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Check, Please! Bay Area reviews: Madcap, El Toreador, Juanita & Maude



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Check, Please! Bay Area reviews: Dad's Luncheonette, Marzano, East Bay Spice Company

Check, Please! Bay Area Season 14 episode 2 airs Thursday, April 18 at 7:30pm on KQED 9. See other [television airtimes](#). And never miss an episode by [subscribing to the video podcast](#).

In this episode, we visit [Madcap](#), an intimate spot in San Anselmo featuring a market-driven menu created by a world-class chef. With authentic

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Mexican fare and a festive feel, [El Toreador](#) in San Francisco is our next stop. It's so colorful and vibrant, you almost need sunglasses when you walk in the door of this family-owned eatery. Our final pick is an Albany neighborhood favorite called [Juanita & Maude](#) (named for the chef's mother and grandmother) that draws in diners from all over the Bay Area.



Host Leslie Sbrocco and guests on the set of season 14 episode 2. (*Grace Cheung*)

Get Restaurant Information:

- [Madcap](#) (San Anselmo)
- [El Toreador](#) (San Francisco)
- [Juanita & Maude](#) (Albany)

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Host Leslie Sbrocco sipping wine (*Courtesy of Leslie Sbrocco*)

My name is Leslie Sbrocco and I'm the [host](#) of ***Check, Please! Bay Area***. Each week, I will be sharing my tasting notes about the wine, beer, and spirits the guests and I drank on set during the taping of the show.

2012 Domaine Carneros 'Jardin D'Hiver' Ultra Brut Cuvée, Carneros, California \$60

When Domaine Carneros (the California outpost of France's Champagne house Taittinger) added its stunning glass conservatory dubbed the Jardin d'Hiver, one of wine country's most beautiful properties became even more beautiful. In this Gustave Eiffel-inspired sunroom guests can take in sweeping vineyard views and enjoy a signature 'Asian bites with bubbles' pairing. This limited-edition bubbly is an ode to the winery's prized addition. Made in a bracingly-dry style (called Ultra Brut), it's crisp, crave-worthy, and classy.

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2017 Ponzi Vineyards Pinot Blanc, Chehalem Mountains, Willamette Valley, Oregon \$22

When talking about iconic American wine families, the Ponzi family is on my short list. As pioneers of the Oregon wine industry, they have established themselves as leaders in quality and innovation. Though their roster ranges from Chardonnay to Pinot Noir, this wine is a personal favorite of mine. The white grape variety, Pinot Blanc, is known in the Alsace region of France where it gains a nutty richness. But, the Ponzi Pinot Blanc is dripping with succulent fruit notes layered with a ping of alluring minerality. A wine to stock up on for spring and summer sipping.

2017 Loveblock Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough, New Zealand \$20

When Kim and Erica Crawford sold their eponymous brand more than a decade ago, they followed their values to create a new wine brand highlighting the best of New Zealand. That's when the Loveblock Farm captured their hearts. Sure, they still craft Sauvignon Blanc – the variety that made Kim famous – but the Loveblock expression is full-bodied and full of flavor. Forget the green, grassy Savvie of well-known producers, this elegant white is fermented with natural yeasts and a portion aged in neutral oak barrels to add complexity and texture. It's a wine I love.

2014 Cecchi 'Riserva di Famiglia' Chianti Classico Riserva DOCG, Italy \$75 magnum (\$38 standard bottle size)

The Cecchi family's winemaking history dates to 1893. Located in the bucolic area of Chianti in Tuscany, they are known for producing reds of intensity and structure. Their Chianti Classico Riserva di Famiglia is a special bottling produced only in years where quality is high. This is a beauty. A medium-full bodied red from Sangiovese that teases with dark berry fruit aromas peppered with earthy notes, it's supple on the palate, finishing with brightness and balanced tannins. Though it drinks well now

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with grilled steaks and toothy pasta dishes, it's an age-worthy red to impress.

Dingle Single Malt Irish Whiskey Batch NO.3, Ireland \$85

Whiskey lovers unite behind Dingle. A classic brown spirit, it packs a power punch wrapped in sultry smoothness. The Batch No. 3 is a blend of individually-aged casks, which have previously held both Bourbon and Port. This unique combination kicks up the dark spice and citrus aromas and then follows them with sweet, brown-sugary richness. Each sip is like decadent dessert in a glass. Only a limited number of bottles were produced, so if you can't find this one, try one of the other Dingle bottlings and prepare for pleasure.

