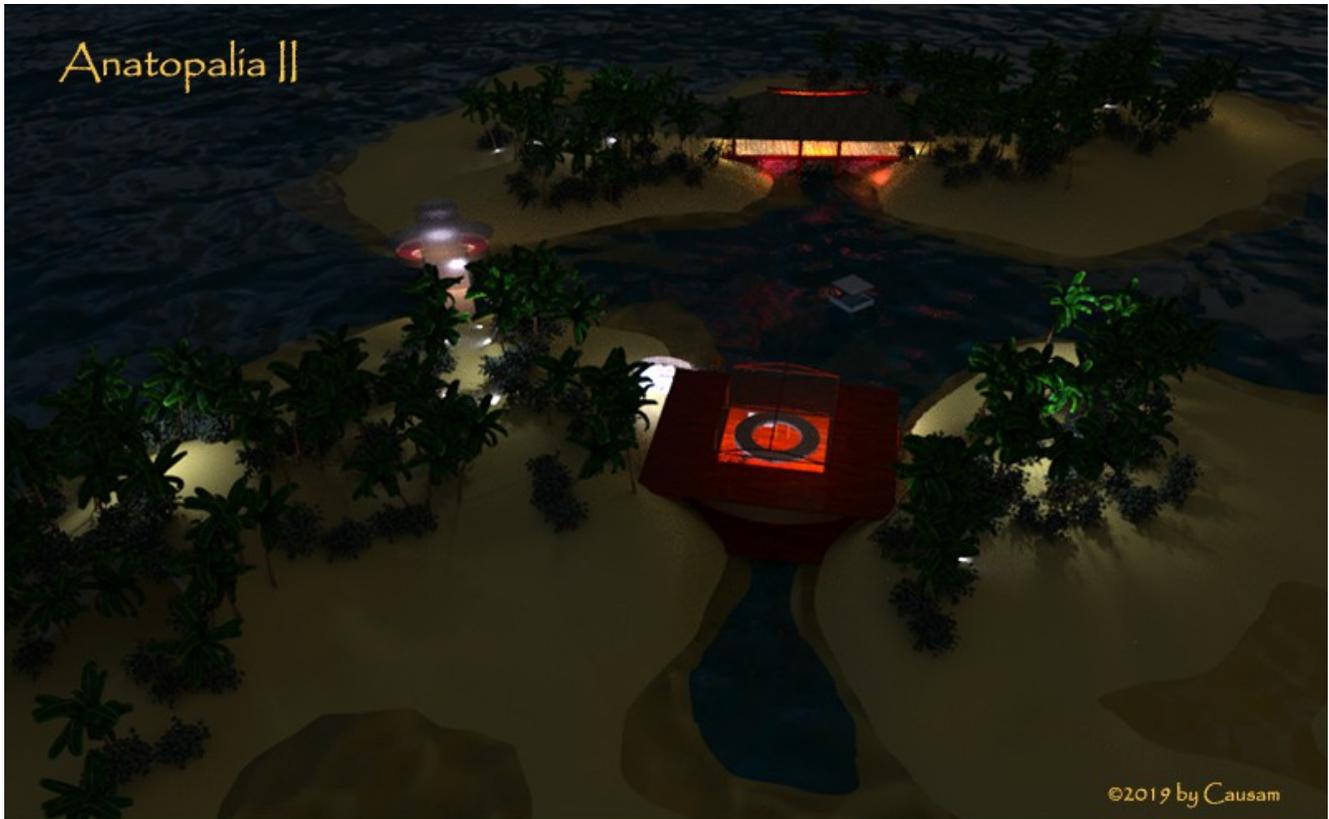


Anatopalia II

Overview and Guide

04/02/2019
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Anatopalia II

Features:

East Bridge w/ Pavilion

South Bridge w/ Stone Lanterns

Dedicated Path Lighting

Skylight in the Bungalow which opens and closes.

Improved Island meshes with expanded beach area.



Designed for flexible, creative night lighting.

Introduction

Thank you for purchasing Anatopalia II. This landscape is by far the most ambitious thing I've ever attempted, and looking back over a year to its conception and first

iteration, frankly way over my head at the time. The result was that the first version, Anatopalia, was a product which was embarrassing to see – it made me cringe to think that folks actually paid money for it and expected a reasonable product for their dollar. I think this second iteration finally delivers on that promise. As such, it is a free upgrade to those who already own the first Anatopalia.

Anatopalia II fixes many of the worst problems with the first and adds some nifty new features. The bungalow was a disaster mainly due to poor mesh work and normals. This bungalow has been reworked almost completely from the ground up in Blender. The mesh is now more coherent, the normals are right, and most importantly, it's been packaged as a collection of parts rather than simply munged together as one large object. As a result the user has far more control over the scene and can even use parts of it in other areas of the island to get a completely custom scene. It also has a skylight which opens and closes and has a hidden emissive surface that will light the entire inside and even provide dramatic light on the deck above. The result of all of this is a much more friendly rendering space.

One thing to keep in mind is that Anatopalia II has been built as an Iray environment. You can use 3DL, however you'll have to make a few adjustments to the material settings to do so (for instance, switching to an area light shader for the light-emitting surfaces). 3DL is not my first choice in rendering engines. I prefer Iray and so I try to stick with what I know.

I placed a heavy emphasis on night lighting for Anatopalia II. The sky dome illuminated things very well for daytime shots and still does, but I was consistently disappointed in the earlier version of Anatopalia with how difficult it was to get a nicely lit night scene. This has been remedied in full.

The islands have been reshaped a bit to provide much more usable beach area, wading pools, and etc. The North Island has been changed to allow a water channel directly under the bungalow. The Southeast and Southwest Islands have had some landscaping work to create pathways, and to accommodate the South Bridge. The “floating palm trees” are now firmly anchored in to the ground in all areas. Landscape lights have been added and also some “frond lights”, which are hidden emitters made from palm fronds. I simply chose a palm frond from each place where I wanted overhead illumination and converted the surface to emissive with an opacity of .0001. The result is a more manicured looking landscape. I like it.

Bridges have been added connecting the North Island to the Southeast Island, and the Southeast Island to the Southwest Island. The East Bridge (the former) has a round central pavilion with pink semi-circular couches for a nice lounge in the sun or moon. The canopy which covers this span is a translucent enclosed structure. It provides a little

shade in the daylight for softening the illumination on your character, and also acts as a diffuser for the three lights inside of it during night time renders. I think of it as a large light box.

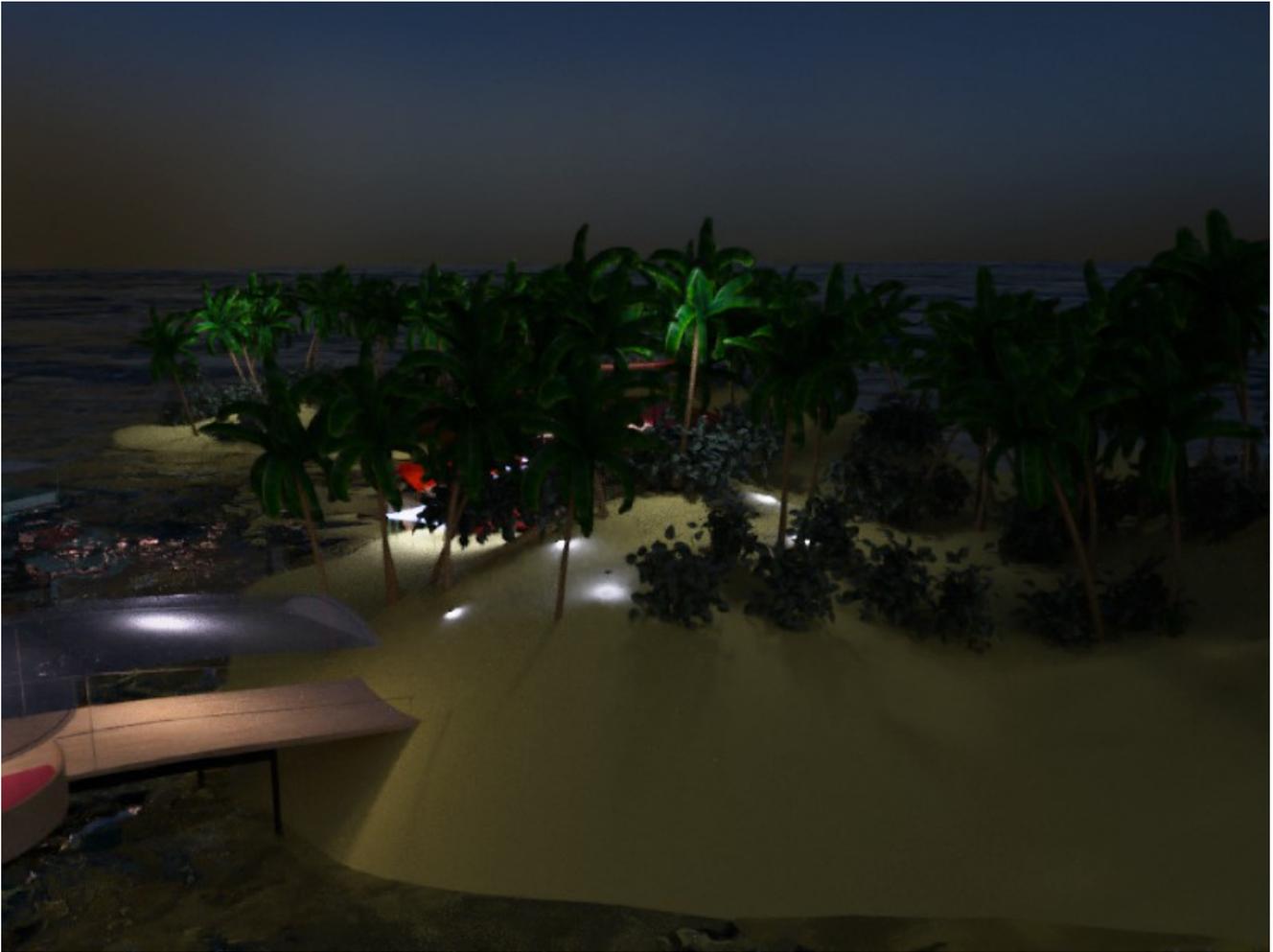
The other span is a covered bridge in the Japanese style which connects the Southeast and Southwest islands. It is large and wide, with plenty of illumination from several sources, four of which are Japanese stone lanterns – one at each corner of the span. There is also a rice lamp midway across, some rafter lights, and two long lights which illuminate the ridge beam for a dramatic landscape effect. This is the location for the Teahouse, an add-on which is soon to be released.

This guide is organized by major components of the landscape, of which I have defined six; North Island, Southeast Island, Southwest Island, Bungalow, East Bridge and South Bridge. Please feel free to skip around.

One additional note: I highly recommend that you download the [original user guide](#) for Anatopalia as a companion to this document. It contains some useful general information for using the product, and seeing the differences between the way Daz handles this landscape from version 4.9 to 4.10 is instructive. Therefore I elected not to reiterate the information but to leave it intact in the old form in the hope that the user will gain more insight from reading it alongside this document.

Again, thanks for purchasing Anatopalia II.

Part I: The North Island



A view looking west along the North Island. The East Bridge is visible at the lower left with the Bungalow behind the trees in the center of the image.

When Anatopalia was originally released over a year ago, Daz Studio was in version 4.9. Daz is now in 4.10 stable and 4.11 beta is out there. One of the changes, or bugs I would call it, is the frame select feature when it comes to large scenes – it now works only inconsistently. The result is that using nulls to create navigation points which can be easily frame selected to save scrolling may in fact have the opposite effect. I say “may have” because I can never tell from one click to the next even within the same session which way frame-select will go. It might zoom the viewport to precisely the navigation point I have selected, or it may zoom me 500 yards away with the navigation point at the center. It really is a crap shoot in my experience, so I have largely done away with navigation points in favor of simply selecting a portion or surface of something nearby and crossing my fingers. That seems to work most of the time.

I bring this up because the North Island is rather large. I have one navigation point only on this island, and that is an artifact of constructing the scene because I wanted a spot to place two path lights. I left it there in case it is ever handy. To navigate from one end of the island to another, you'll probably be using your scroll wheel a fair amount. I find this mildly inconvenient but it's an idiosyncrasy of Daz Studio 4.10 and later, and as such is out of my control.

That out of the way, let's get in to the North Island. This feature is relatively simple. The grotto is still there on the northeast corner of the island. The northern beach, all the way across, is a more interesting place altogether than it used to be. There is more usable beach area and the wading pools are better defined. There is also a water passage under the bungalow. On the east half of the island is an illuminated pathway which leads to the East Bridge. There is also a nice clearing which has a frond light overhead.

The west half of the island has two pathways which fork off from the northwest "exit" of the upper deck at the bungalow. One of these leads south to a small beach area facing the lagoon, and the other widens out to the west, opening on to a very large beach area which faces the sunset.

The pathways are designed to be roomy and yet maintain a cozy feel to them. The photographer in me wanted an environment in which wide angle lenses can be used to stay tight on the subject and still provide plenty of backdrop, yet not have to struggle with foliage getting in front of the lens. Give this a try, I think you'll be pleased with the result.

NOTE: Remember that in navigating the North Island (indeed navigating *anywhere* in Anatopalia II) it is best to choose an object like a path light near where you want to go, and then frame select on that. You should think of these small objects as much as navigation points as lights. Frame select does seem to work better this way than when using nulls.

Part II: The Southeast Island

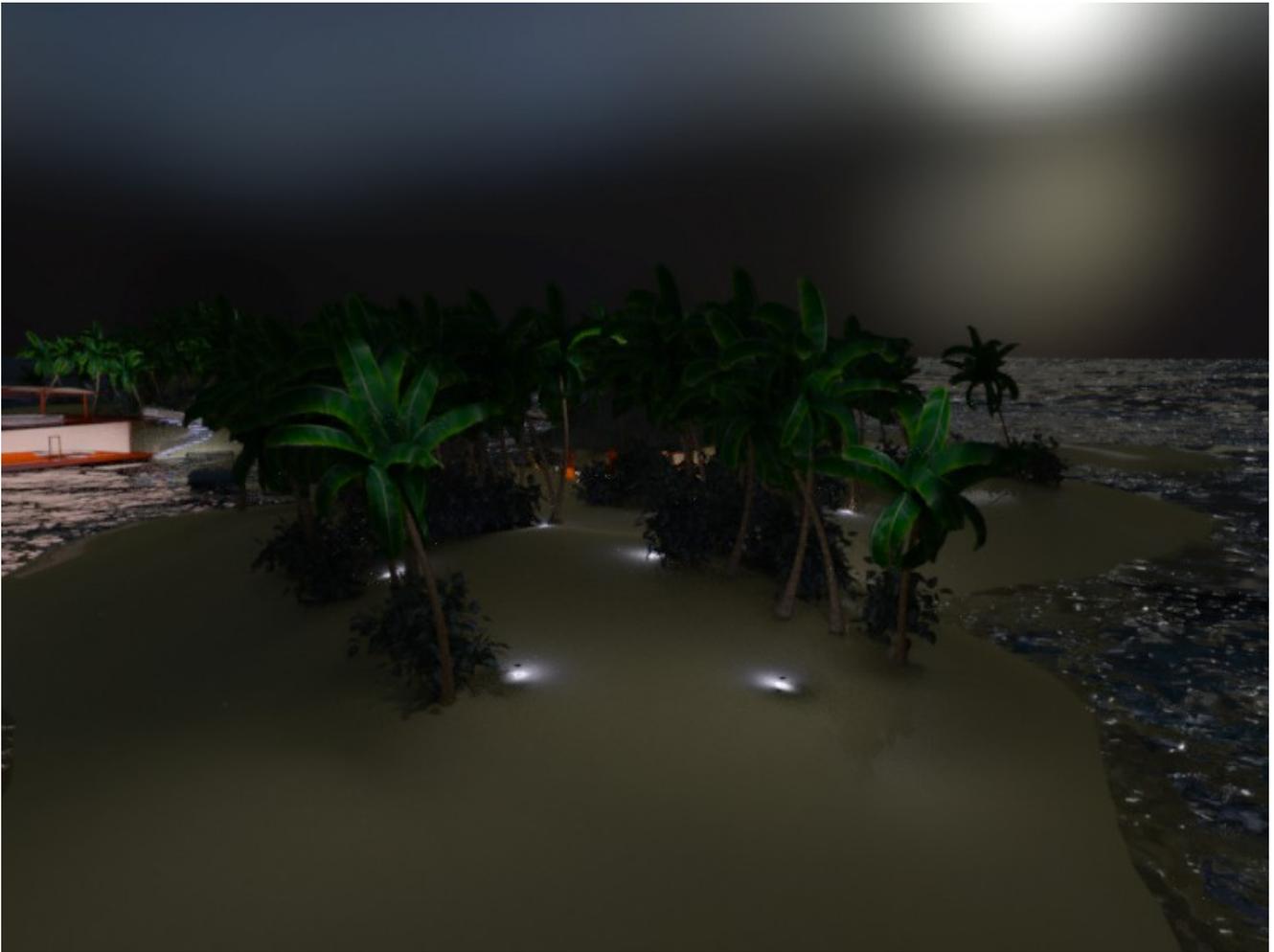


The view looking directly west along the pathway on the Southeast Island. The East Bridge is to the right out of frame, and the South Bridge is pictured left-center.

The Southeast Island is a linchpin of the landscape. Not as large as either of the other two islands, it still possesses a great deal of beach area and is the connection point of both bridges. Along with the Bungalow, this is a central attraction of Anatopalia II because of its centrality and because there are several add-ons in the works which will populate this island, making it the 'theme park' area of Anatopalia.

Navigating the Southeast Island is relatively easily given its smaller size. It also has one of the best night lighting scenes in the entire place, the pathway shown above.

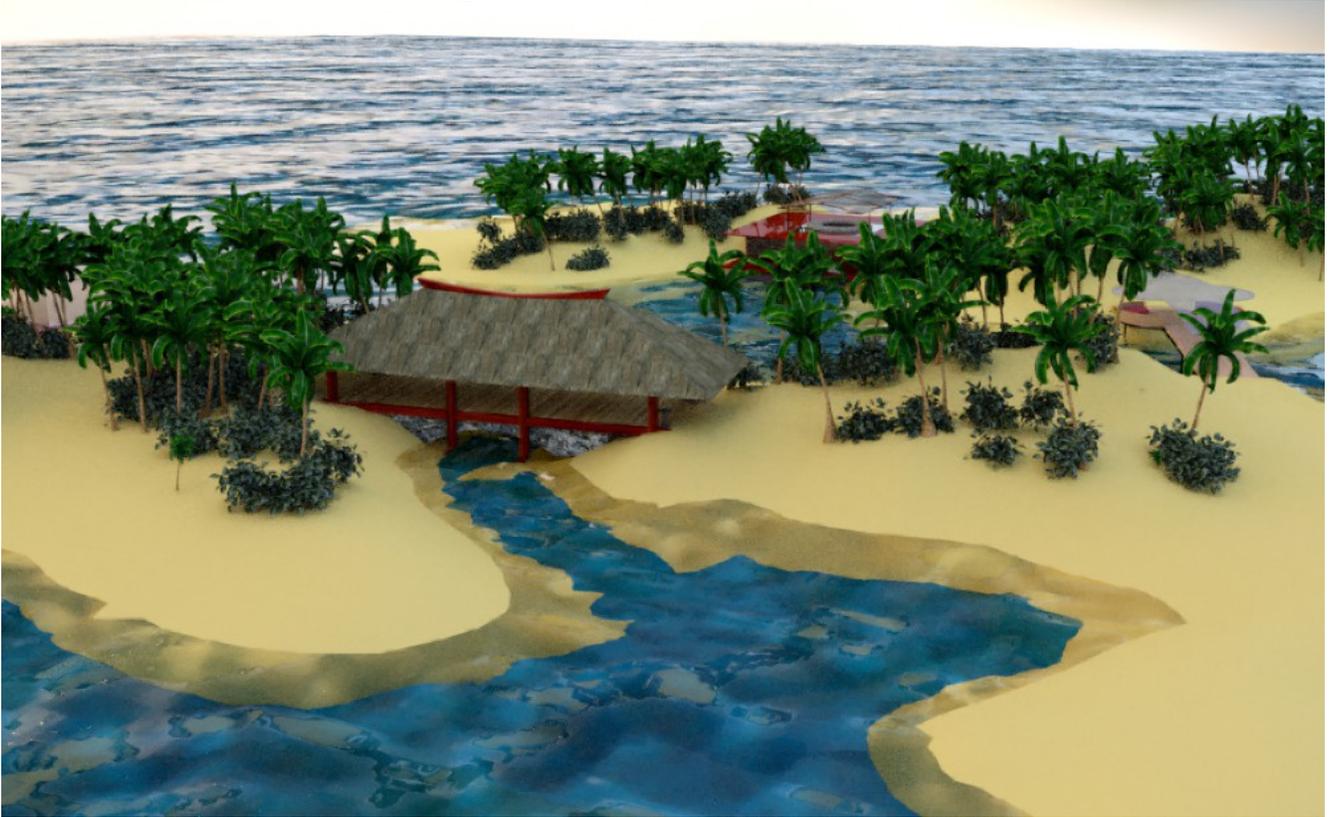
Part III: The Southwest Island



The view looking east from the far beach and up the main pathway of the Southwest Island. Visible at the left is the Bungalow (across the lagoon) and through the trees at center the South Bridge can be seen.

The Southwest Island is where your characters go to 'get away from it all'. The Cabana add-on is designed to be placed on this island facing the lagoon, but for the most part, this is where you would put a big beach-blanket-bingo scene. There is an unobstructed view across the water to three points of the compass, and plenty of privacy. Sunset renders are spectacular on this island.

Part IV: The South Bridge



Aerial view from the south. In the foreground is the South Bridge. The East Bridge is just visible to the right, with the Bungalow in the background right-center. Note the greatly increased beach areas around all islands.

The South Bridge was designed to provide a dramatic visual element both in day and night settings. It is also designed as the location of the Teahouse, an add-on which is in the final touches of development and will be out soon.

There is loads of room on this bridge. It is the location of one of the very few navigation points I've included in Anatopalia II in anticipation of the fact that you'll want to do lots of renders on this structure. At each corner of the bridge is a stone lantern. Other illumination includes some rafter lights and long lights pointing upward to illuminate the ridge pole. These are independently controllable, although the stone lanterns are all of one group and must be turned up and down as a group.

Part V: The East Bridge



The view looking south across the East Bridge. The South Bridge is partially visible to the right.

The main feature of the East Bridge is its “light box” effect at night. The sofas in the pavilion are derived from the circular sofa on top of the Bungalow. They've been joined together as two large halves with emitters on the bottom to provide a dramatic light source if desired.

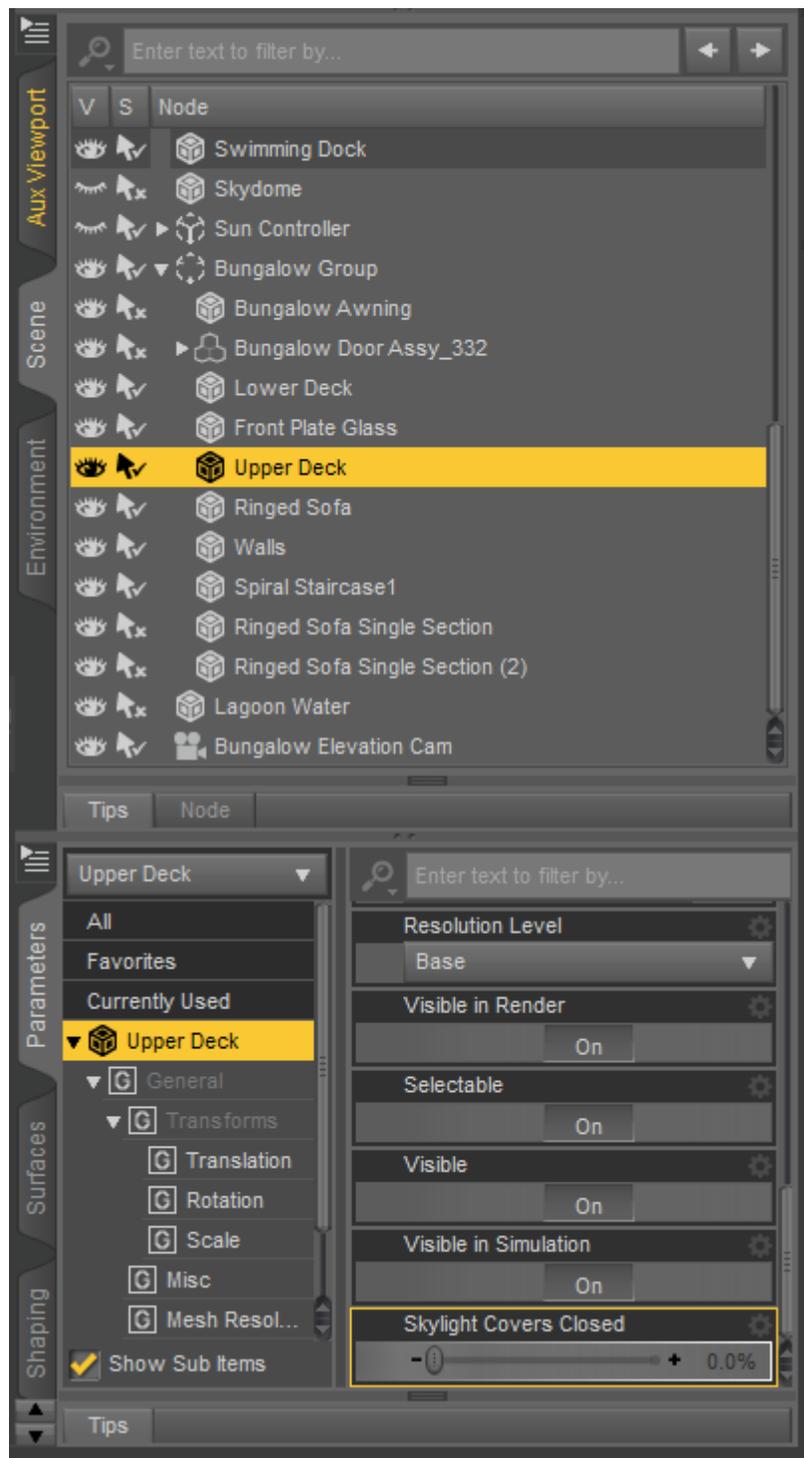
Part VII: The Bungalow



The Bungalow. This shot was taken with the tone mapping settings outlined in “Part VIII: Night Lighting”. The scene loads by default with this camera view.

The Bungalow is the most technically improved part of Anatopalia II. Only the awning, the front door and the sofa single sections survived the rework unscathed. The most fundamental difference is that every single part of the Bungalow group is kept separate now as opposed to the first version in which almost all of it was one single object.

The upper deck is now equipped with a skylight which opens and closes. You will find the control for this in the Scene tab:



The front door still opens and closes, as well. The controls for this are similarly in the scene tab. For detailed instructions, see the original [User Guide](#).

All of the mesh for the Bungalow structure proper has been completely re-worked in Blender to address surface and normal issues which were present in the original. The materials have been adjusted and the inner walls have been provided with a much brighter wood texture to give better lighting conditions both day and night.

There was a floating spiral staircase in the original product which drew some commentary. Mostly this was to the effect that stairs can't float in air. Rather than argue the point that this isn't the real world, I added supports for the steps. (HINT: I have hidden some lights at the bottom of the balusters. By changing the opacity of the balusters and dialing up these lights, you will get a ghostly effect to the supports at night). Note that the steps are now illuminated more discreetly and the glass has more of a translucent quality now than the original, in which they were simply clear.

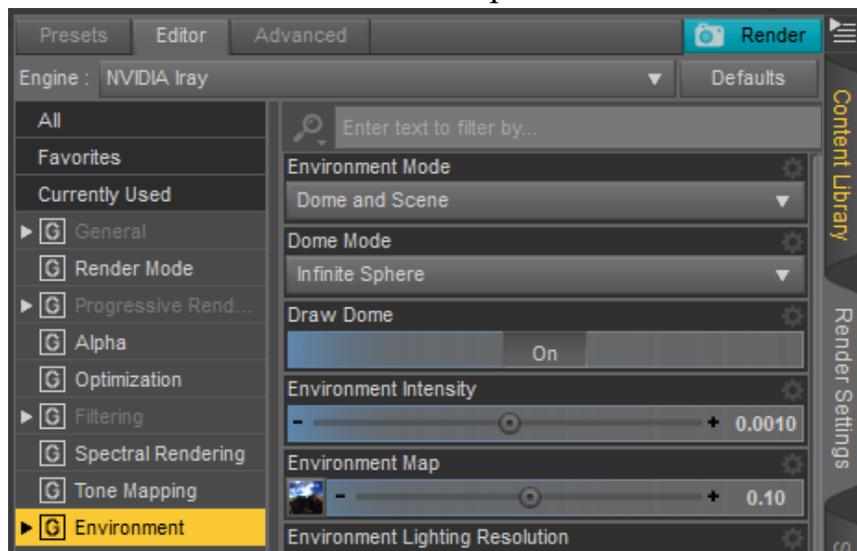
Part VIII: Night Lighting



Night vs. Day: the Iray mesh light settings in these two images are at the product's default values, except that the sun is invisible in the first. Environment settings and tone mapping make all of the difference between the two. Anatopalia II is designed to make night lighting in Iray as simple as possible while yielding beautiful results.

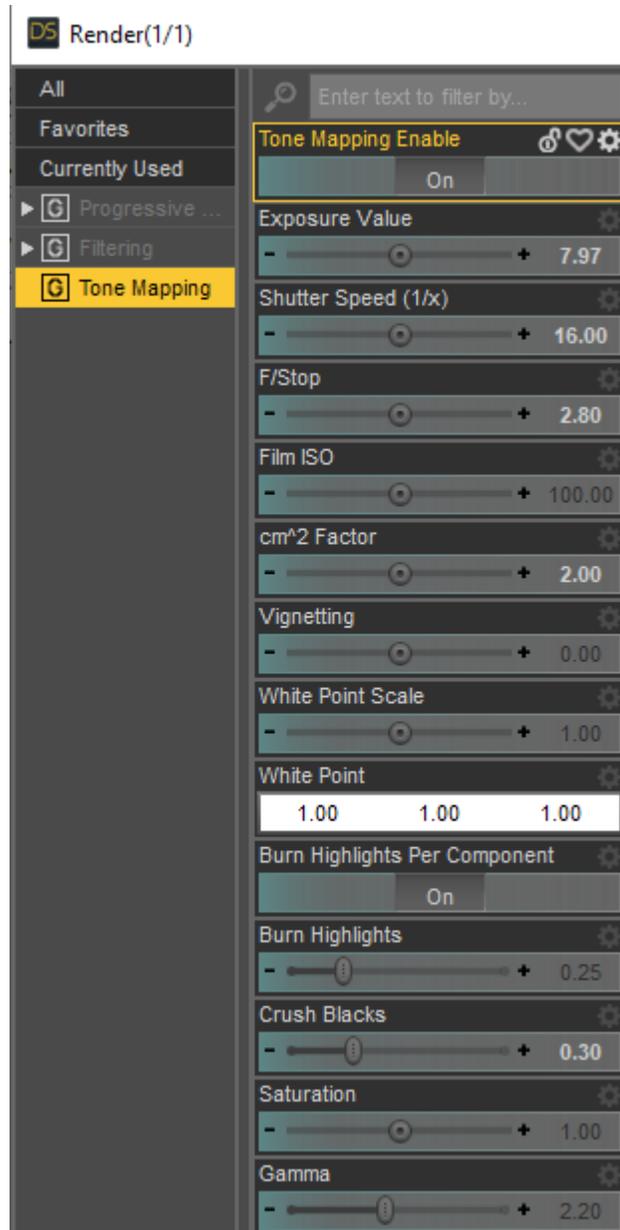
Night lighting can be a little tricky if you've never learned photography, but rendering is very much like using a real camera with some distinct advantages built in to the bargain. Therefore the concepts will be familiar to you. I've made the emissives in the mesh lights within Anatopalia II set usefully as a starting point, but there are a few things to keep in mind in getting a great result in a night lighting render.

First of all, you'll want to give the mesh lights a chance to do their work, and this means dialing the Environment Intensity way down. You'll also want to set your Environment Map to something low. After all, you're trying to make it night time outside, right? Here are the settings I've found most useful for Anatopalia II:



These give just enough of the sky to be in the picture without it taking over the lighting in your scene. I have my sky dome turned off (invisible) and the sun below the horizon. For a sunset scene this works well, but for a pure night time shot you will want to turn the sun off from the scene tab.

Now let's talk about Tone Mapping. This is by far the most powerful weapon in your arsenal. Get familiar with it. Here are the settings I've used for the Southeast Island image at the beginning of that section:



I have changed 4 settings here; Shutter Speed, F/Stop, cm² Factor, and Crush Blacks. Exposure Value adjusts itself automatically based on the other changes. The first two settings, Shutter Speed and F/Stop, are pure photographic principles. The other two

have to do with Iray. I won't bore you with the technical details, merely encourage you to experiment with these settings during your render as well as others in this pane. Your goal is to create an environment where your lights are doing almost all of the work in lighting your characters.

As I mentioned already, the lights in Anatopalia II are mesh lights – this is a purely Iray environment. You may decide to add lighting rigs or individual lights, and that's fine so long as you remember that these lights are not generally set for night situations, so you'll want to adjust their intensity for night scenes. Also don't forget that if you're rendering in 3Delight, you'll have to change the emissive surfaces in your scene to an AreaLight Shader. Omnifreaker's UberArea comes with Daz Studio.

Thanks again for purchasing Anatopalia II. There are still some free updates in the pipeline and these will be announced as they become available. There are also some add-ons which won't disappoint, and these will also be released as ready.