

End of the Line for SMOKERS

The smoking ban for all enclosed public places and workplaces will begin in the UK next July and in Wales from April. Businesses that do not enforce the ban face possible fines of up to £2,500. The ruling follows hot on the heels of a similar ban in nearly all enclosed public places in Scotland earlier this year.



According to the London Chamber of Commerce, most pub landlords and restaurateurs in central London are now in favour of the smoking ban – a turnaround on previous opinion polls which suggested many believed it would have a negative impact on business. Following the ban in Scotland earlier this year, it seemed inevitable that a similar ruling would be introduced in England and Wales. Instead of fighting it, the hospitality industry seems keen to embrace it as an opportunity to attract a new customer base.

Although smokers currently make up about 25% of the general population, they represent around 50% of regular pub-goers.

When the ban takes effect, pubs, bars, and restaurants will automatically become healthier places to visit (and indeed to work), potentially enticing a whole new clientele. The ban on smoking in public places comes into effect on 1st July 2007. A £12 million advertising campaign is already underway in a bid to prepare businesses and the public for the new law – one of the most expensive public health campaigns ever. Smokers themselves are notoriously hard to convince and the campaign is expected to use a combination of shock TV and vanity appeals (for example, smoking can cause premature aging in women, impotence in men) to deliver its message.