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4. European Hotspot. Following the fall of the wall, Berlin has evolved into a very much sought-after cultural center in Europe — thanks to an inspiring array of hip cafés, restaurants and bars, vibrant art and music scenes, eclectic shopping possibilities, and ultra-sleek accommodations. For those unfamiliar with the city, **TASCHEN's Berlin** (TASCHEN, \$39.99) is the ultimate guide. Aptly steered by insider Angelika Taschen and visually illuminated by photographer Thorsten Klopsch, the alluring volume (which also includes a pocket-sized street map) offers sections on the best hotels, restaurants and shops around. Not to be missed: The Corner Berlin, a designer concept store that rivals Paris's Colette; the Green Door, an exclusive nightlife spot that requires a doorbell ring; topnotch Thai food at Edd's; the Hotel de Rome in a converted 19th century bank; and Quartier 206, an impressive luxury department store.

