



The Coolest Watercooler

Island Sky's atmospheric water generators create drinking water from thin air.

BY MATTHEW PHENIX

Surprising as it may sound in this land of plenty, the world's most precious commodity isn't oil or gold, but rather something that many of us take for granted: drinking water. The World Health Organization estimates that some 1.3 billion people are forced to consume contaminated water—resulting in the death of one child every 15 seconds. As global population increases, the pandemic will likely worsen.

But a Florida-based company called Island Sky may have a solution. Dubbed the Skywater 14, this understated machine—easily mistaken for a watercooler with hot and cold water taps, minus the plastic bottle—makes fresh, potable water using nothing more than air and electricity. “The planet's surface is about 75 percent water, but most of it isn't drinkable,” says Island Sky's managing director, Richard Groden. “The earth's largest source of water is actually in the atmosphere as vapor, which falls as rain. Our machine turns that vapor into pure, sweet drinking water.”

The floor-standing Skywater 14 (\$1,995 – \$2,500) and the larger, outdoor-sized Skywater 300 (\$16,000, installed) are so-named for their maximum daily output of fresh water: 14 and 300 gallons, respectively. They both work by drawing in ambient air, filtering it for dust and other contaminants, and then running it through a two-stage cooling device that mimics the natural dew point,

causing the water vapor to condense. The resultant water (the higher the humidity, the more it makes) is purified with ozone, then filtered through carbon to make it taste better.

Moreover, the Skywater 14 conserves energy. In addition to the fuel savings compared to transporting bottled water for traditional watercoolers, there is no concern about water storage or environmental waste. Maintenance is minimal and the unit demands as little as 26 cents' worth of electricity for every gallon of H₂O it produces—a small price to pay to quench the world's thirst. ☐

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