Strata 3D™ *pro* *Rich Media Edition*

A review by Cher Daley:

Retail: $695.00

Academic: $449.00

Strata 3D*pro* v3.8 - The latest in 3D Creative Power for Mac OS X. Photons, Toon Rendering, Stochastic Sampling - and OS X Power and reliability!

*You can send for a free demo or try - out at www.strata.com! Although *The Swift 3D extension is not available in the Demo version due to licensing restrictions*

Strata 3Dpro v3.8 now with the added strength of Mac OS X is even more essential for creating professional images and animations. This is more than just an OS X upgrade, v3.8 adds Enhanced Deformation features, Photon and Cartoon (Toon) Rendering, and Stochastic Sampling - altogether with the consistent reliability of Strata tools.

Do more, Do it faster, and Do it safer (we're talking about 3D here!)

Although Strata 3D*pro* says it's for the beginner thru extremely advanced, I found you had to have some knowledge about animation and 3-D to use this program.

They do provide a printed manual (about 2" thick) that walks you through everything you need to know about the menus and the shortcut tools as well as having several tables in the back showing ratios for skins, file formats you can save & export in, movie formats, etc. I was hoping for tutorials which were strongly lacking. I did however find some on the Internet that gave me a handle on what I was doing. The manual

Strata Cafe is linked through community and as you can see; it has a lot to offer.

are part of Web enabled software that you can interface elements in the application open your Web browser and launch directly to: *www.strata.com*

You then have links to resources, Information, tutorials and related products.

Swift 3-*D* is integrated into this rich media edition allowing users to make vector formats which are key to producing print or Web versions.

I have dabbled a little bit with 3-D animation in the past and found this program to be a bit more complicated for the novice. That being said, if you want all the bell's and whistles, you probably can't do any better than this program.

Strata 3D*pro* offers a wide range of modeling tools; including Splines, Lathing, Polygons, Skinning, Metaballs, Extruding, Booleans, Sweeping and more. Strata gives you real-world textures and lighting controls to create any effect you desire, then you can add ultimate realism to your models and animations with Strata's

ing window and as a rendering option.

Toon options are: Flat, Gradient, Average, Bi-Level, and Tri-Level. All of which affects the way the texturing shows in the renderings. There is an Expert setting that allows custom made shading effects.

New to the program is the ability to use it to convert movies to flash movies. Just open the movie from within Strata, then choose save as and choose the format you want in the drop down menu.

I was impressed with two tutorials I located by navigating through Strata's web site. Getting Started,
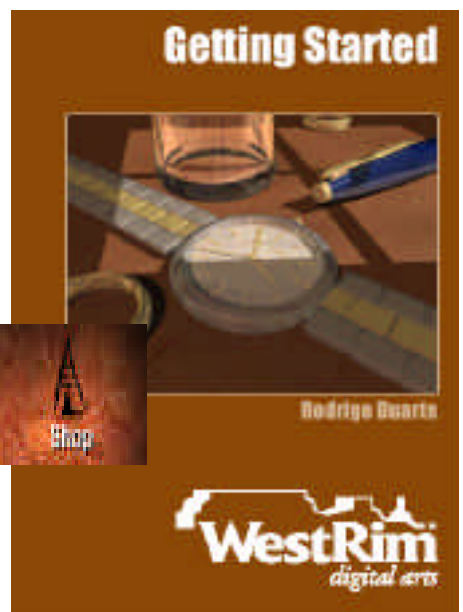
Strata's Home navagation bar is very useful. If you click on Community; It will lead you to many useful iems. This is the first place one should go to get acquainted.

offers links to their web site which is fairly easy to navigate through.

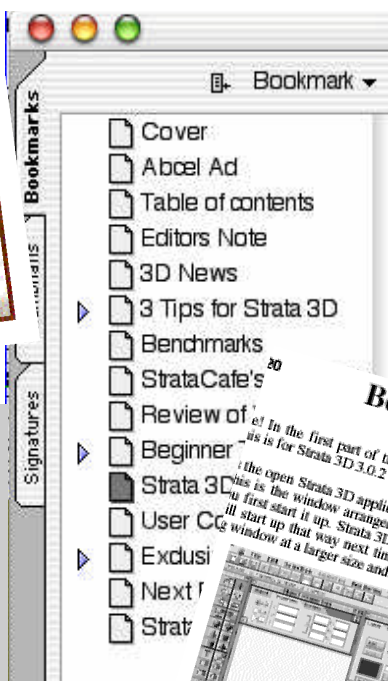3-D-base*, 3-Dpro,* and 3-D*plus,*

esteemed rendering engine.

Strata 3D*pro* now offers Toon rendering as an option in the model-

which is a downloadable .pdf, provided by: *westrim_training@yahoo.com.*

is a step by step tutorial designed to help new Strata 3D users familiarize themselves with the software. It covers the construction, texturing, lighting and rendering of a scene.

The other is the free Strata World Magazine that is also a downloadable magazine in .pdf format with lots of goodies including Basic Tutorials, 3-d News, benchmarks, reveiws, etc.
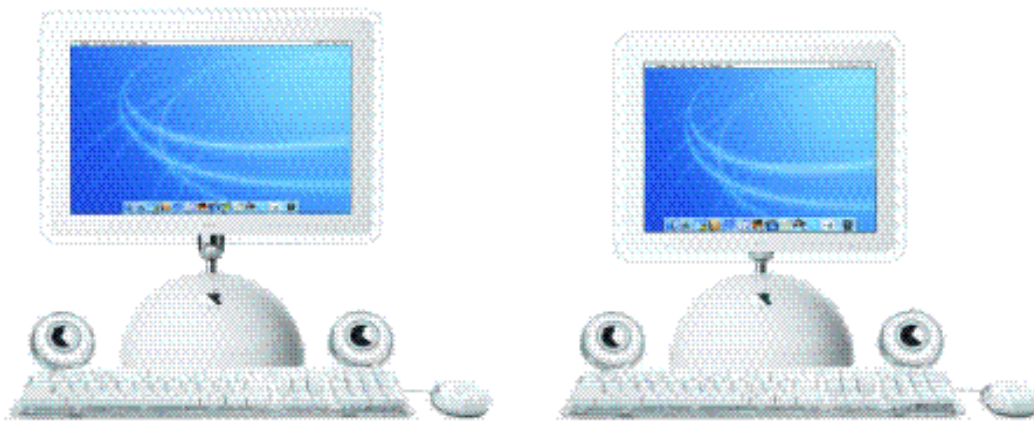
Although I found this program a bit difficult to use (being a bit rusty in 3-D rendering and animation), I soon found after playing with the program for a few weeks; That I actually began to understand what I was doing!

There are a lot of tools available on the internet to get you started.
I recently discovered this magazine and found it to be extremely useful.
It is full of tips and keeps beginners in mind as well.
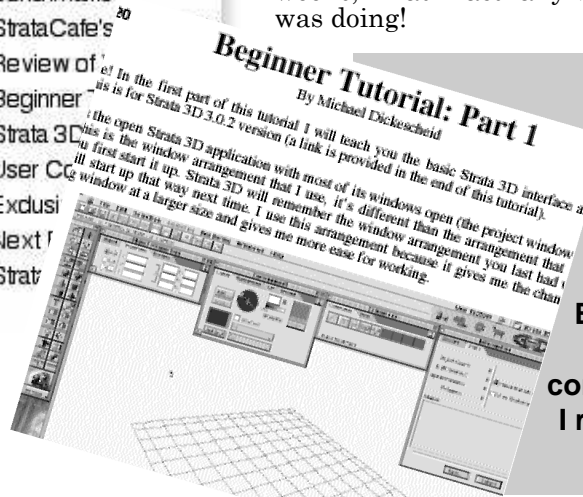
If you are just doing web animations, there are a lot of easier programs out there to use.

But if you desire a professional program for more complex 3-D and animation; I recommend this program!

Beginner Tutorial: Part 1
By Michael Dickescheid