



FIELD GUIDE / 2026 EDITION

Hiring a CGI Studio in Miami

Waterfront is a technical specialism: glare, haze, salt-air finishes, view studies from the exact floor, and the storm features your images keep hiding.

START HERE

Water is a technical problem, not a mood

Most studios can render a building. Fewer can render a building with water in frame all day, in light that is twice as bright as the references they are used to, on a site where the air itself is visible. Waterfront is not a style. It is a set of physical conditions, and a studio that has not worked in them will hand you a competent image of somewhere else.

What the site does

A large, moving, reflective surface next to the building for the entire day, throwing light upward onto soffits and ceilings that would otherwise be dark.

What the air does

Humidity softens distance. Anything more than a few hundred metres away loses contrast and goes slightly blue. Skylines rendered crisp read as computer-generated immediately.

What the buyer does

Stands on that balcony, on that floor, one day. A view invented for composition is a promise somebody will check with their own eyes.

None of that is expensive to get right if it is decided at the start. All of it is expensive to fix at the end, because the fixes are lighting-level and lighting sits underneath every image in the set.

This guide is the brief you send with the plans. It assumes nothing about your scheme and everything about the conditions it sits in.



Maverick Frame production render.

STEP 01

Six conditions to name in the brief

Send this table with the drawings. Each row is something a studio working inland will default to wrongly, and each one is visible to anybody who lives on the water.

CONDITION	THE DEFAULT THAT LOOKS WRONG	WHAT TO ASK FOR INSTEAD
Bounced light from water	Facades lit only from the sky, with dark soffits and dark ceilings behind the glass.	Light reflected off the water surface onto undersides — balcony soffits, overhangs, the first metre of ceiling inside.
Glare and highlight roll-off	Blown white patches, or the opposite — an image toned down until midday looks like an overcast afternoon somewhere else.	Highlights that keep a hint of colour as they clip, the way a real sensor handles a bright sky over water.
Humidity haze	A background skyline as sharp as the foreground. The single fastest way to spot an inland studio.	Contrast falling off with distance. Ask to see it as a slider, not a preset, so you can tune it per view.
Water surface state	Mirror-flat water, or a generic ocean texture that does not match the body of water outside.	Chop appropriate to the location — bay, intracoastal and open ocean behave differently and sit at different heights.
Wet and salt-aged finishes	Everything new, dry and matte, in perpetuity.	Darker damp tone at deck edges and pool surrounds, and honest metalwork — see the next page.
Sun position and orientation	The sun placed where it flatters the composition.	The sun confirmed against the north point, with the date and time stated on each image.

The last row is the cheapest quality control you have. A studio that will put the date and time in the corner of a view has committed to the sun being real, and a studio that will not has told you something.

STEP 02

Materials, planting and the view from floor 14

01 Specify the metal, then specify how it ages

Marine-grade stainless, anodised or powder-coated aluminium and mild steel do not look the same, and they do not look the same after a year on the water. If the specification is honest, the image should be too. Ask which one is shown and whether it is shown new.

02 Glass: which coating, and how blue

Coastal glazing often carries a solar coating with a visible tint. Renders default to near-neutral glass. A building that arrives greener or bluer than its images is a complaint you can avoid in an email.

03 Timber decking, and what salt and sun do to it

Say whether you are showing the day it is installed or the way it will look after a season. Both are legitimate. Choosing without deciding is not.

04 Balcony and view studies from the actual floor

Not a flattering height. Ask for a camera at eye level on the specific level being sold, with the floor number recorded. If the neighbouring plot is consented for something taller, it belongs in frame — a buyer who discovers it later remembers the image.

05 Sightline honesty at the podium

Lower floors look at the car park roof, the pool deck plant, and the building opposite. Those views exist and they still sell, but only if the studio has been told to render them rather than to angle away from them.

06 Planting that belongs here

This is where generic work fails loudest. Royal and coconut palms are not interchangeable, sea grape and mangrove read as local instantly, and a European deciduous tree in a Florida render is the visual equivalent of a spelling mistake. Ask for the palette by species name, and ask for the trunk height — palms are specified and priced by it.

07 Planting at the size it will be delivered

Mature specimens are expensive. If the landscape budget buys a two-metre trunk, the image should not show a six-metre one. Agree that the planting in the render matches the landscape schedule.

One line that prevents most of this

“Cameras for view-dependent images to be placed at stated floor level and eye height, with the level recorded on the image. Planting to follow the landscape schedule at delivered size. Metalwork and glazing to match the specification, including coating tint.”

STEP 03

The features buyers ask about and images hide

Storm resilience is a purchase question on the water. Renders usually remove every trace of it, because it is not decorative. That is a missed opportunity: shown deliberately, it is one of the few things in the set that answers a fear rather than creating a desire.

What tends to get erased

- Impact glazing, and the frame depth that comes with it
- Shutters, screens and their housings
- Ground-floor level relative to the street and the water
- Generator, plant and fuel enclosures
- Parking that sits above a flood level, and why it does
- Railings and glass balustrades built for wind load

How to show it without killing the image

Do not clutter the hero. Commission one or two dedicated images instead — a facade detail at close range where the frame depth is legible, and one sectional or cutaway view that shows ground level, parking and plant honestly. They sit in the brochure behind the lifestyle set and they are the images a cautious buyer studies longest.

WATERFRONT BRIEF — ADD TO YOUR STANDARD PACKAGE

BODY OF WATER bay / intracoastal / open ocean _____
 ORIENTATION north point supplied? ____ sun date+time stated on images? ____
 HAZE distance falloff tuned per view? ____

VIEW-DEPENDENT IMAGES

Levels to be shown _____
 Eye height, stated _____
 Consented neighbouring schemes modelled? ____

MATERIALS

Metalwork spec + shown new / aged _____
 Glazing coating and tint _____
 Decking, day one / after a season _____

PLANTING

Species list from landscape architect? ____ Delivered size? ____

RESILIENCE IMAGES

Facade detail showing frame depth ____ Section showing ground level ____

ASK YOUR OWN CONSULTANT, NOT YOUR STUDIO

Whether any of these images must carry disclosure wording, and whether view representations are regulated in your sale material. Your attorney and your local authority decide that, and the answer changes. A rendering studio cannot tell you.

That last block is deliberate. Studios are asked to confirm what is permissible in sales material more often than you would think, and the honest answer is always the same one: we produce the image to your instruction, and your adviser decides what the instruction should be.

WORKING WITH A STUDIO

Cost, and how to brief it

Two things people ask us before anything else. Both answers are short.

COMMISSIONED WORK	FREELANCER	STUDIO
Single exterior still	\$100 – 300	\$250 – 600
Single interior still	\$120 – 350	\$300 – 700
Package, 5–8 views	\$600 – 1,500	\$1,500 – 4,000
Animation, per minute	\$1,000 – 3,000	\$3,000 – 8,000

Market ranges we are willing to publish. Turnaround and revision-round figures are deliberately not in this table: ours vary too much by project type to state as a benchmark, and an invented number here would be worse than none.

How to brief it — shorter is better

This is the opposite of what most people assume. Four things:

- What you need — **how many images, and of what**
- The plans and elevations, as they are
- A few reference images for mood and light
- One clear line on what the images are *for*

Inflating a small job into a fifty-page specification backfires: taken literally it comes out ugly, and it misleads the people doing the work. Tell them the intent and let the team that does this daily handle the detail.

The mistake that costs the most

The biggest failure we see is not choosing the wrong vendor. It is **timing**. People start looking only after the first supplier has already failed and the deadline is on fire, then choose in a panic.

Line up and vet rendering partners **before** you need one. One, ideally a few, briefed and ready to take work. It costs an afternoon now and saves a project later.

10+

YEARS RENDERING
VISUAL STORYTELLING

350+

BRANDS & AGENCIES
EMPOWERED GLOBALLY

95%

CLIENT
SATISFACTION RATE

40%+

OF OUR COMMISSIONS NOW
INCLUDE MOTION OR 360



MAVERICK
FRAME
STUDIO

When the image has to hold up, **talk to us**

We are a CGI studio: architectural and product rendering, 3D modelling, animation, 360 tours and VR. Ten years, 350+ brands and agencies, and the kind of work that still looks right when somebody counts the windows.

Send us the plans and a line on what the images are for. You get a scope and a price, and no obligation to use either.

START HERE

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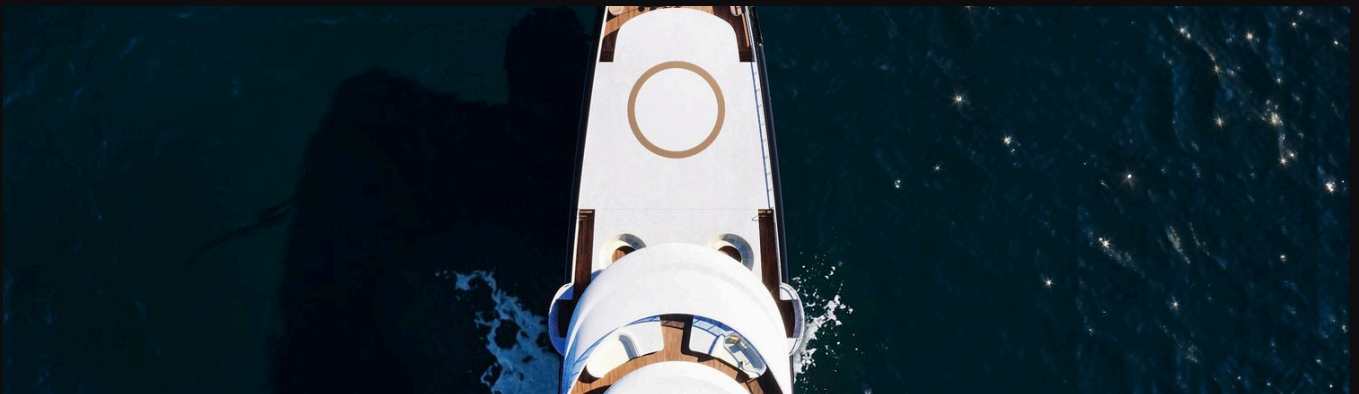
SEE THE WORK

maverickframe.com/gallery

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Maverick Frame production render. · Cost ranges are market ranges as of 2026 and are not a quotation.

