Located in Legacy Tower on Stanton Avenue, KTV offers comfortable couches and touch-screen monitors directly from China with an almost-endless collection of music in a variety of languages. Co-owner Derek Widman decided to open the club after spending several weeks in China and realizing how popular it is there. “People used to travel to Chicago for this kind of karaoke,” Widman says. “I thought, ‘Why don’t we have something like this here?’”

Widman, who graduated from Iowa State in 2009, opened KTV, the first authentic Chinese karaoke club in Ames, in October of the same year. Looking in through its street-side windows, you might not see a karaoke club, especially one with up to 40 guests singing inside. The modestly sized space houses four rooms: two small and two large, for groups ranging anywhere from two performers to twelve.

The popularity of KTV’s karaoke style relies on its privacy. The idea is for a group of friends to enjoy a night out together without the intimidation of singing in front of strangers. Differing from the public performances seen in traditional American karaoke bars, this system allows customers to perform in the privacy of separate rooms with friends.

Open Tuesday through Sunday, KTV generally closes at 2 a.m. but may extend its hours until the last group leaves. Offering a pay-by-the-hour rate of $30 for small rooms and $50 for large rooms, tabs can be paid upon leaving. Aside from offering a limited supply of food and beverages available for purchase, management does not serve or allow alcohol.

The music selection varies from childhood favorites to current hits in multiple cultures. With more than 10 world languages represented, music is updated every six months, with original Chinese software and equipment. Reservations are accepted, but walk-ins are available on a first-come-first-served basis.

Moving to a new town where you don’t know anyone can be hard, but imagine moving to a new country that doesn’t even speak the same language. With such a large population of Asian cultures represented at Iowa State, Ames does offer a small remedy for homesickness. KTV presents the traditional karaoke style found in China, giving students at least one sense of familiarity in their new home.

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