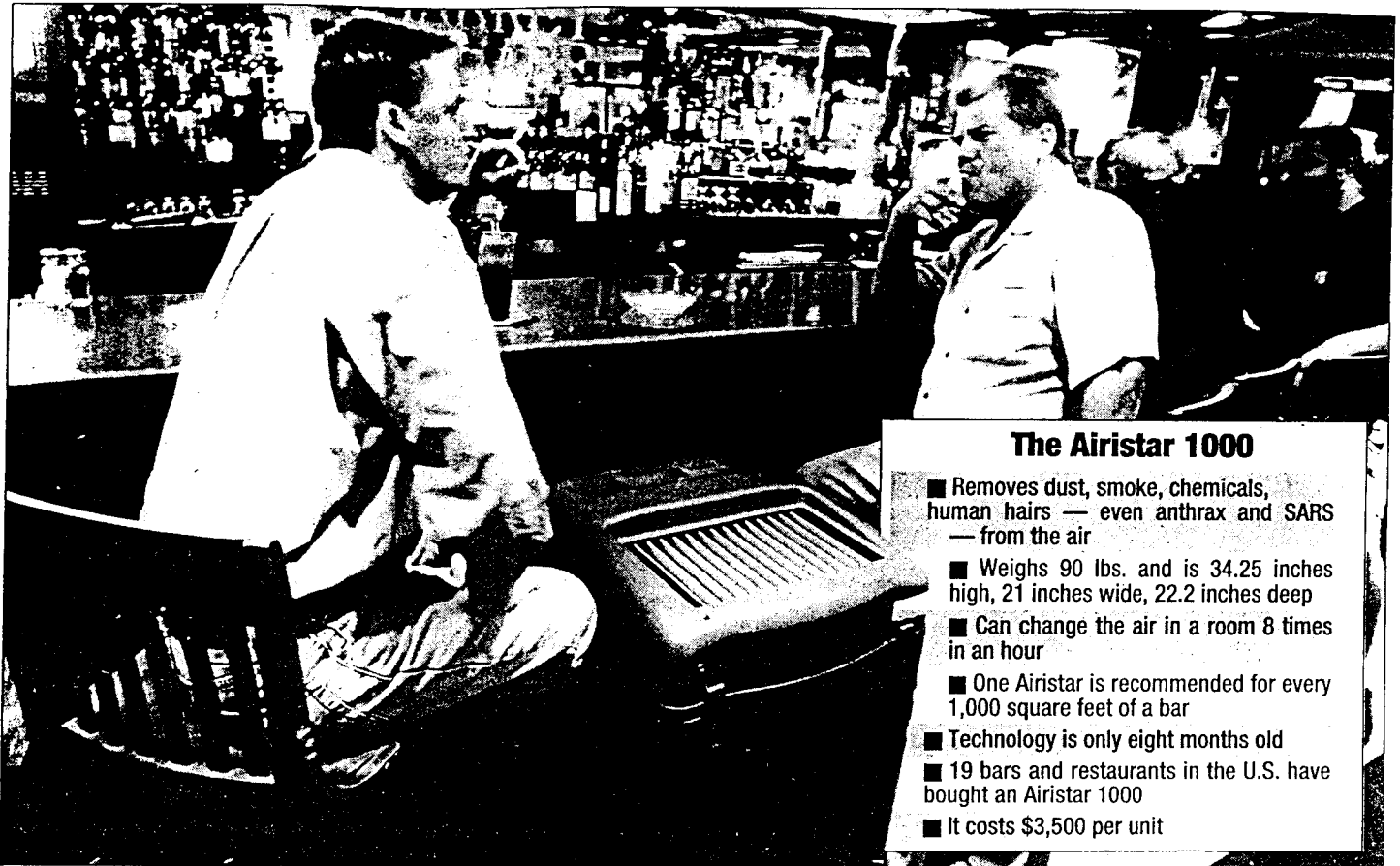


# PIPE DREAMS



## The Airistar 1000

- Removes dust, smoke, chemicals, human hairs — even anthrax and SARS — from the air
- Weighs 90 lbs. and is 34.25 inches high, 21 inches wide, 22.2 inches deep
- Can change the air in a room 8 times in an hour
- One Airistar is recommended for every 1,000 square feet of a bar
- Technology is only eight months old
- 19 bars and restaurants in the U.S. have bought an Airistar 1000
- It costs \$3,500 per unit

**BREATHE EASY:** Strapped bar owners hope this \$3,500 air purifier will get them an exemption from New York's anti-smoking laws. Michael Walker

## 3G air purifier could \$ave N.Y. pub biz

By CHRIS BUNTING

New York pub owners are pinning their hopes on a 90-pound gadget to put butts — and cash — back into bars.

It's called the Airistar 1000, an air purifier that removes dangerous microscopic contaminants — like germs, fungal spores, even anthrax — from the air.

Spurred on by bar owners who say the smoking ban has extinguished their take by as much as 40 percent, two Albany lawmakers are finalizing identical bills that would permit smoking where filters like the Airistar 1000 are installed.

The \$3,500 gizmo — so named because it cleans 1,000 cubic feet of air per minute — can eliminate 99 percent of cigarette smoke in a matter of minutes.

Manufactured by Illinois company Airistar, it's equipped with wheels for mobility and can blend into the background of a bar as a table.

"These state-of-the-art filters make room air cleaner than what you breathe outside," New York Night Life Association spokesman Basil Anastassiou said after a recent demonstration in the office of Assemblywoman RoAnn Destito (D-Rome). State Sen. Raymond Meier (R-Western) is also sponsoring a similar bill.

According to the company's advertising manager, Sean Burke, 115 Airistar 1000s have been sold around the country since they went on sale eight months ago, and 19 were bought by restaurants and bars.

Sam Pappas, owner of Market Square, a bar 20 miles outside of Chicago, installed the gadget to quell customers' complaints about smoky air, despite the fact that Illinois hasn't imposed a smoking ban.

"We hold events ranging from birthdays to Super Bowl parties, and I'd get complaints about the

mist of smoke," Pappas said. "Now the place is crystal clear."

Even if Albany's new laws are passed, the Big Apple won't be immediately inhaling the benefits.

"New York City's laws are more stringent than the bill I'm proposing — and the city's law would preempt it," Meier said.

"However, passage of my bill might persuade city council members to follow suit."

The New York Night Life Association is armed with a petition addressed to Gov. Pataki, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, and Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno signed by 40,000 from bar patrons and workers — one-quarter from New York City — asking that smoking be permitted in air-filtered bars.

Almost a year after Mayor Bloomberg's smoking ban went into effect on July 24, 2003, New York City bars are still feeling the economic burn.

"The city's bars lose on average an estimated 15 to 19 percent in revenues because of the ban," said Brian Nolan, executive director of United Restaurant & Tavern Owners of New York, Inc.

Interviews with more than a dozen bar owners and managers conducted by The Post show the revenue loss is often even more extreme.

Fiddlers Green, a bar on West 48th Street, shut down April 1.

"Sales were down 25 percent," said Eugene Wilson, the bar's manager. "Three of our waitresses left because they weren't making enough in tips."

Sandee Wright, the co-owner of Whiskey Ward on Essex Street, said she was battling a 30 to 40 percent drop in sales.

"I've had to lay three people off, starting with my doorman — my husband does it for free now," she said.

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