

## BELVEDERE VODKA AD BLASTED



In an ad, Belvedere Vodka posted on its Facebook page on Saturday, a man is grabbing a horrified looking woman from behind. The text on the image reads, "Unlike some people, Belvedere always goes down smoothly". In an immediate reaction bloggers and commenters launched a firestorm of attacks against the company, saying that the image was making light of sexual assault. It drew hundreds of negative comments after it appeared Friday on the company's Facebook page, with many suggesting it appeared to depict a rape. The outrage against the ad went viral after it was posted Friday on the company's Facebook and Twitter sites. "This is the most awful piece of promotional material I've seen published in the last several months, if not years," Amy Tennery of the Jane Dough wrote. Business Insider called the image, "disgusting." In spite of Belvedere removing the post since, the backlash still continues. An initial apology didn't improve matters, even though the ad has been scrubbed from both pages, because fans said it didn't address what they believed was the reference to rape. One commenter wrote on Belvedere's Facebook page, "Belvedere Vodka, your apology is insufficient as it does not accept responsibility for promoting rape-culture." Charles Gibbs, the company's president, said, "It should never have happened. I am currently investigating the matter to determine how this happened and to be sure it never does so again," Senior Vice President Jason Lundy also posted an apology, saying the ad also offended "the people who work here at Belvedere." As part of it's apology the company has included a donation to RAINN — the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network; "as an expression of our regret," Gibb said. RAINN posted on its Facebook page that when Gibb called the group he was "profusely apologetic" and "offered to make a generous donation to RAINN to support our work to help victims of sexual violence and educate the public." The apology appeared to be accepted. "Nice to see a company that not only undoes its mistake but looks for a way to do good afterwards," RAINN's post said.

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