

AD SHOWS FIAT 500S TAKE UNCONVENTIONAL ACCESS AVENUES TO U.S. SHORES



Italian automaker Fiat is coming back to the U.S. after nearly 30 years. A new ad highlighting this is taking advantage of the current debate surrounding the immigrant amnesty policy of President Obama that is promising to grant migrant youth work-permits and a legal status to live in the US. In the ad the automobiles are seen to be responding to the exhortation of the Statue of Liberty, who in the lines made famous by Emma Lazarus in her poem, "The New Colossus" encourages immigrants to come to the "New World" which is America. So keen and raring to go are numerous models of the Fiat 500 to come to the United States from Italy that they drive themselves or jump into the sea and swim all the way to New York City. In case someone actually emulates the images that are unfolding, the ad warns viewers that this is "Fictionalization. Do not attempt." The ad was created by Richards Group in Dallas for Chrysler Group that has been selling this Italian sports car in the US since early 2011. This is the first time a single will feature all the three models of the Fiat's US brands Fiat 500, Fiat 500c (for cabrio, or convertible) and Fiat Abarth. The cars are shown entering the country, every which way they can, through most unconventional avenues, without passports or other documents, yet they are not referred to as immigrants, even though visuals are suggestive of the car entering the country as immigrants normally do. A fleeting glimpse of the Statue of Liberty in the windshield of one car as it emerges from the ocean, however, reflects on the welcoming attitude of the "Lady With The Torch" and her famous lines, "your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free," and asking for the "homeless" to be sent to her for her to take under her hospitable wings. Olivier François, head of the Fiat brand and chief marketing officer at the Chrysler Group, denied that the commercial was making a statement on the vexing immigration issue. He said, "I'm aware that this is a country where you can expect controversy." An earlier commercial that the Chrysler Group ran during the halftime of the Super Bowl in first week of February, earlier this year, featured Clint Eastwood. Chrysler said that the ad was "about American spirit, pride and job growth." However, critics said that it was an ad that endorsed Obama's policies. Mr. François said that if this ad also gets enmeshed in an immigration debate, it was never our intention to do so. "Let's state officially that it's not part of the plan," he said. The ad is attempting to get American car drivers to shift their loyalties from small cars like the BMW Mini Cooper, Chevrolet Sonic, or Volkswagen Beetle and the Honda Fit, to the Fiat 500. Last year the Fiat 500 sold 19,769 vehicles; it has already crossed this number in the first 6 months of this year, having notched up 20,706 in sales "So far, the results are not bad," Mr. François said. "It is a segment that is kind of challenging." The new commercial's intention is to bring to the public more awareness of the "Italian-ness" of the car. Mr. François said that "Connecting the product in the United States to its Italian heritage" and "putting the 500 in its context" are "what we need to do." The "Italian-ness" of the ads is further accentuated by the location where the ad was shot. It was filmed on the Amalfi Coast of Italy and other Italian locations. The background song "Come Back to Sorrento," is sung by Il Volo, the trio of teenage Italian operatic tenors. After roughing it on the seas, the cars are seen driving on the streets of New York, whilst a narrator pronounces "The next wave of Italians has come to America, and they've come to party. The Italian-designed Fiat 500." Fiat plans to make public the North American versions of its Fiat 500 hatchback and convertible small cars on Wednesday during the Los Angeles Auto Show.

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