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COMMON DENOMINATOR

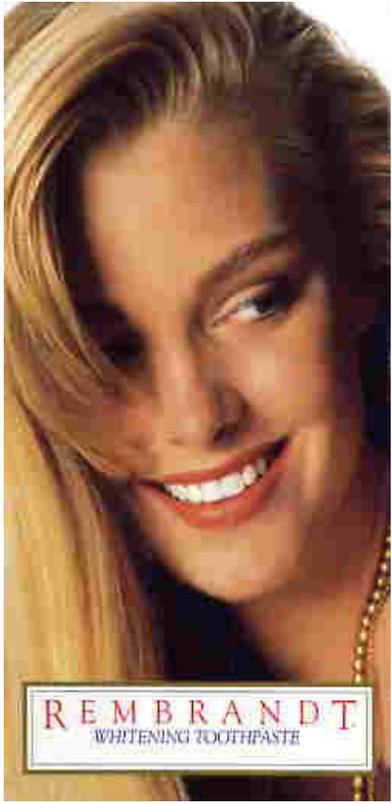
QUESTION: what do a Spanish melon, a Bible, a Los Angeles pop duo, a whitening toothpaste, many hotels (including one in Bangkok), a jewelry firm, a TV district attorney (female), a café in Barcelona, an armchair, a 1950 TV set, a paint brush, a camera, a floor lamp, a paper napkin, a drawing ink, several movies, a diagnostic kit, a watch, a wine, a town in Iowa, many a house pet, a beer, a designer ensemble, a digital display processor, a pastel crayon, a cigar, a cream and sugar set, a folding table, a two-masted schooner, a loan plan, a television antenna, a lamp shade, a laundry detergent, a street in Paris and Berlin, a mirror, an egg company, a felt-tip pen, a Fresnel lens, a clothing firm, a shampoo, a bathroom, a picture varnish, a video decoder, a countertop, a Swiss train, a mobile home, a rotogravure press, a pair of clogs, a knitting yarn, a cooked ham, a computer, an investment company, a crankbait, a work of contemporary art, an enterprise, and a seventeenth-century Dutch painter all have in common?

ANSWER: Only one thing: namely, the name "Rembrandt.."

Note 1 : The list above is anything but exhaustive. Many items were found in a websearch in September 2004 that turned up over 83,000 hits for the entry "Rembrandt product," of which I perused less than a thousand. In mid-2004, the number of hits for the name "Rembrandt" hovered around 1,000,000 and 1,500,000, while those for the variants "Rembrant" and "Rembrand" were tied at around 23,000, but at present stand at a 2:1 ratio in favor of "Rembrant," which may or may not be a typo. Like the stock market, the level of Rembrandt's presence on the web changes from day to day, with major fluctuations over longer periods of time.

Note 2 : The earliest registered REMBRANDT® trademarks, dating from the first half of the 20th century (1914, 1922, 1925, 1933, 1949), applied only to artists' materials, which is appropriate. In the 1950s, for reasons unknown, the range of "Rembrandt" products suddenly expanded to electrical appliances, precision instruments and ephemera such as paper plates, napkins, tablecloths, and cigars. In the 60s the trend subsided, but included products like mobile homes and ball-point pens. In the 80s and 90s, probably due to the media impact of the Rembrandt Research Project and possibly also the re-discovery of Rembrandt's role as "entrepreneur," this brand name underwent a veritable revival, if not a free-for-all. It became a byword for quality, luxury, creativity, originality, uniqueness, success, fame, you name it (a feature-length Disney cartoon was touted in TV commercials as being "Rembrandt perfect"). In other words, Rembrandt means business.

Note 3 : The New York Commodities Corporation, which processes cooked ham, filed its trademark on August 31, 1981 and claimed that "THE WORD "REMBRANDT" IS MERELY FANCIFUL AND DOES NOT IDENTIFY A PARTICULAR LIVING INDIVIDUAL." The Den-Mat Corporation, which manufactures whitening toothpaste, filed its trademark on January 31, 1983, claiming that "THE NAME "REMBRANDT" IDENTIFIES A FAMOUS DECEASED PAINTER.



HOTEL
Rembrandt

Rembrandt Charms

