

D. Maimon Kirschenbaum
Josef Nussbaum
JOSEPH KIRSCHENBAUM LLP
32 Broadway, Suite 601
New York, NY 10004
(212) 688-5640
(212) 688-2548 (fax)

*Attorneys for Named Plaintiff, proposed FLSA
Collective Plaintiffs, and proposed Class*

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK**

-----X
**ANTONIO ALONSO on behalf of himself
and others similarly situated,**

Plaintiff,

v.

**LE BILBOQUET NY, LLC, d/b/a LE
BILBOQUET, and PHILIPPE
DELGRANGE,**

Defendants.
-----X

INDEX NO.

COMPLAINT

**FLSA COLLECTIVE ACTION AND
RULE 23 CLASS ACTION**

Plaintiff alleges as follows:

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

1. This Court has original federal question jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 1331 because this case is brought under the Fair Labor Standards Act, 29 U.S.C. § 201, *et seq.* (“FLSA”). This Court has supplemental jurisdiction over the New York state law claims, as they are so related to the claims in this action within the Court’s original jurisdiction that they form part of the same case or controversy under Article III of the United States Constitution.

2. Venue is proper in this District because Defendants conduct business in this District, and the acts and/or omissions giving rise to the claims herein alleged took place in this District.

THE PARTIES

3. Defendant Le Bilboquet NY, LLC is a New York corporation that operates Le Bilboquet restaurant (“Le Bilboquet,” or “the restaurant”), located at 20 East 60th St, New York, New York 10022.

4. Le Bilboquet has an annual gross volume of sales in excess of \$500,000.

5. Le Bilboquet is owned and operated by Philippe Delgrange.

6. Defendant Delgrange exercises sufficient control of Le Bilboquet’s day to day operations to be considered Plaintiff’s employer under the FLSA and New York law.

7. Defendant Delgrange has the power to hire and fire the restaurant’s employees.

8. Defendant Delgrange controls restaurant employees’ rates of pay.

9. To the extent that employment records are kept for employees, Defendant Delgrange is involved in maintaining those records.

10. Plaintiff Antonio Alonso was employed by Le Bilboquet as a busser from approximately September 2013 until October 2016.

FLSA COLLECTIVE ACTION ALLEGATIONS

11. Plaintiff brings the First and Second Claims for Relief as a collective action pursuant to FLSA Section 16(b), 29 U.S.C. § 216(b), on behalf of all service employees, other than service managers, employed by Le Bilboquet on or after the date that is three years before the filing of the Original Complaint in this case as defined herein (“FLSA Collective”).

12. At all relevant times, Plaintiff and the other FLSA Collective Plaintiffs are and have been similarly situated, have had substantially similar job requirements and pay provisions, and are and have been subject to Le Bilboquet’s decision, policy, plan and common policies, programs, practices, procedures, protocols, routines, and rules willfully failing and refusing to

pay them at the legally required minimum wage for all hours worked and allowing non-tipped employees to share in their tips. The claims of Plaintiff stated herein are essentially the same as those of the other FLSA Collective Plaintiffs.

13. The First and Second Claims for Relief are properly brought under and maintained as an opt-in collective action pursuant to § 16(b) of the FLSA, 29 U.S.C. 216(b). The FLSA Collective Plaintiffs are readily ascertainable. For the purpose of notice and other purposes related to this action, their names and addresses are readily available from the Le Bilboquet. Notice can be provided to the FLSA Collective Plaintiffs via first class mail to the last address known to Le Bilboquet.

RULE 23 CLASS ALLEGATIONS – NEW YORK

14. Plaintiff brings the state law Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Claims for Relief pursuant to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure (“F.R.C.P.”) Rule 23, on behalf of all service employees, other than service managers, employed by Le Bilboquet on or after the date that is six years before the filing of the Original Complaint in this case as defined herein (the “Class Period”).

15. All said persons, including Plaintiff, are referred to herein as the “Class.” The Class members are readily ascertainable. The number and identity of the Class members are determinable from Le Bilboquet’s records. The hours assigned and worked, the positions held, and the rates of pay for each Class member are also determinable from Le Bilboquet’s records. For the purpose of notice and other purposes related to this action, their names and addresses are readily available from Le Bilboquet. Notice can be provided by means permissible under said F.R.C.P. 23.

16. The proposed Class is so numerous that joinder of all members is impracticable, and the disposition of their claims as a class will benefit the parties and the court. Although the precise number of such persons is unknown, and the facts on which the calculation of that number are presently within the sole control of Le Bilboquet, upon information and belief, there are more than sixty (60) members of the Class.

17. Plaintiff's claims are typical of those claims which could be alleged by any member of the Class, and the relief sought is typical of the relief which would be sought by each member of the Class in separate actions. All the Class members were subject to the same corporate practices of Le Bilboquet, as alleged herein, of failing to pay all minimum wage, overtime, and call-in pay due misappropriating Class members' tips, and failing to provide Class members with required wage notices. Le Bilboquet's corporate-wide policies and practices affected all Class members similarly, and Le Bilboquet benefited from the same type of unfair and/or wrongful acts as to each Class member. Plaintiff and other Class members sustained similar losses, injuries and damages arising from the same unlawful policies, practices and procedures.

18. Plaintiff is able to fairly and adequately protect the interests of the Class and has no interests antagonistic to the Class. Plaintiff is represented by attorneys who are experienced and competent in both class action litigation and employment litigation and have previously represented plaintiffs in wage and hour cases.

19. A class action is superior to other available methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of the controversy – particularly in the context of wage and hour litigation where individual class members lack the financial resources to vigorously prosecute a lawsuit against Le Bilboquet. Class action treatment will permit a large number of similarly situated persons to

prosecute their common claims in a single forum simultaneously, efficiently, and without the unnecessary duplication of efforts and expense that numerous individual actions engender. Because the losses, injuries and damages suffered by each of the individual Class members are small in the sense pertinent to a class action analysis, the expenses and burden of individual litigation would make it extremely difficult or impossible for the individual Class members to redress the wrongs done to them. On the other hand, important public interests will be served by addressing the matter as a class action. The adjudication of individual litigation claims would result in a great expenditure of Court and public resources; however, treating the claims as a class action would result in a significant saving of these costs. The prosecution of separate actions by individual members of the Class would create a risk of inconsistent and/or varying adjudications with respect to the individual members of the Class, establishing incompatible standards of conduct for Le Bilboquet and resulting in the impairment of class members' rights and the disposition of their interests through actions to which they were not parties. The issues in this action can be decided by means of common, class-wide proof. In addition, if appropriate, the Court can, and is empowered to, fashion methods to efficiently manage this action as a class action.

20. Upon information and belief, Le Bilboquet and other employers throughout the state violate the New York Labor Law. Current employees are often afraid to assert their rights out of fear of direct or indirect retaliation. Former employees are fearful of bringing claims because doing so can harm their employment, future employment, and future efforts to secure employment. Class actions provide class members who are not named in the complaint a degree of anonymity which allows for the vindication of their rights while eliminating or reducing these risks.

21. There are questions of law and fact common to the Class which predominate over any questions affecting only individual class members, including:

- a) Whether Defendants employed Plaintiff and the Class members within the meaning of the New York law.
- b) At what common rate, or rates subject to common methods of calculation, were and are Defendants required to pay Plaintiff and the Class members for their work.
- c) The policies, practices, programs, procedures, protocols and plans of Defendants regarding the types of work and labor for which Defendants did not pay the Plaintiff and the Class members at all.
- d) Whether Defendants paid Plaintiff and the Class members the appropriate minimum wage for all hours worked.
- e) Whether Defendants paid Plaintiff and the Class members the appropriate overtime wage for all overtime hours worked.
- f) Whether Defendants gave Plaintiff and the Class members the wage statements required by New York Labor Law § 195 and the New York Hospitality Wage Order.
- g) Whether Defendants required Plaintiff and the Class members to share gratuities with tip-ineligible employees.

FACTS

22. Plaintiff's consent to sue form is attached hereto as Exhibit A.
23. Plaintiff worked for Defendants at Le Bilboquet as a busser.

24. Plaintiff at times worked in excess of 40 hours per week. For example, in the week ending February 15, 2015, Plaintiff worked 41.5 hours. In the week ending November 22, 2015, Plaintiff worked 42 hours.

25. Throughout his employment, Plaintiff was paid an hourly rate that is lower than federal and New York State minimum wage.

26. Plaintiff was in fact paid the “tip credit” minimum wage under the FLSA and NYLL.

27. Defendants were not entitled to utilize the tip credits set forth under the FLSA and New York Labor Law, because they (a) required Plaintiff to share tips with tip-ineligible employees, such as maître d’s with management authority and silver polishers who did not provide customer service; (b) did not give Plaintiff the appropriate notice of the tip credit, including but not limited to the notices required by N.Y. Lab. Law § 195; and (c) required Plaintiff to spend more than 20% of his workday performing non-tipped side work, such as cleaning the banquet rooms, cleaning the streets, cleaning mirrors, cleaning the sidewalk, and bringing deliveries down to the basement.

28. N.Y. Lab. Law § 195 requires an employer’s weekly wage statement to set forth any allowances being applied to the Plaintiff’s pay. However, Plaintiff’s weekly pay stubs failed to set forth that Plaintiff was paid pursuant to a tip credit.

29. Defendants did not distribute to Plaintiff a Notice and Acknowledgement of Pay form as required by N.Y. Lab. Law § 195.

30. In addition, Le Bilboquet was not entitled to utilize the tip credits because Plaintiff was required to share his tips with silver polishers and managerial captains.

31. The silver polishers were ineligible to receive tips because they did not provide direct customer service.

32. Le Bilboquet's conduct also violated N.Y. Lab. Law § 196-d, which prohibits employers from requiring employees to share tips with management and/or non-service employees.

33. Defendants committed the foregoing acts willfully and against Plaintiff, the FLSA Collective Plaintiffs, and the Class.

FIRST CLAIM FOR RELIEF

**FLSA Minimum Wage Claims, 29 U.S.C. § 201, *et seq.*,
Brought by Plaintiff on Behalf of Himself and the FLSA Collective Plaintiffs**

34. Plaintiff, on behalf of himself and the FLSA Collective Plaintiffs, realleges and incorporates by reference all preceding paragraphs as if they were set forth again herein.

35. At all relevant times, Defendants have been, and continue to be, "employers" engaged in interstate "commerce" and/or in the production of "goods" for "commerce," within the meaning of FLSA, 29 U.S.C. § 203. At all relevant times, Defendants have employed, "employee[s]," including Plaintiff and each of the FLSA Collective Plaintiffs.

36. Throughout the statute of limitations period covered by these claims, Defendants knowingly failed to pay Plaintiff the federal minimum wage for each hour worked.

37. Plaintiff, on behalf of himself and the FLSA Collective Plaintiffs, seeks damages in the amount of their respective unpaid compensation, liquidated (double) damages as provided by the FLSA for minimum wage violations, attorneys' fees and costs, pre- and post-judgment interest, and such other legal and equitable relief as this Court deems just and proper.

SECOND CLAIM FOR RELIEF

**FLSA Overtime Violations, 29 U.S.C. § 207
Brought by Plaintiff on Behalf of Himself and the FLSA Collective Plaintiffs**

38. Plaintiff, on behalf of himself and the FLSA Collective Plaintiffs, realleges and incorporates by reference all preceding paragraphs as if they were set forth again herein.

39. At all relevant times, Defendants have been, and continue to be, an “employer” engaged in interstate “commerce” and/or in the production of “goods” for “commerce,” within the meaning of FLSA, 29 U.S.C. § 203. At all relevant times, Defendants have employed, “employee[s],” including Plaintiff and each of the FLSA Collective Plaintiffs.

40. Throughout the statute of limitations period covered by these claims, Plaintiff and the other FLSA Collective Plaintiffs worked in excess of forty (40) hours per workweek and continue to do so.

41. At all relevant times, Defendants operated under a decision, policy and plan, and under common policies, programs, practices, procedures, protocols, routines and rules of willfully failing and refusing to pay the Class members at one-and-one-half times the minimum wage for work in excess of forty (40) hours per workweek, and willfully failing to keep records required by the FLSA even though the FLSA Collective Plaintiffs have been and are entitled to overtime.

42. Plaintiff, on behalf of himself and the FLSA Collective Plaintiffs, seeks damages in the amount of their respective unpaid overtime compensation, liquidated (double) damages as provided by the FLSA for overtime violations, attorneys’ fees and costs, pre- and post-judgment interest, and such other legal and equitable relief as this Court deems just and proper.

THIRD CLAIM FOR RELIEF

**New York State Minimum Wage Act, New York Labor Law § 650 *et seq.*
Brought by Plaintiff on Behalf of Himself and the Class**

43. Plaintiff, on behalf of himself and members of the Class, realleges and incorporates by reference all preceding paragraphs as if they were set forth again herein.

44. Defendants knowingly paid the Plaintiff and members of the Class less than the New York minimum wage as set forth in N.Y. Lab. Law § 652 and supporting regulations of the New York State Department of Labor.

45. Defendants did not pay Plaintiff and members of the Class minimum wage for all hours worked.

46. Defendants' failure to pay Plaintiff and members of the Class the minimum wage was willful within the meaning of N.Y. Lab. Law § 663.

47. As a result of Defendants' willful and unlawful conduct, Plaintiff and members of the Class are entitled to an award of damages, including liquidated damages, in amount to be determined at trial, pre- and post-judgment interest, costs and attorneys' fees, as provided by N.Y. Lab. Law § 663.

FOURTH CLAIM FOR RELIEF
New York Overtime Violations
New York Minimum Wage Act, N.Y. Stat. § 650 *et seq.*,
N.Y. Comp. Codes R. & Regs. Tit. 12, §§ 137-1.3 (2010), 146-1.4 (2011)
Brought by Plaintiff on Behalf of Himself and the Class

48. Plaintiff, on behalf of himself and members of the Class, realleges and incorporates by reference all preceding paragraphs as if they were set forth again herein.

49. It is unlawful under New York law for an employer to suffer or permit a non-exempt employee to work without paying overtime wages for all hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours in any workweek.

50. Throughout the Class period, Defendants willfully, regularly and repeatedly failed to pay Plaintiff and the Class members at the required overtime rate of one-and-one-half times the minimum wage for hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours per workweek.

51. As a result of Defendants' willful and unlawful conduct, Plaintiff and members of the Class are entitled to an award of damages, including liquidated damages, in an amount to be

determined at trial, pre- and post-judgment interest, costs and attorneys' fees, as provided by N.Y. Lab. Law § 663.

FIFTH CLAIM FOR RELIEF
New York Notice Requirements, N.Y. Lab. L. §§ 195, 198
Brought by Plaintiff on Behalf of Himself and the Class

52. Plaintiff, on behalf of himself and the members of the Class, realleges and incorporates by reference all preceding paragraphs as if they were set forth again herein.

53. Defendants did not provide Plaintiff and the members of the Class with the notices/wage statements required by N.Y. Lab. Law § 195.

54. As a result of Defendants' unlawful conduct, Plaintiff and members of the Class are entitled to an award of damages pursuant to N.Y. Lab. Law § 198, in amount to be determined at trial, pre- and post-judgment interest, and costs and attorneys' fees, as provided by N.Y. Lab. Law § 198.

SIXTH CLAIM FOR RELIEF
Illegal Deductions from Gratuities, N.Y. Lab. L. § 196-d
Brought by Plaintiff on Behalf of Himself and the Class

55. Plaintiff, on behalf of himself and the members of the Class, realleges and incorporates by reference all preceding paragraphs as if they were set forth again herein.

56. Defendants retained gratuities paid by their customers and illegally shared gratuities among managerial employees and other employees ineligible to participate in the tip pool.

57. Plaintiff, on behalf of himself and members of the Class, seeks damages in the amount of him respective withheld gratuities, liquidated damages, pre- and post-judgment interest, attorneys' fees and costs, and such other legal and equitable relief as this Court deems just and proper.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff, on behalf of himself and the FLSA Collective Plaintiffs and members of the Class, prays for relief as follows:

- A. An award of damages, according to proof, including back pay, front pay, punitive damages, and liquidated damages, to be paid by Defendants;
- B. Designation of this action as a collective action on behalf of the FLSA Collective Plaintiffs and prompt issuance of notice pursuant to 29 U.S.C. § 216(b) to all similarly situated members of the FLSA opt-in class, apprising them of the pendency of this action, and permitting them to assert timely FLSA claims and state claims in this action by filing individual Consent to Sue forms pursuant to 29 U.S.C. § 216(b);
- C. Designation of Plaintiff as Representative of the FLSA Collective Plaintiffs;
- D. Designation of this action as a class action pursuant to F.R.C.P. 23.
- E. Designation of Plaintiff as Representative of the Class.
- F. An award of damages, according to proof, including liquidated damages, to be paid by Defendants;
- G. Penalties available under applicable laws;
- H. Costs of action incurred herein, including expert fees;
- I. Attorneys' fees, including fees pursuant to 29 U.S.C. § 216, N.Y. Lab. L. § 663, and other applicable statutes;
- J. Pre-judgment and post-judgment interest, as provided by law; and
- K. Such other and further legal and equitable relief as this Court deems necessary, just and proper.

Dated: New York, New York
October 31, 2016

Respectfully submitted,

JOSEPH & KIRSCHENBAUM LLP

By: 

D. Maimon Kirschenbaum
Josef Nussbaum
32 Broadway, Suite 601
New York, NY 10004
Tel: (212) 688-5640
Fax: (212) 688-2548

*Attorneys for Named Plaintiff, proposed
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Class*

EXHIBIT A

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CONSENT TO SUE UNDER
FEDERAL FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT

I am an employee currently or formerly employed by **LE BILBOQUET NY, LLC** and/or related entities and/or individuals. I consent to be a plaintiff in an action to collect unpaid wages. I agree that I am bound by the terms of the Professional Services Agreement signed by the named plaintiffs in this case.

Antonio Alonso
Full Legal Name (Print)


Signature

10/11/2016
Date

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ClassAction.org

This complaint is part of ClassAction.org's searchable class action lawsuit database and can be found in this post: [NY's Le Bilboquet Sued by Former Busser Over Unpaid Overtime](#)
