



# THE MIDAS TOUCH

City of Gold examines the cultural bounds and implications of L.A. food critic Jonathan Gold

**J**onathan Gold is the first and only food critic to win a Pulitzer Prize. Let that marinate for a moment.

Then disabuse yourself of any notions of what a food critic of that caliber might be like — perhaps an uptight gourmand enamored with his own palette or some self-important foodie.

Gold is none of that, so it's no wonder filmmaker Laura Gabbert chose to wrap a film around the writer and the myriad flavors of his beloved hometown Los Angeles.

He has a penchant for suspenders, wrinkled shirts and his green pickup.

"I'm an L.A. guy — I drive," Gold says early in the film. "I am my truck; my truck is me."

The documentary follows Gold, driving his truck around Los Angeles, from Alhambra to Hollywood, never setting foot in a glitzy restaurant, opting instead for the underlying fabric of the city, one built on the backs of immigrants. He exhaustively hunts for unsung treasures, from taco trucks to Korean family restaurants in strip malls.

For two-plus decades, Gold's reviews have been printed in the *Los Angeles Times* (he is currently a food critic there), *Gourmet* and in *LA Weekly*, where he started as a proofreader fresh out of college in 1982, with zero aspirations of becoming a food critic.

As a proofreader, however, Gold says he was bored, so he gave himself a challenge: Eat at every food joint on Pico Boulevard, a scrappy 15.5-mile thoroughfare that cuts like a crescent across L.A.

It was here a green Gold found his favorite chili fries and discovered the diversity of L.A. cuisine. On Pico, for example, Gold describes how he learned that not all "Mexican" food was the same, that each restaurant or chef may cook a different regional cuisine, from Oaxaca to Baja.

"Pico is where I learned to eat," Gold says.

(One editor in the film points out that for Gold, as a young man who had recently discovered his love for L.A.'s punk-rock scene and ethos, reviewing burrito trucks rather than traditional restaurants was his own form of disruption.)

Twenty years later, Gold can wax poetic about Oaxacan *mole negro* in a way that will make your belly rumble with envy (see Gold's 2009 "Moles La Tia: Beyond the Magnificent Seven" in *LA Weekly*).

When the camera is not following him, talking to the chefs and cooks of the city, tasting their fare, he's seen at home with his head in some culinary book, surrounded by stacks of the same.

It's not just the latest food sensation that Gold is after, but what underlies it — the families, neighborhoods, immigrant traditions and social circumstances that buttress each dish. Gold recalls the deli culture that was so important to his own Jewish upbringing, how the deli your family frequented reflected your status.

Gold is less a food critic than a cultural commentator in the tradition of Calvin Trillin, using food as a universal tool for understanding our fellow man.

The world could use more of that.

Bon appétit. ■

City of Gold opens April 15 at Broadway Metro.

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Thu: 1:45, 8:30

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IMAX: BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE 3D [CC,DV] (PG-13) ★ Fri. - Sat. 1:155 AM 3:15 PM 6:45 PM

HARDCORE HENRY [CC,DV] (R) Fri. - Sat. (1140 215) 445 725 1015

THE BOSS [CC,DV] (R) Fri. - Sat. (1200 200 230) 430 500 700 730 930 1000

CHONGQING HOT POT NR Fri. - Sat. (1150 220) 450 720 1035

GOD'S NOT DEAD 2 [CC,DV] (PG) Fri. - Sat. (1210 305) 625 1010

BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE [CC,DV] (PG-13) Fri. - Sat. (1125 245) 715 935

BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE 3D [CC,DV] (PG-13) ★ Fri. - Sat. (1235) 415 705 905 PM

MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING 2 [CC,DV] (PG-13) Fri. - Sat. (1130 155) 425 655 940

MIDNIGHT SPECIAL [CC,DV] (PG-13) Fri. - Sat. (1220 300) 635 945

THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT [CC,DV] (PG-13) Fri. - Sat. (1145 240) 630 925

MIRACLES FROM HEAVEN [CC,DV] (PG) Fri. - Sat. (1205 250) 620 950

10 CLOVERFIELD LANE [CC,DV] (PG-13) Fri. - Sat. (1225) 420 710 955

LONDON HAS FALLEN [CC,DV] (R) Fri. - Sat. (1135 AM)

ZOOPTOPIA [CC,DV] (PG) Fri. - Sat. (1145 240) 630 925

ZOOPTOPIA 3D [CC,DV] (PG) ★ Fri. - Sat. (1215 PM 310 PM)

DEADPOOL [CC,DV] (R) Fri. - Sat. (1230) 455 735 1025

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**MR. RIGHT** 12:45 3:00 5:15 7:30 9:45  
**KRISHA** 12:40 2:50 5:00 7:10 9:20  
**EYE IN THE SKY** 11:45 2:10 4:35 7:00 10:00  
**EMBRACE OF THE SERPENT (EL ABRAZO DE LA SERPIENTE)** 2:25  
**WHERE TO INVADE NEXT** 11:45 5:10  
**THE WITCH** 7:50 9:30

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11:00, 1:45, 4:45, 7:20, 10:05

**BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE (3D) (PG-13)**  
SPECIAL EVENT PRICING: \$3.00 UPCHARGE ALL TICKETS  
10:55, 12:40, 1:55, 2:40, 4:25, 5:30, 8:00, 10:25

**BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE (DIG) (PG-13)**  
10:25, 11:40, 3:15, 6:25, 7:00, 9:25, 10:10

**THE BOSS (DIG) (R)**  
10:30, 1:10, 4:10, 7:25, 10:00

**DEADPOOL (DIG) (R)**  
10:40, 1:20, 4:35, 7:50, 10:30

**DEMOLITION (DIG) (R)**  
10:45, 1:35, 4:40, 7:30, 10:10

**THE DIVERGENT SERIES: ALLEGIANT (DIG) (PG-13)**  
10:25, 1:15, 4:30, 7:35, 10:25

**EYE IN THE SKY (DIG) (R)**  
10:20, 1:05, 4:05, 7:45, 10:20

**GOD'S NOT DEAD 2 (DIG) (PG)**  
12:20, 3:20, 6:55, 9:55

**HARDCORE HENRY (DIG) (R)**  
10:15, 11:40, 2:30, 4:55, 7:55, 10:30

**HELLO, MY NAME IS DORIS (DIG) (R)**  
10:15, 11:30, 1:50, 4:20, 7:05, 9:40

**MIRACLES FROM HEAVEN (DIG) (PG)**  
10:50, 1:40, 5:00, 7:40, 10:20

**MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING 2 (DIG) (PG-13)**  
11:35, 2:00, 4:50, 7:15, 9:45

**ZOOPTOPIA (DIG) (PG)**  
10:35, 12:35, 1:25, 3:25, 4:15, 6:15, 7:10, 9:00, 10:05

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