

BRAND NEW SHEEN FOR FIAT 500 AD - CHARLIE SHEEN



Hollywood bad-boy Charlie Sheen is featured in the latest commercial for the Abarth-tuned Fiat 500. The ad has Sheen recklessly driving the Fiat 500 car, at full speed, around a posh, upscale home, with a bevy of beautiful people, adorning every nook and corner of the luxurious home, looking at his antics with awe and amazement and drawing wild applause as he exits from the car. Midway into the ad, the car screeches to a halt and one can see a leg, attached to which is a court-ordered electronic ankle bracelet, as the camera zooms up, one sees that the leg belongs to Charlie Sheen, who whilst cozying up to Romanian supermodel Catrinel Menghia, says, "I love being under house arrest. What do I get for good behavior?" The choice of Charlie Sheen came as a surprise, for the actor is seen as a epitome of bad behavior. From being sent to rehab for drug abuse and accused of domestic violence and from being fired from a television serial, "Two and a Half Men" that reportedly paid him \$2 million per episode, making him the highest paid actor on television, it would seem logical that advertisers would shy away from him. It is a measure of Sheen's determination and resolve to return to showbiz, better and stronger, that he allows the ad to mock him and make fun of his image and that is something to be appreciated and applauded. Have people become more accepting and forgiving of appalling behavior? Americus Reed, associate marketing professor at the Wharton School in Pennsylvania, feels that using Sheen in the ads is perfectly okay and actually considers it a smart idea. "If the idea was to position the car as the rebellious, superfast, out-of-control bad boy, that's exactly what Charlie Sheen is these days, and there's a fit between him and how Fiat is trying to position the brand." The car is a higher performance version of Fiat's subcompact and is priced at \$22,000. It has a 160 horse power four cylinder engine, a 5-speed manual transmission. The ad makes for compelling viewing and it is expected that when it makes it way to dealerships in April, Charlie Sheen would have played his part, in its success. Of course the question remains: With Sheen's dramatic, drug-infused past, and bad-boy actions, is it a mistake for advertisers to use him to promote their products?

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