plans or return free trial products to avoid additional charges;
 - b. That consumers must pay substantial return shipping costs themselves; and
 - c. That for continuity plans, Defendants limit refunds to charges from the last 30 days, or if consumers demand more, charges from the last 90 days.
- 78. Defendants' failure to disclose or disclose adequately the material information described in Paragraph 77 above, in light of the representations described in Paragraph 76 above, constitutes a deceptive act or practice in violation of Section 5(a) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 45(a).

VIOLATIONS OF THE RESTORE ONLINE SHOPPERS' CONFIDENCE ACT

79. In 2010, Congress passed the Restore Online Shoppers' Confidence Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 8401 *et seq.*, which became effective on December 29, 2010. Congress passed ROSCA because "[c]onsumer confidence is essential to the growth of online commerce. To continue its development as a marketplace, the Internet must provide consumers with clear,

accurate information and give sellers an opportunity to fairly compete with one another for consumers' business." Section 2 of ROSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 8401.

- 80. Section 4 of ROSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 8403, generally prohibits charging consumers for goods or services sold in transactions effected on the Internet through a negative option feature, as that term is defined in the Commission's Telemarketing Sales Rule ("TSR"), 16 C.F.R. § 310.2(u), unless the seller (1) clearly and conspicuously discloses all material terms of the transaction before obtaining the consumer's billing information, (2) obtains the consumer's express informed consent before making the charge, and (3) provides a simple mechanism to stop recurring charges. *See* 15 U.S.C. § 8403.
- 81. The TSR defines a negative option feature as a provision in an offer or agreement to sell or provide any goods or services "under which the customer's silence or failure to take an affirmative action to reject goods or services or to cancel the agreement is interpreted by the seller as acceptance of the offer." 16 C.F.R. § 310.2(u).
- 82. As described in Paragraphs 6 to 64 above, Defendants have advertised and sold cooking and golf-related goods and services through a negative option feature as defined by the TSR. 16 C.F.R. § 310.2(u).
- 83. Pursuant to Section 5 of ROSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 8404, a violation of ROSCA is a violation of a rule promulgated under Section 18 of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 57a.

COUNT V Illegal Negative Option Marketing

84. In numerous instances, in connection with charging consumers for cooking and golf-related goods or services sold in transactions effected on the Internet through a negative option feature, Defendants failed to:

- a. clearly and conspicuously disclose all material terms of the transaction before obtaining the consumer's billing information;
- b. obtain a consumer's express informed consent before charging the consumer's credit card, debit card, bank account, or other financial account for products or services through such transaction; and
- c. provide simple mechanisms for a consumer to stop recurring charges from being placed on the consumer's credit card, debit card, bank account, or other financial account.
- 85. Defendants' acts or practices, as described in Paragraph 84 above, violate Section 4 of ROSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 8403.

CONSUMER INJURY

86. Consumers have suffered and will continue to suffer substantial injury because of Defendants' violations of the FTC Act and ROSCA. In addition, Defendants have been unjustly enriched because of their unlawful acts or practices. Absent injunctive relief by this Court, Defendants are likely to continue to injure consumers, reap unjust enrichment, and harm the public interest.

THIS COURT'S POWER TO GRANT RELIEF

87. Section 13(b) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 53(b), empowers this Court to grant injunctive and such other relief as the Court may deem appropriate to halt and redress violations of any provision of law enforced by the FTC. The Court, in the exercise of its equitable jurisdiction, may award ancillary relief, including rescission or reformation of contracts, restitution, the refund of monies paid, and the disgorgement of ill-gotten monies, to prevent and remedy any violation of any provision of law enforced by the FTC.

	PRAYER FOR RELIEF	
	88. Wherefore, Plaintiff FTC, pursuant to Section 13(b) of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C.	
	§ 53(b), Section 5 of ROSCA, 15 U.S.C. § 8404, and the Court's own equitable powers, requests	
	that the Court:	
	A. Enter a permanent injunction to prevent future violations of the FTC Act	
and ROSCA by Defendants;		
	B. Award such relief as the Court finds necessary to redress injury to	
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consumers resulting from Defendants' violations of the FTC Act and ROSCA, including, but not limited to, rescission or reformation of contracts, restitution, the refund of monies paid, and the disgorgement of ill-gotten monies; and

C. Award Plaintiff the costs of bringing this action, as well as such other and additional relief as the Court may determine to be just and proper.

Respectfully submitted,

DAVID C. SHONKA **Acting General Counsel**

s/Robert Frisby

Dated: March 23, 2017

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