

BLACKBOOK

Smart Money

What \$500 Buys In...

After last fall's economic turmoil, **Germany is rebounding**, with U.S. travel to Berlin surging this past summer. Despite the dollar's faltering against the euro, now is still the time to go, as the city's yearlong commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Wall culminates in the **Festival of Freedom** on November 9... In Hong Kong, meanwhile, the economy and the HK dollar have been **holding strong** even as the rest of the world struggles. But **travel from the Americas has taken a hit**, with hotel occupancy—not to mention room rates—down significantly... Closer to home, Aspen has seen a number of hot hotel, restaurant, and store openings in preparation for **this year's ski season**. But as in places like Nantucket and the Hamptons over the summer, vacationers seem to be delaying their bookings, which means there may still be prime real estate, choice weeks, and **deals to be had**.

Aspen

Two nights in a mountain-view studio room at the brand-new, 173-room **Viceroy Snowmass**. Situated at the base of Snowmass Mountain, the hotel has a sleek alpine aesthetic and a slopeside pool terrace infused with the whimsy of interior designer Kelly Wearstler. viceroy snowmass.com

OR

Twenty-five Kobe beef burgers with bacon, Vermont cheddar cheese, and grilled onions at **N9NE Steakhouse**, which opened in June. Chef Chris Conlon's strengths—beyond red meat—are sides like lobster mashed potatoes and creamed corn. funworldwide.net

OR

Ten samplings of six flavors of s'mores (caramel apple, kettle corn, pound cake, etc.) toasted over a personal mini fire pit at **Liquid Sky**, Aspen's buzziest après-ski spot. funworldwide.net



OR

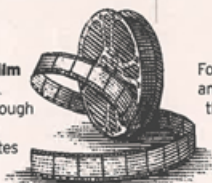
Two tickets to the December 17 party celebrating the Holly Hunt–designed redo and 20th anniversary of the beloved **Little Nell** hotel. Chef Ryan Hardy will serve farmhouse-inspired dishes like truffle fries, chicken-liver pâté, and homemade cheeses. thelittlenell.com

OR

Two pairs of women's shearling boots made exclusively for the year-old **J. Crew at-the-Mountain**, the brand's first ski resort shop. Other finds: tweed jackets from British purveyor Abraham Moon and limited-edition handmade skis from Heidskis. jcrew.com

OR

A pair of tickets to 22 **Aspen Film** screenings of Oscar contenders. Running from December 20 through January 2, these have become gathering spots for chic Aspenites and visitors. aspenfilm.org



Berlin

Five private tours of the Egyptian and Pre- and Early History collections at the **Neues Museum**, which lay in ruins after World War II but was just reopened after a restoration by the British architect David Chipperfield. smb.museum



OR

Almost two Anti-Aging Concept treatments at **Susanne Kaufmann Spa**, which the skincare maven debuted last October. The two-hour facial makes use of Kaufmann's moisturizing and firming products. susannekaufmann.com

OR

Fifteen servings of the signature veal tripe with truffled chanterelles at **Gendarmérie**. Launched in May by renowned Berlin restaurateur Josef Lagner, this mostly French joint occupies a former bank. (The vault now houses an oyster bar.) gendarmerie-berlin.com

OR

Three nights in a junior suite at the 64-room **Circus** hotel, which arrived last year on the edge of Rosenthaler Platz. Meant for the young and hip, it's got Segway rentals for \$16 per hour and an indie vibe in every simply decorated (but stylish) room. circus-berlin.de

OR

Nearly one small Last Bag, designer Piet Breinholm's take on the classic leather schoolbag, from the rugged-chic, multibrand fashion emporium **14 oz.**, which opened in July 2008. 14oz-berlin.com



OR

Forty-two Moscow Mules, a ginger beer, vodka, and cucumber concoction at **Bar Tausend**, the latest it spot for Berlin's beau monde. Located under the Friedrichstrasse S-bahn stop, the bar's entrance is unmarked, speakeasy style. tausendberlin.com

Hong Kong

Two nights at the **Upper House** (the rate holds through December 31), a new property with views of Victoria Harbor and 117 amply sized rooms—starting at 730 square feet—on the top 11 floors of a Pacific Place tower. upperhouse.com

OR

Eight high teas for two at **Sevva**, featuring a platter of treats like ginger cheesecake, turtle pie, and crumpets with cream cheese and smoked salmon. The terrace is the place for cocktails come evening. sevvahk.com



OR

One customized browsing and buying tour of the city's top galleries with Jehan Chu, an art adviser and former Sotheby's expert who started the year-old **Vermillion Art Collections** to help collectors curate and add to their holdings. vermillionart.net

OR

Ten organic eggs confit with truffled oxtail gelée, lomo ibérico, and croutons at **Cépage**, the new sister restaurant to Singapore's famed Les Amis. Serving French-Mediterranean food accompanied by a 2,000-plus-bottle wine list, it has three floors but only 79 seats. lesamis.com.sg

OR

Three Revitalizing Rituals at the year-old **Natura Bissé**, the Spanish skincare line's first stand-alone spa in Hong Kong. The treatment includes an oxygenating, aromatic back massage and an exfoliating, moisturizing facial. naturabisse.es

OR

One Venise bracelet—a yellow-gold monogrammed pendant on a string—by **Youma Hostelet**. The jewelry designer's debut showroom is an appointment-only affair on Ice House Street. youma.com.hk



As of late September, one euro = \$1.47 and one Hong Kong dollar = \$0.13.