

SMOKING BAN TO PROMPT INFLUX OF 'PUB VIRGINS'

Independent research predicts new trend of "ladies who sup"

The stereotype of the pub regular is set to undergo a major transformation as a new wave of 'pub virgins' flock to smoke-free locals when the English smoking ban comes in this summer.

New research conducted by pub and brewery group Greene King reveals that Britain's pubs are set to see an influx of new faces, with upmarket, married, female forty-somethings the group most likely to be seen newly propping up the bar.

The research showed that over a third (36%) of women between the ages of 45 and 54 currently avoid pubs because of their smoky atmosphere. However, more than half (54%) plan to visit pubs once the ban is in effect, with 8 in 10 women surveyed saying the ban will make pubs a much more appealing place to socialise.

The research also showed that pubs are also set to welcome a new generation of families, with 1 in 3 (31%) young parents who would previously have avoided taking their children to pubs for a family meal, planning to visit as a family following the ban. However, among the younger generation without children, the ban is likely to have the opposite effect on some pub-goers, with 16% of 18-24 year olds saying they are less likely to visit following the ban.

Greene King's David Elliott said: "While the younger generation and male population currently make up a large proportion of Brits visiting pubs to drink, the introduction of the smoking ban looks set to entice a new wave of female customers into pubs across the country, with professional women and young families now keen to visit smoke-free pubs to socialise, eat and drink. The ban could see pub culture in Britain take on a whole new identity."

Further findings of the research include:

- Almost half (46%) of Britons surveyed say they will be more likely to visit pubs following the smoking ban, while 69% believe that pubs will be a better place to eat, drink and socialise

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- 1 in 2 (48%) smoking pub-goers believe the ban will help them to kick the habit

Said Elliott: "Greene King will welcome this new breed of pub virgins with great food and drink and fantastic service but we are also committed to looking after those who do smoke - 95% of our pubs have outside areas which will be well equipped for those who wish to light up. There is no doubt the landscape of pubs and pub-goers will change and our job is to attract a new breed of pub-goer while at the same time ensuring our regulars stay regular."

Ends

Contact details: For more information including case studies of the new "pub virgins" please call Sara Atkinson or Chris Lawrence on 020 7287 2087

Notes to editors

The research was undertaken by NOP between 26th-28th January. Telephone interviews were conducted among a nationally representative sample of 965 adults.

About Greene King

Greene King owns and operates over 2,300 pubs in England, Scotland and Wales. It is a major brewer of cask ales including award winning Greene King IPA, Abbot ale, Old Speckled Hen and Ruddles County.