

REVIEWS



**LAST CALL AT THE GLADSTONE HOTEL**

**Directed by:** Derreck Roemer, Neil Graham

**Rating:**

It seems that everyone in Toronto knows (and jokes) about The Drake Hotel's bourgeois transformation. Much less fuss is made, though, about fellow Parkdale hotel the Gladstone's more subtle evolution into a West Queen West hotspot.

Last Call At The Gladstone Hotel chronicles the hotel's journey from a crumbling flophouse in 2000 to the beautifully renovated arts haven it became in 2005. Covering both the bar and the hotel rooms, the film offers two very different portraits of the Gladstone: the booming nightlife of the hipsters downstairs and the desperate existence of the poor people who live above them. As the Gladstone passes hands from corporate developers to artists, the struggle between the two worlds becomes less of a clash between "the people" and "the man" and more of a complicated mess of good intentions, misunderstandings, cultural differences, harsh reality and the eventual uneasy truce between art and commerce.

This incredibly human and moving film isn't an easy watch for any socially conscious person who's ever nursed a pint in one of the Gladstone's bars, but it's definitely a must-see for anyone interested in issues such as poverty, urban renewal and gentrification. —**Sarah Kurchak**