

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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## MANSION

### THE TRADE

# DO YOUR EYES DECEIVE YOU?

As renderings of luxury properties become more sophisticated, they can be hard to tell from photographs. Three side-by-side comparisons

**IN THE BUSINESS OF LUXURY CONDOMINIUMS**, a picture is worth \$10 million.

To sell condo units long before the building is finished, developers rely on architectural renderings to show potential buyers floor plans, finishes and furnishings of units and common spaces, such as lobbies and courtyards.

Creating a 3-D image is much like constructing a

building. Renderers typically start with the architectural plans to make a geometric representation of the space. Then they create a virtual "wireframe" of structural details, such as the walls, a kitchen island and furniture. Next they introduce lighting, from windows and fixtures. The finishes, such as carpeting, upholstery and wood paneling, are layered on top of the wireframe. Styling el-

ements—a blanket draped over a sofa or a backgammon board—offer an extra punch of realism.

Below are three renderings of buildings under construction in New York. Beside them are photographs of actual spaces. Can you tell the difference between the rendering and a real space?

—Beth DeCarbo

#### THE RENDERING

When it's completed next year, **15 Renwick** in Manhattan's Hudson Square neighborhood will have 31 units priced from \$2 million for a two-bedroom unit to \$10.5 million for a penthouse. The Brooklyn-based design and consulting firm March created the renderings in eight months, with six to eight people working on the project, says Brandon Hicks, co-founder of the firm. "Everybody does these renderings now, so we have to look at ways we can stand out," he says. March renderers look for styling ele-

ments that make the space feel lived in. The faux taxidermy and the dog statue behind the chair convey a quirky character—but the space still looks real. "We consider it photography for a project that hasn't been built yet," says Mr. Hicks. The building was developed by IGI-USA, a subsidiary of Israel-based Iaki Group Investments, and designed by ODA Architects. A rendering of the lobby is on the left.

**THE PHOTOGRAPH** on the right is of the One Museum Mile lobby in New York's East Harlem.

#### Real or Rendering?



#### THE RENDERING

**Oosten**, scheduled for completion in winter 2015-16, will have 216 units ranging from \$780,000 for a one-bedroom unit to \$3.3 million for a townhome. The Seventh Art, a global marketing and design firm, got to work long before the floor plans were conceived, conducting market research to understand Brooklyn's South Williamsburg. The findings resulted in condo plans with an industrial feel—wood floors, exposed brick walls and metal doors, says Michel Mein, principal of the firm. Next,

every week for months, up to 15 people representing the developer, architect, interior designer and sales/marketing teams met to hammer out specifics. "A 3-D rendering looks like a very simple thing to produce," says Mr. Mein. "It would be—if all the decisions were made in advance." The building, developed by Xin Development and designed by architect Piet Boon, is shown in the rendering on the right.

**THE PHOTOGRAPH** on the left shows the living room of a home in Cape Town, South Africa.



#### THE RENDERING

"A calm, relaxed scene set amid an urban jungle." That's the mood SCDA Architects sought to convey in its rendering of the **Soori High Line**, a boutique condo project in Manhattan's West Chelsea neighborhood scheduled for completion in 2016. Developed by Siras Oriel LLC and designed by Soo Chan of SCDA, the building will have 27 units, 16 of which will have a private pool. A two-person team at SCDA—an architect and an interior designer—oversaw the renderings process, says Darren Yio, an architect with the firm.

The team chose to illustrate the pool area at sunset, when the mood is relaxed. Details like lighting make the rendering more realistic, Mr. Yio says. "Sometimes it can confuse the buyer a little bit because it looks so real," he adds. Prices will range from about \$3.6 million for a two-bedroom unit to \$10.9 million for a five-bedroom duplex. The rendering of the pool of a penthouse unit is on the left.

**THE PHOTOGRAPH** on the right shows the pool of a private home in Stevensville, Md.



L-R: March; Dorothy Hooy for The Wall Street Journal

L-R: Sage Price for The Wall Street Journal; The Seventh Art

L-R: SCDA Architects; Ed Mink Register for The Wall Street Journal