

BAR HOPPIN'

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The Rating System:

1 Don't be shy to piss on the toilet.

2 Worth a visit once per semester

3 A good solid buzz

4 Always tip the help

5 Is there an apartment for rent upstairs?

So you just hit the big 2-1, and you're looking to paint the town red. First, you should know what you're getting yourself into. For bar neophytes and veterans who may be stuck in a weekend rut, here's a rundown of Ames bars worth checking out. And some not worth checking out.



People's

2428 Lincoln Way

is perhaps the most well-known Campustown bar and is one of the top live-music venues in the city. A large bar that always seems to draw a crowd, People's has a large selection of beers on tap and good food. A popular time for People's is the traditional Friday-after-class (FAC), when the barkeeps will fill any mug for \$2, but that's about the only time that drinking at the bar is inexpensive. Every time I've gone to this vanity fair of ISU bars, I've dropped about a thousand bucks on cover and drinks. The bar is hard to maneuver around, with tables in all the wrong places, and getting a drink isn't the easiest either when things get kicking. Even though it may be the most popular bar in Ames, it certainly isn't the best.

Rating:
2 Drinks



Paddy's

124 Welch Ave.

is a pseudo-Irish pub with a far more laid-back atmosphere than its downstairs counterpart, Sips. The food is good even if you're cheap as hell, as the big barrel o' peanuts, popcorn machine, and hotdog cooker are all free for the looting. Paddy's, unlike Sips, doesn't have a dance floor, but

there's plenty else to do, with pool, darts, and a few TVs. Paddy's is a pretty good place to go and chill, but when the bar is at capacity, it's about impossible to get served if you're not female. All in all, though, Paddy's is a good time.

Rating:
4 Drinks



Sips

124 Welch Ave.

Rating:
3.5 Drinks



is one of those places that would charge cover if you were the only one there. This might be the most expensive bar in Ames, but the atmosphere is pleasing if the place is packed. The popularity of this bar is evident by the long lines out

front, and Sips is a good place to go dancing if you get the inclination. The bar tends to draw a lot of women to it, which may explain its popularity. Overall, Sips is a pretty good time, but be sure to have a full wallet before you go in.

Mickey's Irish Pub 109 Welch Ave.



is another fake Irish pub like Paddy's. Free dogs, popcorn and peanuts help keep you in the bar rather than walking up the block to the gyro stand. It has an outside deck that is accessible when the weather is nice. Mickey's is one of the smallest bars on campus, but it is a good time, with a solid drink special every

night (including a Red Bull night). It also serves Minsky's pizza, which it offers for free on Thursday until 11. Unlike Paddy's, Mickey's doesn't have pool and darts, but it is a better place to just sit and converse than Paddy's. Overall, Mickey's is a really good bar.

Rating:
4 Drinks



Lost & Found

124 Welch Ave.

Lost and Found, 121 Welch Ave., is a dank little tavern above Cy's Roost. If you have eyesight problems, steer clear, as this is by far the darkest bar in the city. The darkness, though, feeds into Lost and Found's strong ambiance, which makes it a little easier to overlook their lack of respectable

drink specials. You get the feeling in Lost and Found that you're among friends, even if you are actually lost and the guy next to you only sounds something like your roommate. There's a few pinball machines in the barroom and a Foosball table, but other than that the only entertainment is the conversation in the secluded booths and tables buried away in this bar's dark corners.

Rating:
3.5 Drinks



Cy's Roost 121 Welch Ave.

Rating:
3.5 Drinks



is an institution on Welch Avenue. A relatively large bar with pool tables, darts and Foosball, Cy's draws a crowd less interested in getting a woman and more interested in getting drunk. The biggest turnout is on Wednesday for Buck Burgers, when burgers from the in-house Don's Deli are only \$1. The food is tasty, and the drink specials can be downright theft on some nights (check out regressive pitchers on Wednesday night after Buck Burgers). Although Cy's is going to have to shut down for 60 days this winter due to a liquor violation from last football season, don't hold that against this bar. It's a classic campus watering hole.



Thumbs 2816 West St.

Rating:
3.5 Drinks



is another proud dive bar. If you want to get away from the standard bar crowd, it's a great place to visit. The bar has pretty reasonable prices, especially if you enjoy Pig's Eye (Tuesday all day, \$1 bot-

les). Thumbs also serves the best Bloody Mary in the city, complete with a beer chaser for no extra charge. Thumbs is nothing special, but it's cozy and comfortable. A pool table and a pinball

machine are pinned in the back corner of the tiny barroom. It's hard to explain its charm, but you'll just have to take my word that it's a hole-in-the-wall worth visiting.





Lumpy's

2428 Lincoln Way

is located under People's, where no one seems to notice it. This place doesn't just seem like a dive bar; it is a dive bar (and proud of it). But if you want to get away from the crowds, it isn't a bad place. The bar itself is a joke; it smells like the musty basement it is, the bathroom doors have no doorknobs let alone locks, and it's about impossible not to feel like you're in a dungeon. The place sucks, but the beer is cold and relatively cost-efficient. Just don't expect too much when you go there.



Rating:
2 Drinks



Dean's List

2522 Chamberlain St.

Rating:
3 Drinks



is a Thursday night favorite in Ames, when it opens the bar for \$5 all-you-can-drink. DL is a tri-level bar with a large dance area on the second floor, the grand-daddy of the Campustown meat markets. There are three different atmospheres in the bar: the laid-back first floor with a Ms. Pac-Man machine, pool tables and darts; the depraved dance party on the second floor; and the too-drunk-to-dance desperation of the penthouse. The cleanliness of the bar leaves more than a little to be desired, especially the bathrooms, which should be used only in emergencies. Dean's List has pretty decent prices, especially during the Thursday special and during mug night on Wednesday.



Corner Pocket

2428 Lincoln Way

Rating:
2.5 Drinks



is the place to go if pool is your game. Featuring 15 pool tables, three of which are championship tables, the Corner Pocket is hands-down the best place to play pool in Ames. The tables, unlike almost any bar, are actually balanced, and you don't need a bunch

of quarters. You get your balls and pay hourly for your games. Besides pool, the Corner Pocket also offers cheap beer every night of the week. However, if you're not playing pool, it's best to look elsewhere, Minnesota Fats.

Fox 1

111 S. 5th St.

Rating:
3 Drinks



may be out of the way from Campustown, but it's worth the drive if you can find a way back after boozing. Saturday-night karaoke is the hobby of choice at the Fox, and country music seems to prevail. If you like to sing and drink beer with the local blue collars, the Fox is where to be on almost any given night. If you want to risk looking like an ass in front of a bunch of people you don't know, you can win a bar tab for your effort (I won \$15 worth of beer). They have an extensive list of songs you can sing, so if you don't know any country, don't worry. If you don't want to sing, you can still play pool and darts.

Welch Avenue Station

207 Welch Ave.

is more of a quiet bar to go to sit and watch football on the big screen on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon. It's good for Monday Night Football, when there are progressive pitchers. Of course, there's more than TV football at Welch Ave., with attractions such as an old-school Frogger

machine, four pool tables, a Foosball game, and in-bar Pizza Pit deliveries. Most nights at Welch Ave. also feature a DJ who takes even the most obscure requests. This is a well-balanced bar with good food and good prices, a laid-back atmosphere, and a great location.

Rating:
4 Drinks



Boheme Bistro

2900 West St.

is an international café located just west of campus. It has a very interesting atmosphere. It's a melting pot of the different cultures in the Iowa State community. This bar is an 18 and over bar all the time, and the busiest nights are Friday and Saturday. The bar has a couple different atmospheres. Some nights it features live music and is filled with people wanting to dance. Other nights the atmosphere is more conducive to studying or chatting with your favorite prof. The Boheme is easily the most unique bar in Ames, but you have to check it out yourself to decide whether it's for you.

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2.5 Drinks



Hunky Dory's

300 S. 17th St.

is probably the only country music bar with neon palm trees inside. The tables are located above the dance floor, serving as stadium seating for the line dancing fools below. Even though I'm not the biggest fan of country music, I'll have to admit that I had fun here. It was a Thursday night, when you pay \$5 for all the beer you can drink until midnight. At midnight, the entire atmosphere changed, as the country music stopped and the dance music started. Although the bar is located completely away from campus, there were a lot of people there and it was worth the trip.

Rating:
3.5 Drinks



Tip Top Lounge

201 E. Lincoln Way

is full of regulars on most nights, but come Saturday morning on game day, the place is packed full of ISU students who have an appetite for the famous chili and cold pre-dawn beer. It's not close to campus but well worth the distance on a Saturday morning because it's a major pre-tailgating spot. The parking lot is full by 5:30 a.m., and you'll receive a chant of "Late! Late! Late!" if you arrive after then (doors don't open until 6). Other than on Saturday mornings, I don't know why any ISU student would want to be at the Tip Top. It loses its appeal when you go any other night. (Saturday morning: 5 drinks, the rest of the time: 1 drink)

Rating:
Average
3 Drinks



Whiskey River

132 Main St.

may be one of the best bars in Ames, in my opinion. It's got an atmosphere conducive to sitting and relaxing, maybe even chatting with the bartenders. If you want to stay out late, Whiskey River is a good place to go because the clocks actually have real time rather than "bar time." When they say it's 2 o'clock and kick you out, it actually is 2 a.m. The food at the Whiskey is high quality, and the place is dripping with charm. The only problem with the Whiskey is its location. Being on Main Street makes it tough to draw the college crowd, but there still seems to be quite a few students anyway. If this bar were closer to campus, it would be an unparalleled drinking experience.

Rating:
4.5 Drinks

