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~~Advertising Analysis—Sample Essay~~

Taste Selling "Taste": Sample Analysis of a Seductive Advertisement

The makers of alcoholic beverages conduct some of the most interesting advertising campaigns. ~~Some of the most expensive and interesting advertising campaigns of recent years have been conducted by the makers of alcoholic beverages.~~ Vendors sell everything from beers to clear malt beverages by associating them with good times. ~~From beers to clear malt beverages, vendors sell the product by associating it with good times.~~ Whether they feature connect with attractive models on the beach or cigar-smoking buddies in a pool hall, the modest price of their products and the obvious connection between the product and the promised effect (inebriation); make ~~it for~~ an easy sell. Wine ~~vendors-importers~~ face special complications when designing advertisements to attract buyers to their more pricey wares. If ~~one customers~~ can achieve the effect of inebriation for fifteen dollars a case of beer, why exactly would ~~one they~~ pay out twenty or forty dollars for a bottle containing one tenth the volume?

The makers of a "Bordeaux" advertisement published in an August 2003 issue of the consumer magazine, The Wine Spectator, emphasize the idea of "taste"—both in the sense that wines from this region of France are flavorful, and by implying that the viewer is a person of good taste, refinement, even class. A carefully generated visual atmosphere, use of carefully manipulated wine glasses, and cleverly ~~suggesting~~ ~~suggestive~~ language promote the product and manipulate the viewer, while at the same time flattering "him."

The Wine Spectator features articles reviewing various wines, growing regions, and vintages, as well as information on other gourmet cooking and eating. The magazine itself might be considered a glorified advertisement, since the buyers guide includes information aimed at conisours stocking their wine cellars. The range of other advertisements in this issue of the magazine confirms the suspicion that the assumed audience has a good deal of disposable income. One notes advertisements for fine cigars, luxury and foreign automobiles, five-star vacation resorts and the like. Many of these products might interest both men and women, but there is no advertisement in this issue featuring a product mostly associated with women. Thus from the advertiser's perspective, this is a magazine for men: particularly for men with taste, or money, or perhaps who would like to be seen as having these qualities.

Visually, a deep black background emphasizes the partial images of two filled wine-glasses. The image is simple, no hands or people or dining room or clutter—just the curves of the goblets. By using careful lighting, the photographer brings out just the edges of the goblets, emphasizing the curviness, the silhouettes. In themselves, the silhouettes might not seem charged with meaning. However, if one anticipates a male viewer and connects the slightly suggestive quality of the images with the implications in the advertisement's language, then the advertiser's strategy ~~will~~ becomes more clear.

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Turning back to the advertisement, tThe language confirms this sense that and tone of the ad project that message that implicitly male viewers ought to purchase this product because it so as to confirms their classiness and, by extension, their attractiveness toward women. A large, script "B" underlies the word "BORDEAUX TM" in white; below it one reads the slogan: "Fine Wines. Be Seduced" set in a smaller, red and white, san-serif type. Finally, in a smaller sized white font, the following sentences describe the origins of the wine and the Bordeaux region of France, but with an emphasis again on seduction or allure:

There is little in this world more alluring than a glass of Bordeaux.
Centuries of Cabernet and Merlot blending mastery, combined with a
unique terrain and climate give birth to refinement and equilibrium of a
highly enticing nature. www.bordeaux.com

Superficially describing the taste or flavor of the wine ("refinement and equilibrium"), the ~~body of the~~ deliberate choice of words for this ad copy really means to suggest brings home the promise that the viewer and buyer of this product will attain for himself "refinement and equilbirium.

Appealing to emotions rather than logic, the address to a male viewer and the promise of the advertisement are keyed by the words "alluring" and "enticing," both of which reinforce the underlying joke: since "men," who supposedly have only one thing on their mind, must know the one thing more alluring than a glass of wine. Too tasteful to be explicit, the language implies its suggestive—"Fine wines. Be seduced." With a subtle wink and a tip of the cigar, we "men" know that it is not a glass of wine by which we desire to be seduced. Or perhaps the message could better be summarized: first the wine, then the woman? Which leads one back to the two suggestive images of wine goblets, which in their emphasis on curves stand-in for the attractive woman in a bikini which would be in their place if this were an advertisement for Budwiser. But we have better taste than that, since, of course, we drink Bordeaux.