



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	180/01
2. Advertiser	Accor Asia Pacific Australia (Novotel Vines Resort, Perth)
3. Product	Travel
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Discrimination or vilification Other – section 2.1 Portrayal of sex/sexuality/nudity – section 2.3
6. Date of determination	Tuesday, 14 August 2001
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement opens on a young woman attending Confession. Asked what was her sin, the woman tells the priest “I was tempted by them all.” As she continues her Confession, an announcer’s voice advises “Introducing the Novotel Vines Resort Seven Deadly Sins packages.” After the woman is heard to say “but the thought of chocolate body paint and satin sheets made me settle on lust,” the announcer continues “Seven wickedly different ways to spend the night for \$179 per couple.” The priest is then heard to say “What is their number?” The advertisement concludes with the reservation number on screen.

THE COMPLAINT

Comments which the complainants made regarding this advertisement included the following:

‘The general consensus of opinion from the people viewing was of disgust, distaste, revulsion with the thought that a place so lacking in taste and discernment in allowing such a crass advertisement to showcase their attractions would obviously not be worth our consideration when entertaining guests or planning our next weekend away.’

‘Although I think myself as very open and extrovert, I found this advertisement pushed the borders somewhat.’

‘As a Catholic, I am offended by your demeaning of a sacrament for the purpose of cheap financial gain.’

‘This is a highly offensive advertisement to me and my family —husband and two teenage children. As Christians, Catholics, we respect the sanctity of the priesthood, the sacrament of confession and the interior of a church as being sacred, beyond the mockery of non-Christians.’

‘We object to this commercial because it is an insult to:

(a) the Catholic Church

(b) priests

(c) the Sacrament of Confession.

The commercial clearly exploits a Catholic sacrament to infer that:

(i) priests are essentially lust-filled voyeurs, and

(ii) the confessional is an opportunity for priests to entertain, and indulge in, their vices.’

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board ('the Board') considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics ('the Code').

The Board opined that, while some people might regard the advertisement as irreverent, most would not consider it to vilify Catholics or Catholic ritual. Accordingly, the Board found the material did not constitute discrimination/vilification. It further found that the material did not contravene the Code in relation to the portrayal of sex/sexuality/nudity, or any other grounds, and the complaint was dismissed.