

# Mike Hale picks the best places to watch Super Bowl 50



*Peter B's Brewpub assistant brewer John Galante holds a 25 oz. mug of Belly Up Blonde Ale. The bar is one of several around town hosting Super Bowl parties. David Royal — Monterey Herald*

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POSTED: 02/03/16, 3:48 PM PST

Make no mistake about it, Super Bowl Sunday is a national holiday, a religious experience and the world's biggest excuse to behave badly — all wrapped into one glorious and gluttonous genuflection to our gridiron gods.

While some of us prefer to lounge in our pajamas and watch the game and the commercials on our own television, with our own handpicked group of friends, others elect to brave the barstool or booth and take in the action at a restaurant, sports bar or watering hole.

Last year's spectacle drew 184 million viewers. More than 43 million Americans hosted a Super Bowl party, and 5.3 million people sent 26.1 million tweets during the game.

Nearly 13 million more headed out to watch the game at their favorite spot. These folks left their homes in search of a social environment unmatched at their homes (with no dishes to wash). It's about cheers and cold beers, wings and

wingdings, football fans and fanatics sharing space with those who simply want to be swept up in a wave of celebration.

The biggest party of them all takes place at Cannery Row Brewing Co. in Monterey, where more than 70 tap handles stand like linemen defending the end zone. For this occasion the restaurant tosses out its regular menu and creates a special buffet from chef Justin Robarge.

“It is going to be Monterey’s ultimate Super Bowl tailgate party with food stations throughout the restaurant,” said James Velarde, senior vice president of brand relations for Coastal Luxury Management.

Chef Robarge will create a carving station in front of the Ol’ Hickory smoker, snack stations along the open kitchen, a street taco bar and more.

“During the game servers will come around with passed snacks prepared by chef Justin so guests don’t miss any of the action,” Velarde said. “Think of it as CRBC’s homage to Michael Mina’s Tailgate restaurant at Levi’s Stadium (site of Super Bowl 50 in Santa Clara).”

Doors open at noon. The buffet is priced at \$30 and does not include drinks. CRBC strongly suggests reserving a table early (831-643-2722).

When it comes to viewing, CRBC boasts 11 HDTV’s in the main dining room and bar, and provides the popular Sound Dog audio system that allows serious fans to bring their own earbuds and plug in to follow the game uninterrupted.

During breaks there will be prize drawings and trivia contests, with the top prize being two tickets to Pebble Beach Food and Wine 2016’s Lexus Grand Tasting (the ninth annual event is March 31-April 3).

For more information, visit [www.canneryrowbrewingcompany.com](http://www.canneryrowbrewingcompany.com).

Following are other best bets for Super Bowl viewing:

Peter B’s Brewpub, 2 Portola Plaza, Monterey >> This popular pub inside Portola Hotel and Spa plans what it calls Pigskin Palooza, with an all-you-can-eat buffet, craft beer, drink specials and eye candy from 18 HDTVs.

The action begins at 2 p.m., and your participation requires a pre-paid ticket — \$60 on Eventbrite or \$45 for Mug Club members (call the pub for the Mug Club discount code). The price includes admission, the buffet, tax, gratuity and Eventbrite fees. Also, take advantage of complimentary self or valet parking.

The pre-game to halftime menu features dips, spreads, cheeses and pretzels. The halftime buffet will hold salads, wings, pizzas, meatballs, barbecued ribs, chili and more. Look for raffle prizes and merchandise giveaways. [www.peterbsbrewpub.com](http://www.peterbsbrewpub.com).

Knuckles Sports Bar, 1 Old Golf Course Road, Monterey >> This has been the go-to spot for big-game viewing for decades. Inside the Hyatt Regency Monterey Hotel and Spa, Knuckles provides the most televisions, including hi-def monitors in the bar and huge 8-foot screens in a converted ballroom called The Vault (reservations accepted for parties of 10 or more).

The party begins at 11 a.m., with a special menu and buckets of beer available. The regular menu includes such popular gridiron fare as Beer and Cheese Soup (Dragon Slayer IPA, bacon, jalapeño, smoked cheddar), Black and Tan Onion Rings (drizzled with dark stout) and Old Bay Calamari (with pesto aioli).

Alvarado Street Brewery and Grill, 426 Alvarado St., Monterey >> Chef Jeremiah Tydeman takes gastropub fare to the next level, emphasizing seasonal, local and sustainable ingredients paired with head brewer J.C. Hill's hop-forward brewing style.

Alvarado showcases guest beers but it's Hill's creations, including the now famous Mai Tai PA (gold medal at the 2015 Great American Beer Festival), that take center stage. On Super Bowl Sunday, Hill's beers will be priced at \$4, perfect to wash down 50-cent chicken wings.

Some big-game fare worth noting: Alvarado Burger (Monterey jack, herb aioli, lettuce, tomato, onion, fries); poutine (pork belly, fries, beer gravy, mozzarella); and calamari fries with jalapeno and fresno chiles, lemon and chipotle aioli. [www.alvaradostreetbrewery.com](http://www.alvaradostreetbrewery.com).

Flanagan's Irish Pub, The Barnyard Shopping Village, Carmel >> This vibrant pub always brings its A-game for special events (look for the area's biggest St. Patrick's Day party on March 17).

Owner Joe Opitz will have a little fun with the menu, creating specials based on the Super Bowl teams, the Carolina Panthers and Denver Broncos, and the Bay Area location. Look for a Denver bison burger (\$9.95), Carolina pulled pork barbecue sandwich (\$9.95) and San Francisco clam chowder in a sourdough bowl (\$7.95). The regular menu features such items as bangers and mash, fish and chips, Maryland-style crab cakes, fresh-cut fries and the aptly named OMG steak sandwich.

To wash it all down, Opitz offers 16-oz. Bud and Bud Light cans for \$3.50.

Flanagan's does not take reservations, so it's advisable to get there early.

La Piccola Casa, 212 17th St., Pacific Grove >> If you're searching for a more low-key experience, book a table at this little house that smells of fresh-roasted coffee by day and marinara by night. Joe Rombi and his wife, Laurie, specialize in baked goods and Italian fare.

For the big game, La Piccola Casa will provide a prix fixe menu for \$25 that includes an appetizer, salad, a pasta course and dessert (reservations: 831-373-0129). Or order off the regular menu, laden with hand-tossed pies (try the Famous Mauro's, with prosciutto, red onion, mozzarella and fresh arugula). [www.joerombi.com](http://www.joerombi.com).