

The famous and the fledgling come to the Whistler Film Festival

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By Mary Frances Hill

In the last seven years, the Whistler Film Festival has exploded from Little Festival that Could to a destination event featuring some of the most promising filmmakers and performers from Canada and beyond. This year, Canadian content takes the spotlight, with an in-person conversation between Maclean's film writer Brian D. Johnson and prolific Canadian director Atom Egoyan (*Where The Truth Lies*, *Ararat*); the premiere of Denys Arcand's latest, *Days of Darkness*; and a host of films from Canada's most promising directors, a filmmakers forum; outdoor screenings; and, as happens every year, directors will vie for honours in the Philip Borsos Competition for Best New Canadian Feature Film, one of the highlights of the festival.



J.C.

November 22 cover: The Whistler '07 Film Festival. Lights! Camera! Snow!

Here we offer reviews of some of the festival's best offerings, and a taste of the creative process from the perspective of filmmakers and one up-and-coming actor. For a full survey of the festival's feature-length and short films, documentaries and competitions, visit WhistlerFilmFestival.com.

LAST CALL AT THE GLADSTONE HOTEL

Toronto's Gladstone Hotel was more than a century old when, in 2000, developers purchased it with the intention of transforming it from a neglected, crumbling flophouse into something approximating its former glory — the primary draw being an arts-centric bar and performance space on the main floor. But those grand plans failed to take into account the long-term residents who made it their home, and the employees to whom it felt like one. Over five years, directors Derreck Roemer and Neil Graham documented the protracted (and often heartbreaking) struggle of the Gladstone's idealistic new owners to foster change without ruining people's lives. If for nothing else than the time the film spends with Maryanne, a shockingly articulate tenant and former bag lady, *Last Call* is engaging viewing. And if you think this story's location renders it irrelevant to Vancouverites, think of Gastown and know that similar stories have already been set in motion here.

—Michael White