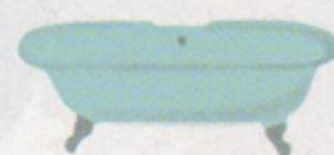




SLIM SHADY

BLACK IS THE NEW black, the old black, the only black—and titanium makes for frames that are supermodel-thin. *Sunglasses, \$325, by Robert Marc, at Robert Marc boutiques, New York and Boston, (212) 319-2000, www.robertmarc.com.*



surfin' usa: Fall Cocoon Edition

NOVICA.COM OFFERS GOOD KARMA along with its astonishing range of high-quality decor items, from Peruvian religious oil paintings to West African carvings to Balinese hammocks. In association with *National Geographic*, Novica directly represents 1,700 artists and artisans in the developing world on a website (Novica also sells through eBay) that features photographs and interviews with the creators themselves.

Sometimes a gardening store, especially a self-avowedly eccentric one like San Francisco's Paxton Gate, can outgrow its confines, its category, its ability to be simply explained. Now in much larger brick-and-mortar quarters at 824 Valencia Street, and with its website (paxton-gate.com) under construction, Paxton Gate is your one-stop resource for handsomely stuffed and mounted cane toads, gleaming Japanese garden shears, "odd and exotic" bromeliads, and antique architectural elements. That's just for starters.

If you absolutely must do-it-yourself, but are clueless as to how, **Bozzle.com** has your back—

not to mention your living room. A trove of free interior-design articles, how-tos (everything from hanging wallpaper to producing designery paint effects) and dozens of links to other learning and supplier sites, Bozzle is a fine place to while away a dreamy afternoon without hitting a lick on your renovations.

Everything else has a "superstore" on the Web—why not claw-foot bathtubs? Can't find that classic roll-rim of your dreams? That elusive double-ended slipper? Vintage Tub & Bath (vintagetub.com) has modern versions of all of the above and more more more, including an entire line in very nonvintage acrylic.

Get wind of what's up in European design at **Vincon.com**, a kind of Conran's crossed with Williams-Sonoma based in Barcelona. The overall design feel is spare and sleek, but every category—from Children to Office & Stationery to Kitchenware—has its elements of surprise and whimsy, not to mention stuff you haven't seen anywhere else.

PERINI TENDERLOIN

We came across the Perini Ranch Steakhouse's **mesquite-smoked, peppered beef** at a high-toned fête where the buffet line kept backing up and stalling in front of these spicy, medium-rare slices of tenderloin direct from Buffalo Gap, Texas. Even a very proper Parisian lady of our acquaintance—who rarely admits to a weakness for things American—was spotted sneaking back for thirds. Slow-roasted and smoked, the tenderloins are flash-frozen and vacuum-packed (each pack yields about 30 to 40 thin-sliced medallions), and recover their subtly seductive depth of flavor when served at room temperature. At \$88 for a 2 to 2½ lb. package, you've got to think mighty highly of your guests to lay these beauties out, because they won't stop eating until you have to reorder. *Perini Ranch Steakhouse, (800) 367-1721, www.periniranch.com.*

