

# **Visualization Insider**

**Helping Clients Select Furniture and Materials for Interiors**

## Introduction

People ask us from time to time, 'What do you look for in a 3D user?' Our usual answer is, 'Someone that can produce realistic exteriors.' We say this because it appears to us that far more users struggle with the realism of exterior scenes than interior scenes. While new users are often able to produce beautiful interior visualizations, their exteriors often lack the same believability and realism. There are numerous reasons for this, including a lack of understanding of site plans, not knowing how to create proper landscaping (especially in the absence of a landscaping plan), the usually larger scene size unforgiving of inefficient workflow, and so on. And although it's apparent to us that exterior scenes are far more difficult for users to make believable, it also seems clear that interior scenes have their own unique problems that make them actually more agonizing to work on.

What makes interior scenes so painful for so many users is the difficulty in helping the client make good furniture and material selections. Unlike modeling from architectural drawings, interior design is more of an art than a science. If a hundred 3D users from all corners of the world receive the same set of architectural drawings, they should all produce nearly identical models, assuming of course the drawings are complete and well built. But the moment you start working on furniture and material selections, everyone and their brother has something to say about the selections made. The drapes are too yellow, the couch is too contemporary, the table is too shiny, the flooring is too boring, and the list goes on. With most interior jobs we've worked on, the clients don't have a decent interior design planned out and they often have no idea what they want. When they see your attempt at interior design they can be quick to tell you that they don't like your selections, but getting them to make sound decisions of their own can be a monumental undertaking. Having pained our way through the process of creating interior scenes for so long, we learned long ago to adapt our workflow to accommodate the most difficult clients.

When you present your proposal for interiors to a client, you need to decide whether your client needs or wants custom furniture or if stock furniture is the better choice. If you try to present your client with stock furniture, you of course have to have a large enough selection of high quality furniture and materials for the client to pick from. Unfortunately, many clients don't want to spend the time sifting through hundreds or even thousands of different images of furniture and material selections to find something suitable for their project. Even if they are willing to give it a try, many can not see past the default colors or materials on the stock furniture and envision different materials or colors on a piece of furniture that might otherwise make a suitable choice. And even if you have an enormous library of furniture and materials, if you don't present those libraries in an easy to navigate manner, the client might quickly give up in frustration. Because of all the potential difficulties in working with clients on these selections, you should always budget for the unexpected.

The series of images on the following page show one example of a project where the client changed the furniture and materials over and over again, first trying to use stock selections, but in the end relying entirely on custom furniture and materials. Fortunately for us, we always anticipate this possibility on all projects and cover ourselves in our proposals by making it clear to the client from the start the types of changes that incur added cost. This particular client ended up paying more for changes to furniture than what was originally allotted for in the entire project. The bottom line is that you have to know your client and determine if they are willing to endure the work of choosing custom furniture and materials. If not, you should do everything you can to sell them on custom furniture without scaring them away with too much added cost. If custom furniture is the chosen course, then the only other thing to decide is how to go about creating the furniture.



Furniture creation is a very specialized skill and while many of us can create furniture, creating it fast and detailed is a completely different issue. Unless furniture creation is a specialty skill that you possess, you would probably be doing yourself a favor to contract custom furniture creation to someone that specializes in it. Otherwise, you might spend several times longer creating furniture that is of far less quality. If you have a need to contract out this important part of your interior scene, we would like to recommend Alexander Gorbunov ([intero\\_ua@yahoo.com](mailto:intero_ua@yahoo.com)) from Intero Visuals ([www.interovisuals.com](http://www.interovisuals.com)). His skill in furniture creation is truly amazing. As an added note, Alexander will be writing an article on furniture creation for week 23 of the Visualization Insider, due out May 18<sup>th</sup>.

Finally, as an example of how we work with the client to create custom furniture, the following three pages show what we actually send to our client when the determination is made to create custom furniture.

## Selecting Furniture for 3D Virtual Tours

3DAS can provide custom furniture creation in all virtual tours. In order to provide you the best possible content for your interior designs, 3DAS needs a furniture plan and high-quality images of the furniture, fabrics, flooring, and other materials you wish to see in the virtual tour. Specifically, we need the following:

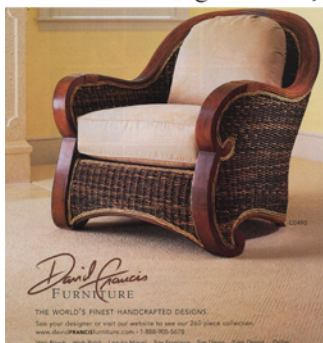
- Pictures of the furniture that you want included in the project.** This can be magazine pictures that you mail or scan and email to us, or web addresses that show images of pieces you want. The image below-left is an example of an appropriate image with which a model could be made. From the image on the left, we were able to create the model of the chair shown in the middle image. The image on the right is an example of a poor image that we cannot use to create an acceptable model. It is unacceptable because it is cropped and is a low resolution image.

Good Image

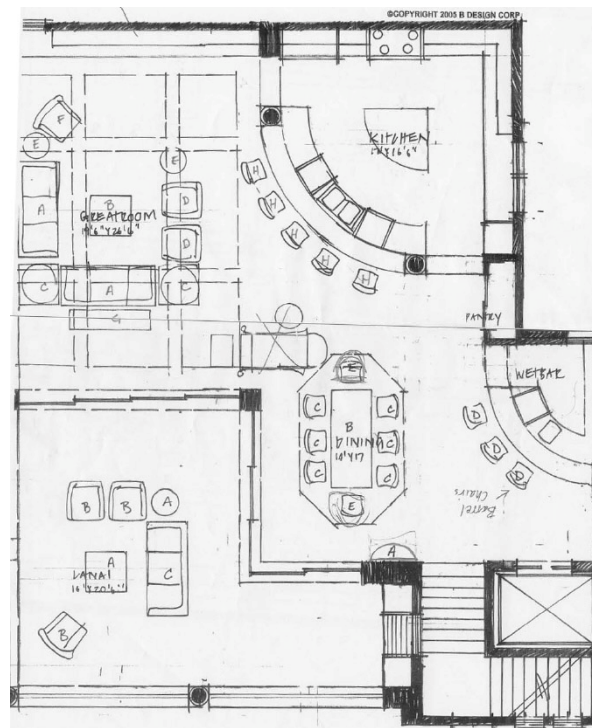
equals

Good Model

Poor Image



- Furniture layout.** This is usually just a floor plan that you print and use to draw symbols on that represent the various furniture pieces for the design. Symbols should be labeled so that they reference the image that shows their likeness.



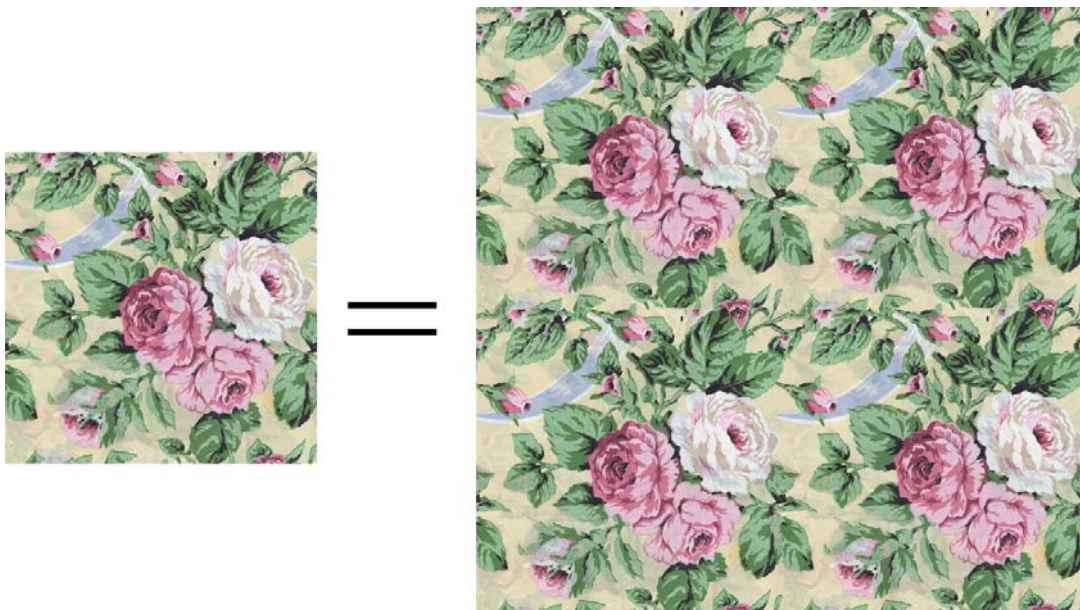


- **Material selections.** We can often find a material similar to those shown in the images of the furniture you provide, however, it is best if you provide exact material samples from which we can scan and use in our scene.

If you provide us material samples of a pattern fabric, ensure that the sample is large enough to capture any repeating patterns, otherwise we cannot tile the material correctly in our scene. The image below-left shows an example of an unacceptable material image. When tiled, this image has a clearly visible seam along each border, and the result is always poor.



The image below-left in this example shows an acceptable variation where the entire pattern is captured and the result is a seamless material, as shown on the right.



**Knick-knacks and Kitchen Accessories.** To give a virtual tour a warm, inviting, and realistic feeling, we need to populate each room with knick-knacks and kitchen accessories like those you would find in any home or office. We have a library of knick-knacks and accessories you can select from to populate the scene or you can allow us to use our best judgment and make selections ourselves. The images below are the type of items that we use to populate our scenes. To make selections from our library, click on the links '**Knick-Knacks**' and '**Kitchen Accessories**' from our catalog webpage and write the reference numbers on the floor plan along with the rest of your furniture selections.



**Note:** We have to stress that while doing custom furniture has many great advantages over stock furniture, creating custom furniture is very time-consuming and if changes are made to selected pieces, 3DAS must charge for those changes at an hourly rate as specified in the project contract. At any time, you can substitute custom furniture with selections from our stock furniture catalog displayed on our website, at no additional cost.