

Stars of 'Only Murders in the Building' aren't above trash talk

By Yvonne Villarreal
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In this saturated true-crime market, innovation can be a challenge. Then Steve Martin, Martin Short and Selena Gomez walked into the Arconia.

The trio's unique and surprising chemistry has fueled Hulu's comedy-murder mystery "Only Murders in the Building." And it builds in Season 2 on Hulu.

The famous whodunnit threesome — former TV star Charles (Martin), struggling Broadway producer Oliver (Short) and troubled artist Mabel (Gomez) — ever the podcast trendsetters, have become persons of interest in a fresh murder case.

The first season of the comedy introduced viewers to the three neighbors, all fans of a true-crime podcast, who banded together to solve a killing that happened at their Upper West Side co-op — launching their own podcast in the process. After solving the case, Charles, Oliver and Mabel now find themselves suspects in a fresh case: the murder of their co-op board president, Bunny (Jayne Houdyshell), whom Mabel found in her apartment, stabbed with a knitting needle.

In a recent interview, Martin,



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From left, Steve Martin, Selena Gomez and Martin Short attend the after-party for "Only Murders in the Building" Season 2 at Sunset Towers on June 27, 2022, in Los Angeles.

Short and Gomez talked about the new season, the show's multi-generational appeal and sharing the screen with Shirley MacLaine. The following has been edited for clarity.

Q: The first season was a fresh, hilarious and insightful take on the true-crime genre that set a high bar for the second season. I'm curious what intrigued you about Season 2 and the mystery surrounding who killed Bunny.

Short: Season 1 ended with our arrests, so obviously that was already set up: Are we going to spend the rest of our lives in jail? Are we gonna get out? And obviously since we didn't do it, who did it? It's set up very cleverly.

Gomez: I just wanted to keep

knowing what was happening, so it was really great. We kind of picked up right where we left off.

Martin: I'm dedicated to solving a murder per season. I think it's very satisfying for the audience. And then you sort of tease another murder, if one happens, for the next season.

Q: Selena, as a fan of the genre who has attended things like CrimeCon, did you feel like that gave you added insight into how to play a person of interest?

Gomez: Oh, yeah. I love escape rooms, and I was just in a few the other night and as soon as I walked out, my friends looked at me and said, "You are completely Mabel in that escape room." I'm just fascinated with clues and

solving things and trying to figure out the who, the why, the what.

The whole premise of the show is basically three characters that were a little bit lonely but found this common ground, and I think that's what the bulk of the show is — that you know they all have this in common. And now they're all being accused of murder, so it brings us closer.

Q: Season 2 has some new faces, including Miss Shirley MacLaine. How quickly did she settle into the groove?

Short: Oh, it was a complete trip. What I love about Shirley is that she's filled with a lifetime of show business stories that she will share with you right away. There's an immediate looseness to her, and intimacy, and she asked questions where she actually wants the answer. She's interested in everything about life. That's what's made her so remarkable.

Martin: I just had a lifetime fascination with her from "The Apartment," which I thought she was so great in, so vulnerable — an instant great actress. So it was an honor for me to work with her, and she was very kind to me. I don't know if it was an honor for her to work with me. But she

acted like it.

Q: I have multiple text chains going for this show that span generations. When did you have a sense of the viewer demographics?

Martin: I have no idea what the demographics are. No one's ever told me. I'm always fighting for taking our hard language out, and everybody else is fighting to get it in. So I never know quite where it falls. It's kind of a family show, and it's kind of not.

Gomez: After doing the first season, the reaction I got really was warm and lovely and surprising. I don't know, I would say like 15 and older and beyond.

Martin: I have heard, in my day, though, [of] a 14-year-old using the F-word. I read about it.

Q: Martin, if Steve is trying to tone down the language on the show, are you trying to amp it up?

Short: Effing yeah. We're both aware of certain things of [our] character[s]. For example, I [as Oliver] wouldn't use certain language in front of Mabel, because that's who Oliver is. But he wouldn't be afraid to say to, uh, Steve's character, whatever his name is.

Martin: Charles!

Short: Oh, you're Charles. I gotta read some scripts.

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