

Seascape Creation in Vue d'Esprit

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Islands in the Sunset

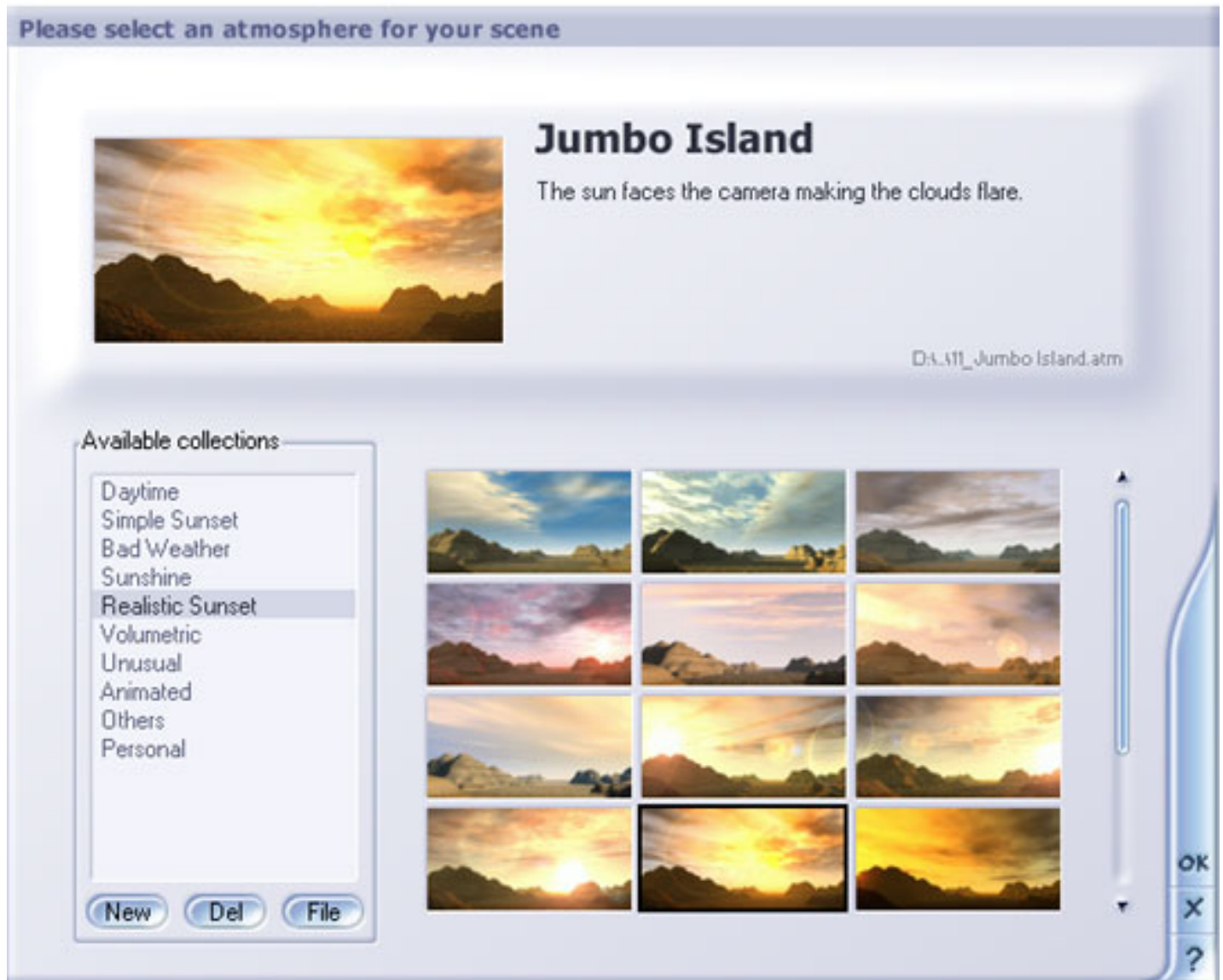
Vue d'Esprit is a landscape creation package available from the E-on Software company. It is known for its realistic 3D scenery and features such as volumetric effects, glowing materials, lens flares, and "Solid3D" terrain modeling. It is also known for the realism of its vegetation and that will be covered in a future tutorial on landscapes. For this month, we are going to start out with a simple seascape.

Strategy for a Seascape

Our goal here is to create a seascape backlit by the setting sun, using default settings where we can. To help get realism, we'll build the scene to scale. We'll start by creating the atmosphere, the water, and the rocks in the foreground. Next we'll add the islands in the background, adjust the position of the sun, apply materials, and render the image.

Give It Some Atmosphere

The first thing we'll do is open the atmosphere menu to select the sky we want. This can be done by pressing CTRL+N to start a new scene or by pressing the F5 key. Select the Jumbo Island preset from the Realistic Sunset collection as shown below.

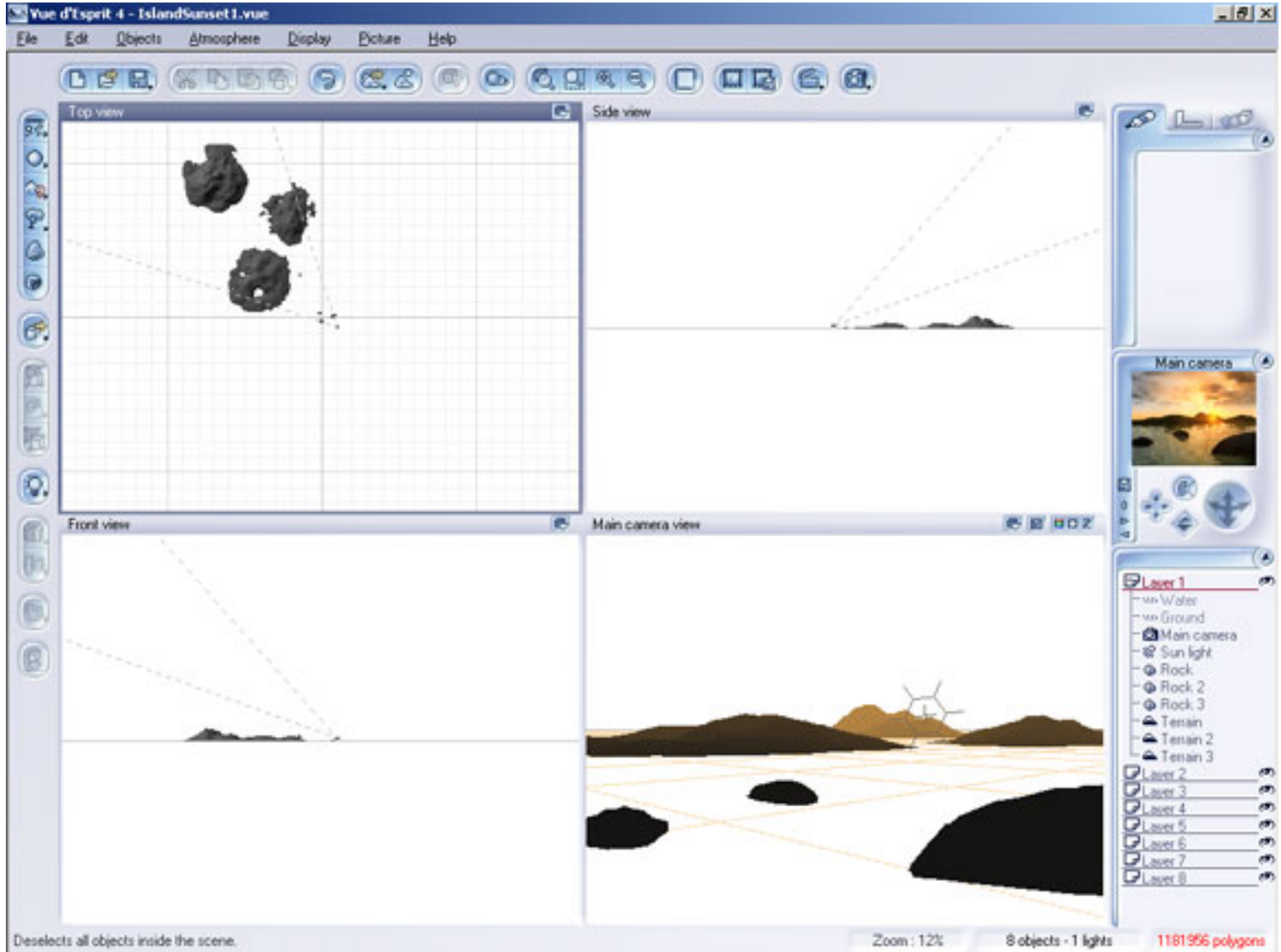


Create the Rocks and Islands

Next, create the water plane by pressing the first button down on the left side of the screen. Create three rocks by pressing the fifth button down on the left three times. Arrange the rocks in the foreground as shown below in the Main Camera view. For the first island, create a terrain by clicking the third button down on the left. In the Terrain Options pop-up that opens, enter 512 by 512 for the resolution and click OK. In the Terrain Editor, apply some Diffusive erosion to get the smoothed effect you'd expect in an island exposed to wind and surf. Repeat for two more islands.

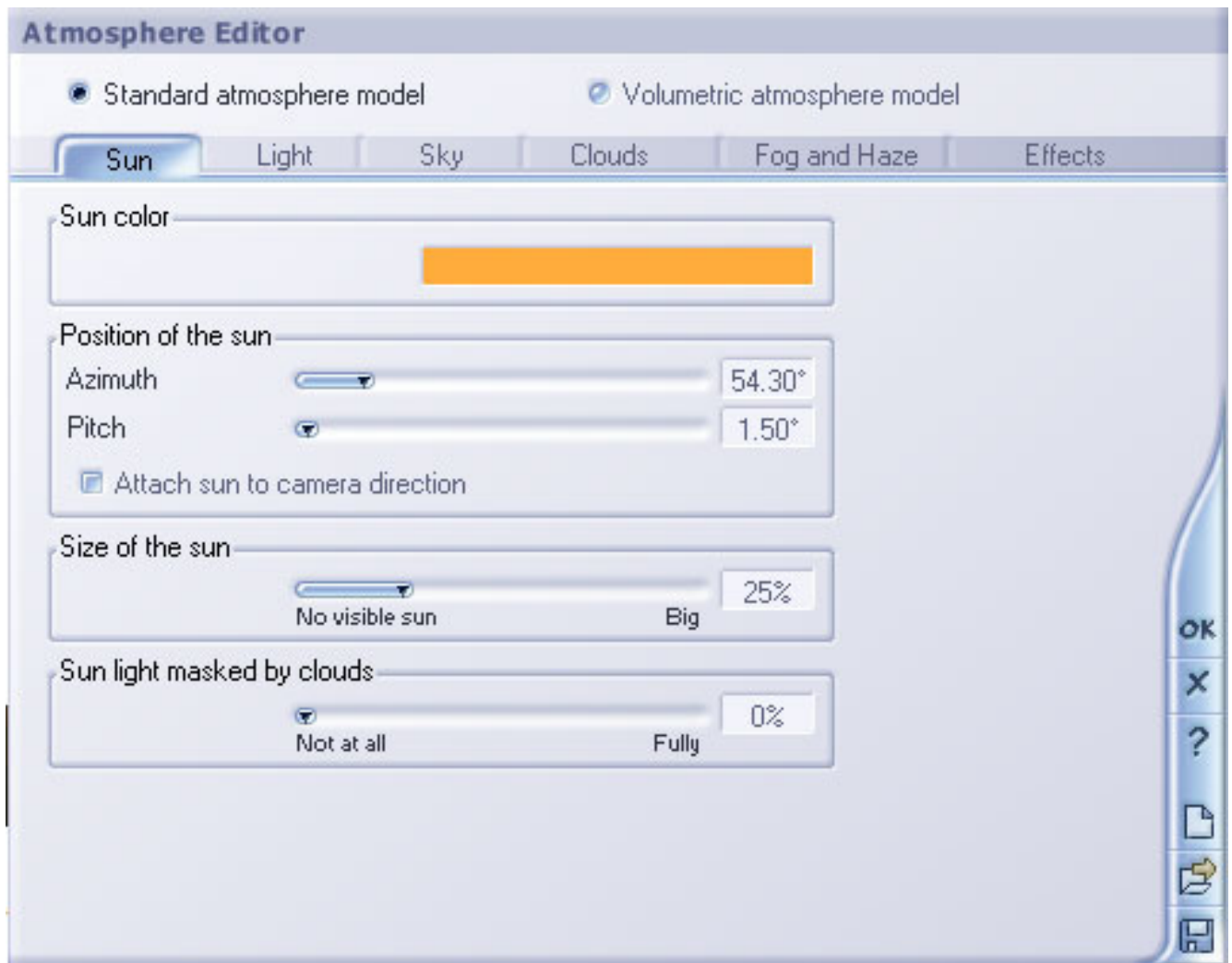
We're going to adjust the size and position of the islands in the Top view, so make the Top view active by clicking in that window. Zoom out using the toolbar's Display menu until the objects are just tiny specks in the center of the top view. Select the first terrain and scale it up by moving the mouse over one of the squares at the terrain's

corners and dragging it out. Move the selected terrain to the upper left in the Top view. Now repeat the scaling and moving process on the other two terrains until everything is arranged as shown below.



Adjust the Sun

Press F4 to open the Atmosphere Editor. Adjust the position of the sun using the Azimuth and Pitch settings as shown below. The numbers you use will probably be different depending on the shape of your islands. Just get the sun into the general position you want and be aware that you'll be probably be changing it after a few test renders.



Apply the Materials

Select the first rock. Press CTRL+M to open the Material menu. Select Mossy Rock from the Rock collection as shown below. Do the same for the other rocks.



Select the first terrain, open the Material menu, and select Scrubland from the Landscapes collection. Do the same for the other terrains. Select the water. Open the Materials menu and select Channel Water from the Liquids collection.

Render the Image

When you're ready to make the first render of any new scene it's a good idea to use the low fidelity Preview Mode for a quick look. When you're satisfied with the composition and lighting of the scene, you can switch to one of the higher fidelity modes to produce the final image. You can select the render options by pressing CTRL+F9 or by going through the Display menu in the toolbar. The two 200 by 200 pixel images shown below are cropped from 580 by 435 pixel renders. The Preview Render shown at below left took 21 seconds to render the full image. The Ultra Render at below right took 7 minutes to render. The full image produced with the Ultra Render is shown at the start of this tutorial.



Variations on a Theme

If you want to dramatically change the appearance of your seascape, try changing the clouds. Press F4 to open the Atmosphere Editor and click on the Clouds tab. The Jumbo Island sky preset we used has three layers of clouds. You can independently adjust each layer, changing parameters such as cloud type, altitude, density and cover. You can also add or delete cloud layers and adjust the lighting to come up with a nearly limitless range of custom skies. Other atmospheric effects include full control over the light, the sky, and a volumetric atmosphere model.

Wrapping Up

That's it for this month's installment. We'll come back to Vue later for a look at landscapes and the SolidGrowth vegetation. Until then, happy rendering.

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