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See It Now

A new visual tool lets home buyers make selections online in 3-D.

*Source: BUILDER Magazine
Publication date: 2006-02-01*

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For years, home builders have been looking for a reliable software tool that would let home buyers view home plans and models and select options in 3-D and then integrate with a builder's back-office system.

BuilderMT, which partners with Timberline to offer a full back-office system, is well on its way to delivering such a product for home builders with its new Web-based virtual design center, VDSee.

Home builders such as Vintage Homes (Memphis, Tenn.), New Urban Builders (Chico, Calif.), and Stock Development (Naples, Fla.) are already using VDSee with customers. Home buyers can make option selections with a salesperson at a model home or design center, or they can make the selections online. Buyers can view quick virtual tours of model homes or drill down to see the floor plans, walls, and even a framing skeleton. VDSee also lets buyers easily make change orders to a design.

The tool lets buyers click through and add floor and wall colors, cabinets, sinks—just about anything that's specified in a home. The CAD technology is based on View22, the software that powers the configuration sites for noted industry manufacturers such as Kohler and cabinetmaker Merillat.

VDSee costs \$1,500 for a one-time setup fee and \$5,000 per plan or room to be rendered. Built-in integration with BuilderMT and Timberline will be available in the spring, and by then, builders will be able to use VDSee with BuilderMT's upcoming extranet software. The idea is for supers and subs to have access to the 3-D images; if the subs don't have Web access, a super can pull up a plan and print it out for them. For more information, visit www.buildermt.com/vdsee.