

Lydia Sloan Cline



SketchUp for Interior Design

3D VISUALIZING, DESIGNING, AND SPACE PLANNING

WILEY

Table of Contents

[Cover](#)

[Foreword](#)

[Foreword](#)

[Why Read This Book?](#)

[What's Covered?](#)

[Extra Goodies](#)

[Chapter 1: What Is SketchUp and How Do Interior Designers Use It?](#)

[What Is SketchUp?](#)

[Who Uses It?](#)

[Is It Easy to Learn?](#)

[What Is SketchUp Used For?](#)

[The Difference between Traditional CAD Drawings and Models](#)

[How SketchUp Displays the Model](#)

[Types of Models](#)

[What SketchUp Make \(Free Version\) Can Do](#)

[What SketchUp Pro Can Do](#)

[How Designers Use SketchUp](#)

[Chapter 2: Getting Started](#)

[Hardware, Operating System, and Browser Requirements](#)

[The Video Card](#)

[The Space Navigator 3D Mouse](#)

[Use a Tablet PC](#)

[Download SketchUp Make](#)

[The Workspace](#)

[Run Multiple SketchUp Files at the Same Time](#)

[Save Options](#)

[Backup Files](#)

[Chapter 3: Exploring the Interface](#)

[Select or Change a Template](#)

[Add the Large Tool Set](#)

[The Select Tool](#)

[The Rectangle Tool](#)

[The Inference Engine](#)

[The Push/Pull Tool](#)

[Input Numbers](#)

[The Pan and Orbit Tools](#)

[Modifier Keys](#)

[The Escape Key](#)

[The Zoom Tool](#)

[The Views Toolbar: Generate Orthographic Drawings](#)

[Select with Selection and Crossing Windows](#)

[Select by Clicking, Right-Clicking, and Holding the Shift and Control Keys](#)

[The Move Tool](#)

[Customize the Desktop](#)

[Make a Custom Template](#)

[The Help Function](#)
[Manage Dialog Boxes](#)

[Chapter 4: Modeling Furniture, Cabinetry, and Accessories](#)

[Faces and Edges](#)

[The Eraser Tool and Erasing](#)

[The Pencil and Freehand Tools](#)

[The Move Tool](#)

[Stickiness](#)

[Groups](#)

[Causes of a Non-Filling Face](#)

[Color-Coordinate the Model's Lines with the Axes by Changing the Edge Style Setting](#)

[Model a Table](#)

[Model a Bookcase](#)

[Model a Clock with Radial Array](#)

[Chapter 5: Drafting, Modeling, and Furnishing a Floor Plan](#)

[Prepare a Raster File for Import](#)

[Draft a Plan by Tracing a Raster Image](#)

[Trace Interior Walls](#)

[Edge Styles Again](#)

[From Plan to Model](#)

[Flashing Planes](#)

[Draft a Plan from a Paper Sketch](#)

[Interior vs. Exterior Models](#)

[Components in Single- vs. Double-Sided Walls](#)

[Create Plan and Elevation Views](#)
[Model a Building from an AutoCAD Plan](#)
[Interact with Revit, 20-20, and Other Programs](#)
[“Clipping” \(Disappearing Geometry\)](#)
[Model a Sloped Ceiling with the Protractor Tool](#)

[Chapter 6: Modeling a Two-Story House Interior](#)

[Model the Shell and First Floor](#)
[Model the Second Floor](#)
[Model the Living Room](#)
[Model a Cabinet](#)
[Model Crown Molding with the Follow Me Tool](#)
[Model a Stairs Guard](#)
[Edit a Downloaded Staircase](#)
[The Outliner](#)

[Chapter 7: Painting with Colors, Textures, and Photo-Matching](#)

[What Is Painting?](#)
[Paint with Native SketchUp Materials](#)
[Paint with Textures](#)
[Paint the Stairs](#)
[Import Swatches from Other Models](#)
[Put New Colors and Textures into the Software](#)
[Check Face Orientation on Painted Surfaces with Entity Info and Face Style](#)
[Apply a Real-Life Design Scheme to the Model](#)
[Import a Texture](#)

[Import an Image](#)

[Photo-Match an Interior Space](#)

[Chapter 8: Enhancing and Presenting the Model](#)

[Annotate the Model: Dimensions and Text](#)

[Dimension a Floor Plan](#)

[Scenes](#)

[The Walk-Through Tools](#)

[What Are Dynamic Components?](#)

[Save vs. Export](#)

[Enhance with Other Software](#)

[Enhance with Hand-Rendering](#)

[Why SketchUp May Run Slow](#)

[Chapter 9: Plugins and LayOut](#)

[What's a Plugin?](#)

[LayOut](#)

[SketchUCation Forum](#)

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Cover Design: Wiley

Cover Image: Large image and two on the second line: Courtesy Matthew Kerr, IIDA, ASAI, Zimmerman Architectural Studios, Milwaukee, WI. Second from the top in right hand column: Courtesy of Terry Sandee, REDGRAPHX, Inc. Top right corner image courtesy of author.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

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Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey

Published simultaneously in Canada

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:

Cline, Lydia Sloan.

SketchUp for interior design : 3D visualizing, designing, and space planning / Lydia Sloan Cline.

pages cm

Includes index.

ISBN 978-1-118-62769-3 (pbk.); 978-1-118-80493-3 (ebk); 978-1-118-80507-7 (ebk)

1. Interior decoration—Computer-aided design. 2. Interior architecture—Computer-aided design. 3. SketchUp. I. Title.

NK2114.C59 2014

747—dc23

2013026541

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Foreword

Modeling software is rapidly replacing traditional two-dimensional drafting software as the vehicle for designers to create and communicate. SketchUp has emerged as the modeling program of choice in many diverse fields as a result of its low price and relatively short learning curve. This book is for the beginner who wants to get up and running with it fast.

Why Read This Book?

You may be wondering why you should read a SketchUp book, when there is so much content online. My answer is that the online content, while very good, is not organized. If you don't know what the software's capabilities are, you don't know what to ask or search for. This book leads you through SketchUp in an orderly manner. Its intent is to acquaint you with its many capabilities. Toward that goal, tools and functions are briefly described under their own headings and then used in step-by-step examples.

SketchUp's most popular functions are introduced early, to enable you to quickly do what you want to do with it. Some tools are revisited later to show more complex options. By the time you finish, you'll have been exposed to most of the tools, one or two options for each, and some different approaches for solving modeling problems. You'll then be pointed to a site where you can ask your increasingly complex questions. End-of-chapter links to high-quality online content are also given as a guide through the ocean of Web information.

What's Covered?

Coverage is specific to the interests of interior designers and interior architects: how to model interior spaces, study scale and proportion, test different ideas, present solutions, plan spaces, and generate architectural floor plans, elevations, and sections. There are also examples that show SketchUp combined with other software programs and hand-rendering tools for maximum utility and flexibility.

Knowledge of other drafting software is not needed. However, it is assumed that the reader has basic architectural drafting knowledge, such as what floor plans, interior elevations, perspective, and isometric and section views are. This book shows how to use SketchUp to create those drawings; it doesn't discuss what they are. If you could benefit from a drafting refresher, some resources are listed at the end of this Foreword.

Since PCs are standard in the interior design and architecture fields, screenshots are from a PC. Where operations on a Mac are different, Mac screenshots are added. Pro (the pay version of SketchUp) is also discussed, because Pro is cheaply available to students and schools. While all tools in Make (free) and Pro work in the same way, Pro has additional features needed in a professional work capacity.

Extra Goodies

On the Wiley site there are video tutorials of the book's



projects; look for the [] symbol on the page. There is also a Homework folder full of files for completing the end-of-chapter exercises and recreating the projects yourself. Download and save the whole folder at once to your desktop so everything will be available when needed. Instructors have an additional folder with answers to the end-of-chapter questions, some project models, and high-resolution images of SketchUp drawings for showing classes how SketchUp is used in the practice of interior design and architecture.

So, let's get started!

The site that contains the videos is:
www.wiley.com/go/sketchupforinteriordesign

Further Resources

Cline, Lydia Sloan. *Architectural Drafting for Interior Designers*. Clifton, NY: Cengage, 2007.

Cline, Lydia Sloan. *Drafting and Visual Presentation for Interior Designers*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2011.

Chapter 1

What Is SketchUp and How Do Interior Designers Use It?

Objective: This chapter discusses what modeling is, what SketchUp is, and how it's used by interior designers.

Concepts and Functions: SketchUp Make, SketchUp Pro, model, solid/surface/wire/polygonal model, polygon, geometry, vector, raster, BIM, attributes, dynamic component, reports, solid modeling tools

What Is SketchUp?

SketchUp is a *polygonal surface modeling program* ([Figure 1-1](#)). *Polygonal* means that everything SketchUp creates is made out of polygons (flat shapes bordered by straight lines). *Surface* means that everything it makes is hollow. *Modeling* means that it makes models, which are three-dimensional (3D) digital drawings composed of lines and faces (planes). Collectively, those lines and faces are called *geometry*.

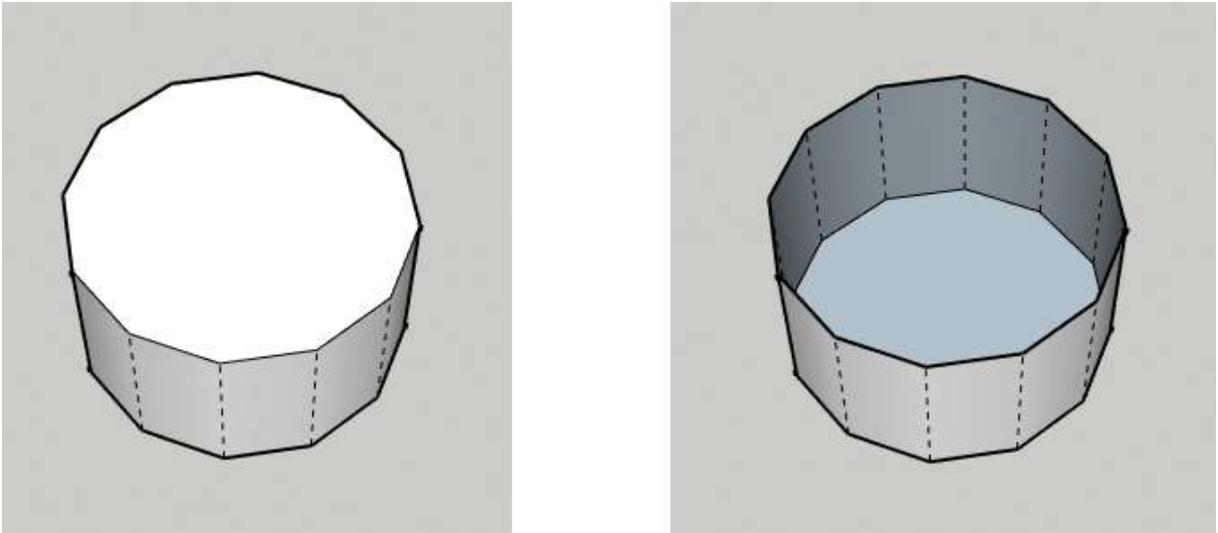


Figure 1-1: All SketchUp models, including circles, are made of polygons and are hollow.

SketchUp is also a *vector* program, meaning it creates vector files with an *skp* extension. A vector file is a collection of lines and curves that scale up or down without loss of quality. Examples are pdfs (Adobe documents) and dwgs (AutoCAD documents). This is as opposed to a *raster* file, which is made with individual pixels and loses resolution quality when enlarged. Examples are jpgs and gifs.

SketchUp is strictly a desktop application, not a Web-based one. It works on both the PC and the Mac. Files made on one platform transfer easily to the other.

Who Uses It?

SketchUp was written as a user-friendly alternative to the complex modeling software common in the architectural field, its original user base. Previous owner Google made it free to the public, which wildly expanded its popularity beyond the original architect user base. Now interior designers, game developers, filmmakers, woodworkers, catalog illustrators, packaging designers, landscapers, and more use it too.

Is It Easy to Learn?

It's probably easier than other industry-standard modeling programs, because it has fewer features and is somewhat intuitive. But "easy" is relative. Like everything else, it still takes practice—you probably didn't make great pencil sketches right away, either.

Know that there are many ways to do the same thing in SketchUp, and no one "right" way. Some ways take a few more steps, but if you make learning it the first priority, efficiency will follow.

What Is SketchUp Used For?

SketchUp is used to electronically sketch ideas three-dimensionally—to "get your doodle on." It's the closest you can get to pencil and tracing paper for thinking out ideas. Since you can "sketch" loosely (meaning without inputting numbers), this software helps you think spatially. Height/width relationships become easy to see; for example, a hallway that seems wide in a floor plan may reveal itself as dark and narrow when the vertical dimension is added. As with a physical foam-core model, a digital model can be studied from any direction. However, SketchUp one-ups the foam-core model with camera tools that let you stroll through the digital model at eye level. Finally, SketchUp models can make the jump to the construction documentation process when the LayOut feature are added.

SketchUp has evolved into two programs: a free, noncommercial one called Make and a commercial product called Pro. Both are owned by Trimble, a company that makes positioning technology products.

The Difference between Traditional CAD Drawings and Models

With traditional computer-aided drafting software such as AutoCAD, the mouse is an electronic pencil with which you basically replicate the hand-drafting process. Three-dimensional (3D) drawings made with AutoCAD are really a collection of two-dimensional (2D) entities that give the illusion of three dimensions. A model, however, is a true 3D object that the viewer can “orbit” around and view from any position. Two-dimensional (orthographic) views are generated from it ([Figure 1-2](#)).

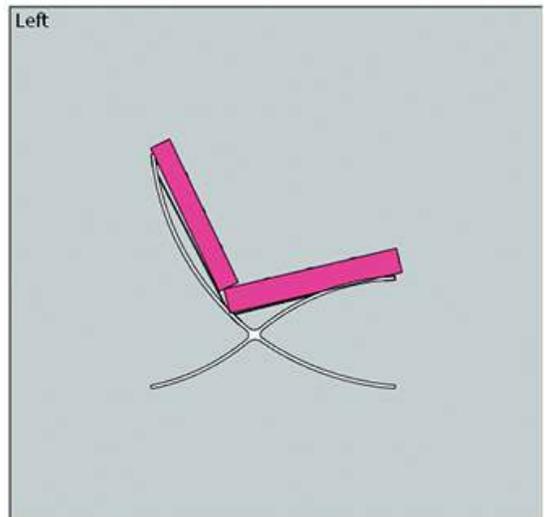
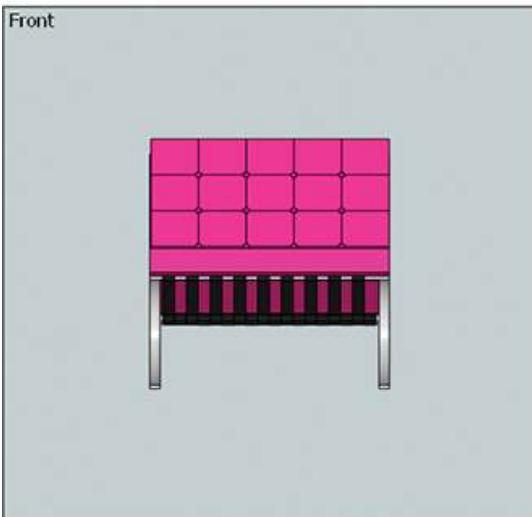
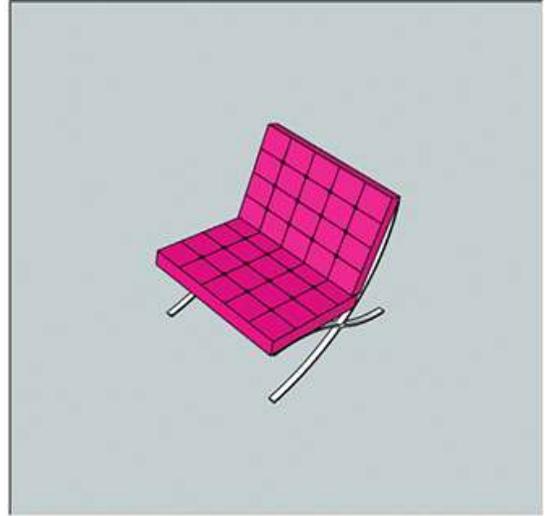


Figure 1-2: The user orbits around a model to view it from any position. Two-dimensional (2D) views are then generated from it.

AutoCAD is not a prerequisite to learning SketchUp; the two programs operate differently. If your computer drafting experience to date is limited to traditional 2D software, you will find that modeling requires a different approach. You may also find that you never want to go back to 2D software once you see the advantages of 3D.

How SketchUp Displays the Model

By default, SketchUp displays the model as a 3-point perspective. That is, all parallel lines converge to left, right, and top or bottom vanishing points. However, it can be set to display as a 2-point perspective, as an *isometric* (3D view in which parallel lines remain parallel), and orthographically (plan, elevation, and section views).

Types of Models

It's helpful to understand the different model types before you learn SketchUp, because this may affect how you plan to use it. Knowing a software program's strengths and limitations affects the time spent on a piece and its resultant quality.

There are three types of models: solid, surface, and wireframe ([Figures 1-3](#)).

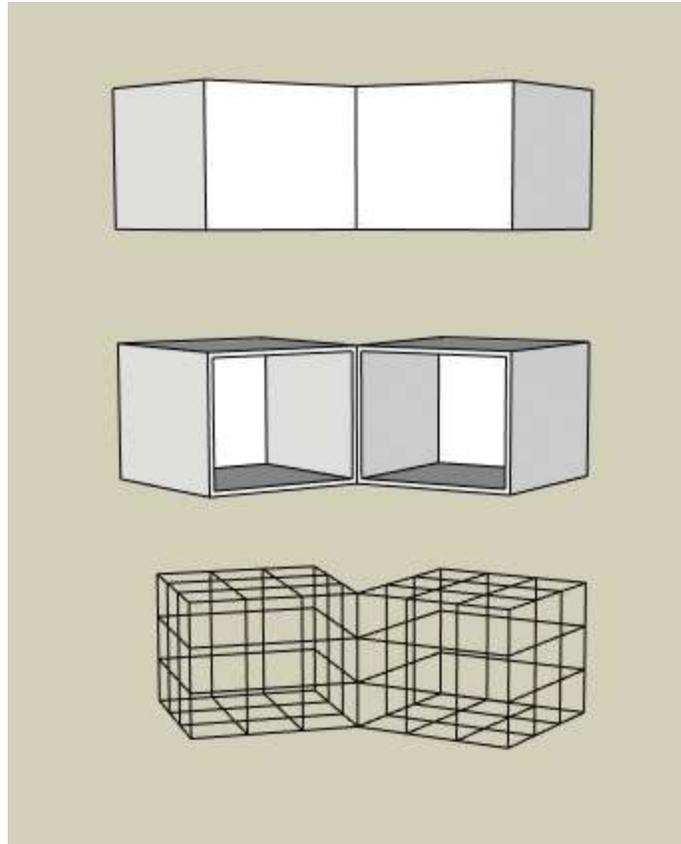


Figure 1-3: Solid, surface, and wireframe models.

Solid models are just that: filled solid inside. They contain data such as interior volume, mass, and weight. This enables you to perform tasks such as specifying a constant wall thickness or connecting and curving adjacent edges. Solid model file sizes are large, so they may run and regenerate slowly. *3ds Max* and *form•Z* are two solid modeling programs popular with architects and interior designers.

Surface models are hollow with a thin skin, composed strictly of lines and faces (planes). You can create complex curves and forms, but only surface data—e.g., area—is stored. A surface model doesn't recognize geometry as specific features; for example, where a solid model would recognize a staircase and perform relevant calculations, a surface model just sees the staircase as lines and faces. Surface models are used when the designer is primarily

concerned with external form and appearance. Their file sizes are generally smaller than those of solid models, so they run faster. Besides SketchUp, another popular surface modeling program is *Rhinoceros 3D*.

Wireframe models are the simplest. They only contain information about the object's edges and intersections. As the name implies, this model appears constructed from wires. Its file size is very small; hence, it runs quickly. Wireframes can be created or displayed with any modeling software.

BIM, or *building information modeling*, refers to a particular, data-rich type of solid model plus a collaboration process. A popular BIM program used in the construction industry is *Revit*.

No model type is "best"; all have unique advantages. For example, designs that require a constant wall thickness are better drawn with a solid modeler. Designs that require curved, sculpted surfaces are better drawn with a surface modeler.

Older and newer versions of SketchUp can work on the same computer, but Make and Pro cannot. Only one can be installed.

What SketchUp Make (Free Version) Can Do

The free version of SketchUp can do almost everything the commercial version can, such as:

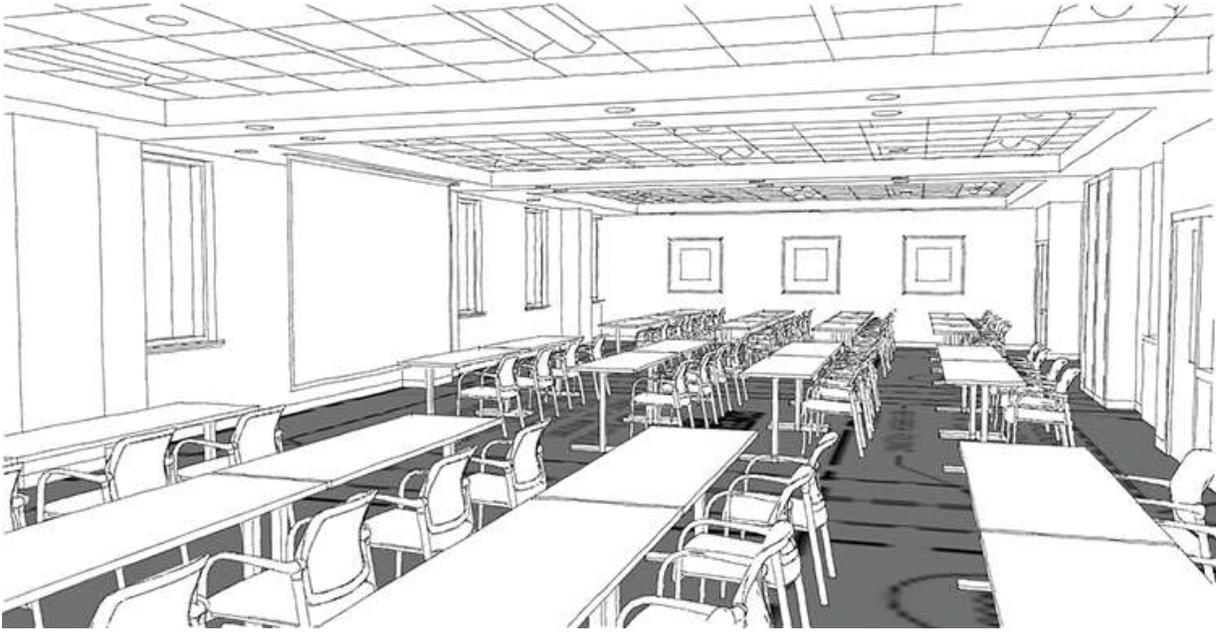
- Make complete interior and exterior models
- Add color, texture, shadows, and geolocation information
- Apply styles that simulate art media, such as pencil and watercolor
- Make, download, and edit components

- Download and use dynamic components
- Download and use plugins (add-on software)
- Create (low resolution) raster files and animations of the model
- Import raster files of floor plans to trace, and of real-world materials to apply
- Export the model to 2D image formats

Pro has additional features that working professionals need.

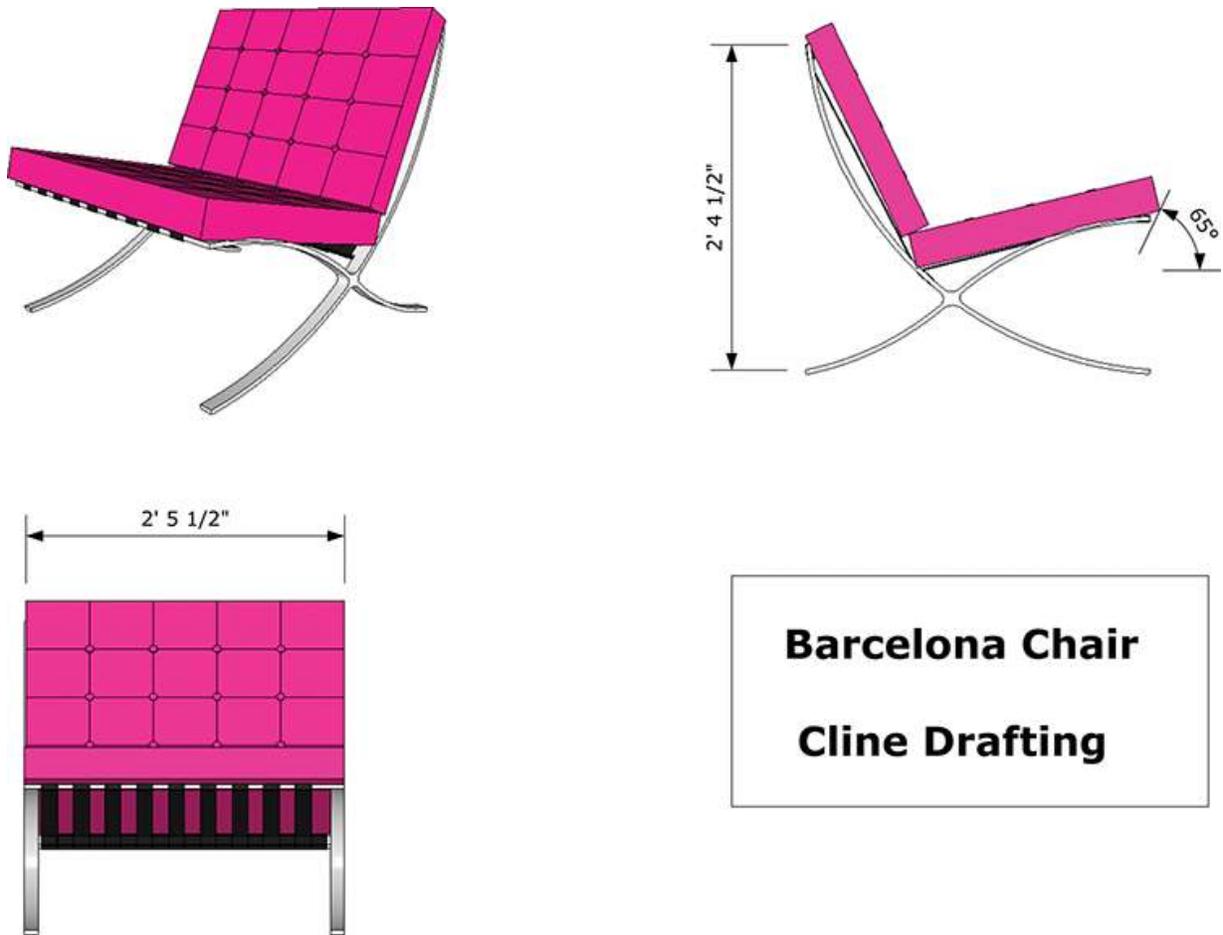
What SketchUp Pro Can Do

- *Import AutoCAD (dwg) and Revit (rvt) files ([Figure 1-4](#)).* This turns them into SketchUp geometry, which enables precise modeling from existing floor plans (tracing a raster file may be time saving but is not precise). Layers and blocks are also preserved.
- *Export SketchUp models into formats that can be directly imported into AutoCAD or Revit.*
- *Create presentation boards and design documents from the model.* This is done with LayOut, a feature that installs with Pro as a separate program ([Figure 1-5](#)).



Courtesy Matthew Kerr, IIDA, ASAI, Zimmerman Architectural Studios, Milwaukee, WI

Figure 1-4: An AutoCAD floor plan imported into SketchUp Pro and partially modeled.



Barcelona Chair
Cline Drafting

Figure 1-5: LayOut enables you to create a design document from a model.

- *Make custom line weights and styles, giving the model a hand-drawn appearance (Figure 1-6).* This is done with Style Builder, a feature that installs as a separate program.
- *Export high-resolution animation and raster files.* These are more suitable for printing and presentation than the low-resolution files the free version is limited to.
- *Create and edit dynamic components.* These are models programmed to store information and perform specific actions (Figure 1-7). For instance, staircases can add steps when height is adjusted, and cabinets can store price and parts information and open doors with a click.

- *Perform additive and subtractive modeling tasks, or what engineers call **Boolean operations**. This saves steps, making for a faster workflow ([Figure 1-8](#)).*
- *Generate reports such as materials takeoffs (e.g., how much paint to buy based on the area of walls in the model).*
- *Receive upgrades, maintenance, and support on technical problems via e-mail and phone. Such support is for installation and licensing issues, not tutorials on the software.*

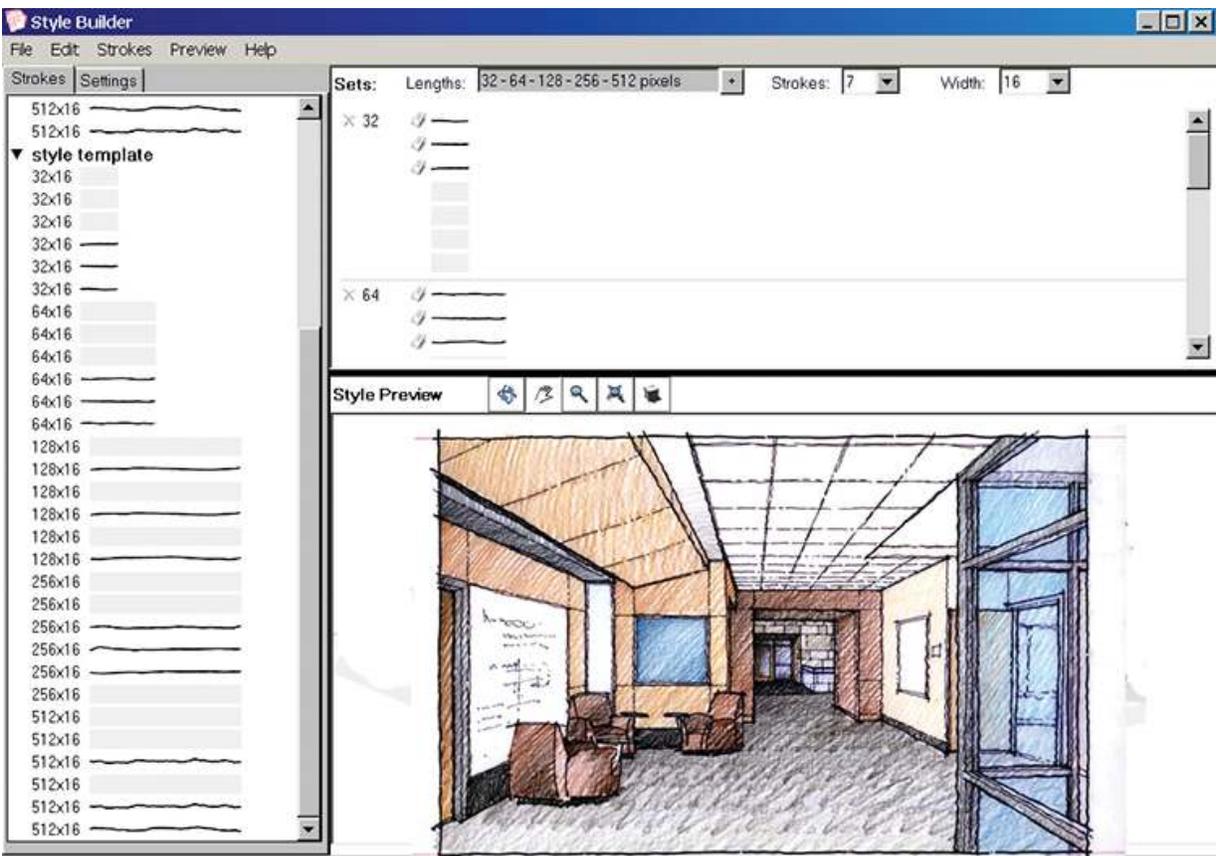


Figure 1-6: Style Builder creates models that look hand-drawn.



Figure 1-7: Clicking on this dynamic cabinet component makes the door open to show storage options.

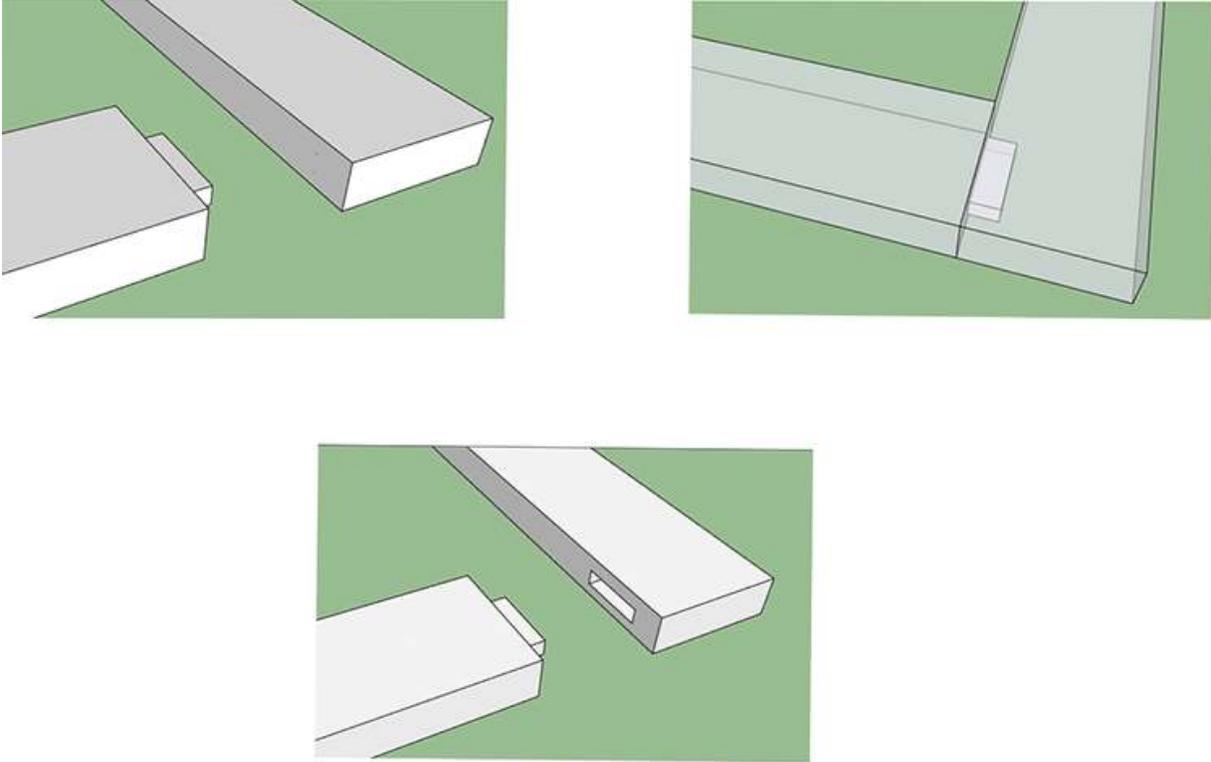


Figure 1-8: With solid modeling tools, a tenon is pushed into a block of wood, then pulled away, revealing a clean mortise joint automatically created.

Purchase Pro

A single, nonexpiring license for Pro costs \$590, which includes a year's maintenance subscription. Upgrading to new versions after one year costs \$95. Offices can buy single-user and network licenses. A single license installs SketchUp on any computer, but only one can run it at a time. With a network license, you pay for the number of seats or *instances* desired (with a 50-seat minimum required for a first purchase). The software can be installed on as many computers as wanted, and the license resides on a server. You can run as many instances of SketchUp as you bought seats for. Network licenses can't be used off-site because SketchUp must detect the license before starting.

Thus, if you wanted to bring a laptop to a client presentation, a single-user license would be needed.

Purchase a Pro Educational License

Students enrolled at accredited schools can purchase a \$49 educational version that expires after one year. It is fully functional and doesn't watermark images, but it doesn't permit commercial use. Upgrades during the license's year are free. You can also repurchase the license after expiration if still a student. Obtain it through SketchUp's network of educational resellers; see Further Resources at the end of this chapter.

How Designers Use SketchUp

Following are examples of ways SketchUp can be used by interior designers and interior architects, both by itself and as part of a larger workflow.

- Solidify a pencil-and-tracing paper floor plan by tracing over it, and then model the traced plan ([Figure 1-9](#)).

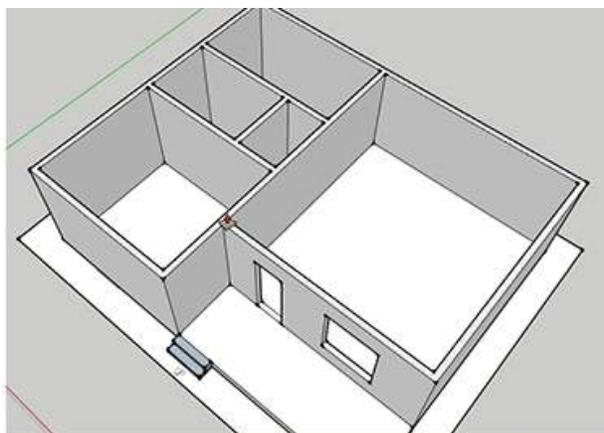


Figure 1-9: Tracing an imported plan and then modeling from it.

- Import models of specific manufacturer catalog items and use them to space plan ([Figure 1-10](#)). This enables seeing if there's enough room for the furniture before presenting to the client. The SketchUp model scan serves as a 'fit' drawing.



Figure 1-10: Ready-made models of Ikea furniture and rugs, downloaded free from the 3D Warehouse.

- Change the model style to give it an artsy look ([Figure 1-11](#)) and make high-resolution PDFs for marketing materials.

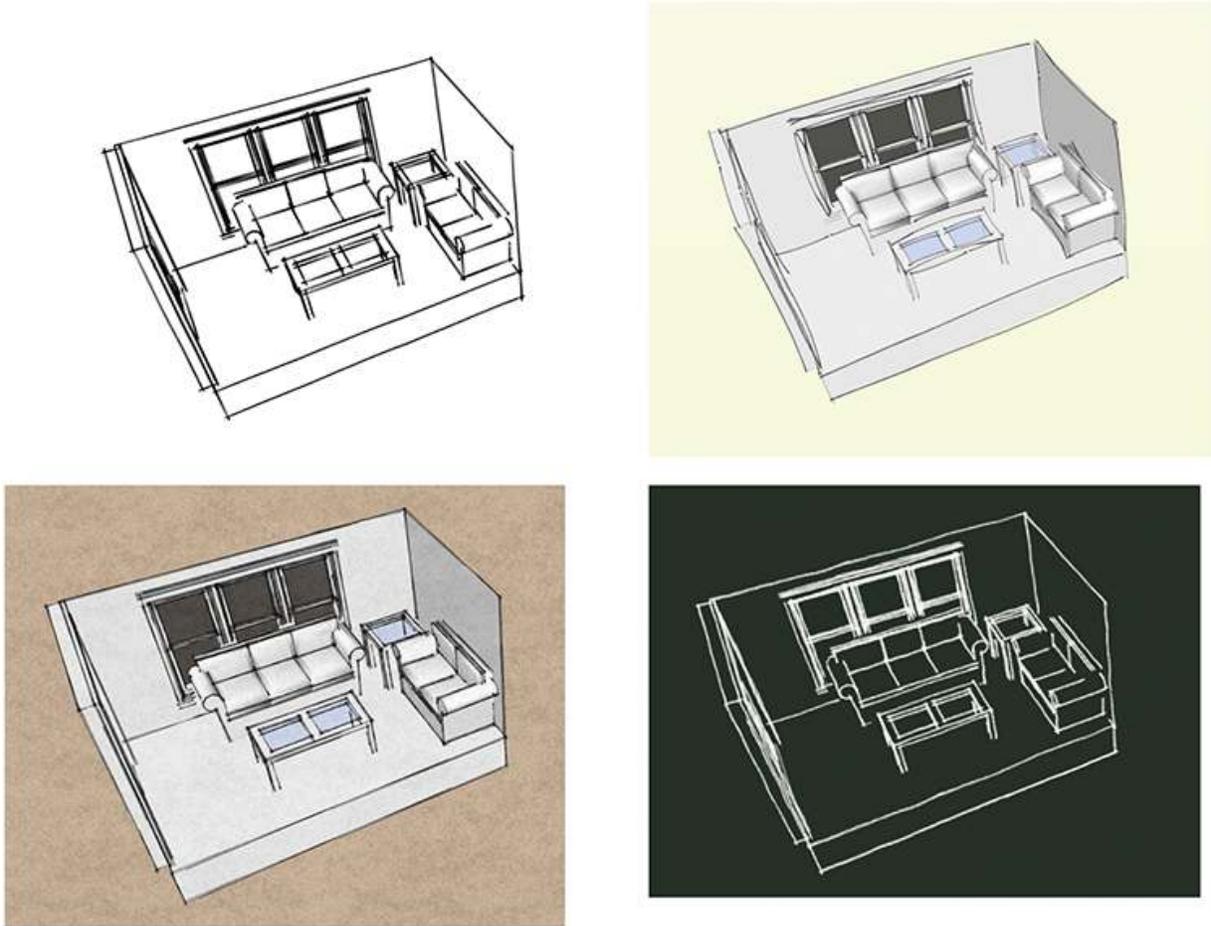


Figure 1-11: Four of the many styles available in free SketchUp.

- Use a SketchUp model as an underlay over which to trace ideas and adjustments. Print up plans and 3D views of the model, hand-color and scan, and then import them into Photoshop for lighting and text enhancement ([Figure 1-12](#)).
- Show animations and slide show scenes of different options ([Figure 1-13](#)). This enables clients to see how the design works before committing to it. Their favorite photos and wall art can also be incorporated.



Courtesy Matthew Kerr, IIDA, ASAI, Zimmerman Architectural Studios, Milwaukee, WI

Figure 1-12: A SketchUp model was printed up and then used as an underlay for tracing and marker work.



Figure 1-13: Incorporate photos into the model. The tabs at the top are preset scenes of the house for a slide show.