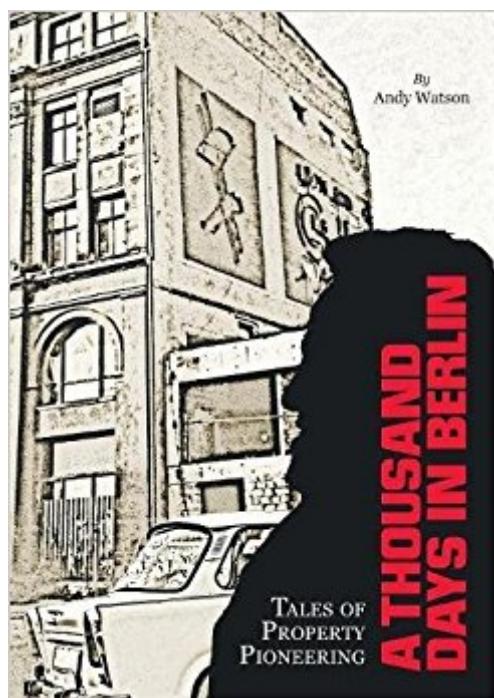


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A Thousand Days In Berlin: Tales Of Property Pioneering



Synopsis

This book captures the energy and sense of wonder in early 1990s Berlin as seen by a young property professional who lived and worked in the reunified city. *A Thousand Days* recalls how the city's vibrant history and culture clashed with its traumatic recent past, and how Berliners dealt with the scars left by the Wall. The book is also a story of Berlin's property industry rebuilding from scratch. The author rubs shoulders with pioneering real estate giants reconstructing the built environment of the future capital. Part One, "inside Berlin," includes stories of the powerful west Berlin Betonmafia, a basement full of Stasi telephone taps and a big night out at the Kempinski celebrating a deal with a Russian Import-Export company. Part Two "outside Berlin," recalls the broken infrastructure and pollution of the former DDR, the acrid taste of asbestos dust and distinctively sweet smell of brown coal. Travelling in the "wild East," the author watches families ordering at a McDonald's for the first time and crowds of onlookers admiring his old Honda Civic as if it were a Ferrari. He describes the oddities of town planning in the former DDR, with colossal smokestacks inside a nature reserve and recalls the experience of explaining supply and demand to suspicious planning officials in eastern Germany. "The Real Thing" chapter is a tale, now emblematic of those unique times, of Coca-Cola's surge into the former East and the author's small role in that success story. The final section, "Looking Back," highlights the surprises and contradictions of the city 25 years after the Wall came down, and traces how the new Berlin has evolved to become today's city of choice for real estate investors and for young people to live, work and play.

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Customer Reviews

Andy Watson graduated from Oxford University with a degree in German & French literature. He started work in 1989 as a trainee Chartered Surveyor with Weatherall Green and Smith in London before moving to Frankfurt in 1991, Berlin in 1992 and Paris in 1995. Since his thousand days in Berlin, Andy has continued to earn a living in the commercial property industry. For the last 22 years he has been based in Paris where he has worked extensively across Europe - both as a co-founder of The Retail Consulting Group and as a Managing Director of LaSalle Investment Management. In the last ten years he has become a frequent visitor to the optimistic new Berlin. This is his first book.

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