

AppleWeblog Labs: CorelCAD™ for Mac®

By [Dani Muñoz](#) | May 12, 2011, 19:30

Yesterday, Corel released a new CAD tool, aptly named [CorelCAD](#). It's a new alternative to existing solutions, such as [AutoCAD® for Mac](#), which—as you may remember—was launched recently.

The price is US \$1,449 (€824.82) for the full version and US \$1,014 (€588.82) for the upgrade version. (To purchase the upgrade version of this product, you must own a previous licensed version of CorelDRAW® Graphics Suite X4 or later, CorelDRAW® Premium Suite, or Corel DESIGNER® Technical Suite X4 or later). Given that the price of this new product is significantly lower (by over 50%) than the price of AutoCAD for Mac, one may certainly wonder if it really is a worthy and serious alternative.

Let's have a look at what this technical illustration tool has to offer and what we can do with it. I also suggest that you install the 30-day [trial version](#) and see for yourself the possibilities that this 2D and 3D detail-creation tool offers!

Minimum system requirements



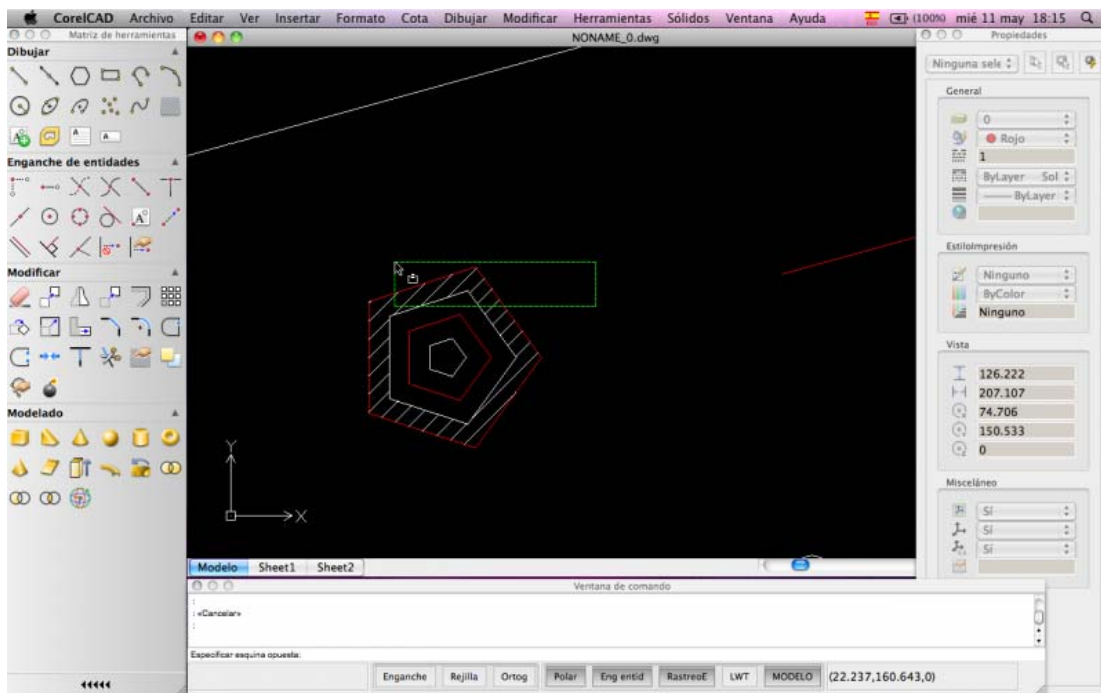
- Apple® Mac® with Intel® processor
- Mac OS® X v10.5.8 (Leopard®) or v10.6.x (Snow Leopard®)
- 1 GB RAM (2 GB recommended)
- 2 GB hard disk space

- 1024 x 768 display (1280 x 800 recommended) with 16-bit video card

As you can see, the requirements aren't too demanding, therefore most Macs should be able to handle it. I've been able to run CorelCAD on my 2007 white MacBook, while AutoCAD wouldn't even start.

General Features

You will notice in the screenshot below of the CorelCAD workspace that it's very similar to AutoCAD. This is a very smart move by the CorelCAD developers, as they've taken advantage of an interface that's very familiar to the user, be it an architect, engineer or designer.



By default, the interface offers 4 spaces: the workspace in the middle, the toolbox to the left, complementary creation tools, such as layer creation and management to the right, and finally a command bar at the bottom. The menu bar at the top is also very similar to AutoCAD. It's here where we can find, for example, a feature that allows us to add external references to a drawing.

Yes—as you're probably thinking—it's very similar to AutoCAD. Of course, all of the icons and features can be customized to fit the way you work; you can add, remove and change their location to suit your working style. You can easily store these configurations of the interface in user profiles, so that each user's workspace is always the same.

Moving on to the creation process, the **2D** environment offers common features, such as dragging elements, guides to help with object creation, and adding shadows or extruding 2D objects to change their size, shape and position. You can also create custom coordinate systems to more efficiently adjust to the specific properties of the illustration.

In the **3D** environment, not only can you change the view of the 2D entities or generate 3D objects from 2D illustrations, but also—as with competing products—you can create 3D models. To start, you can select basic 3D objects (such as cubes, cylinders, cones, etc.). You can also use these to create more complex solid objects using Boolean operations to unite, intersect and subtract bodies. These creations can then be shown as an animation.

Finally, there are two innovative tools to highlight. First, the VoiceNotes feature that lets you add recorded messages, instructions or reminders directly in your drawing. The second, existing in other products as well, lets you easily mark-up drawing elements with freehand sketches.

Compatibility

It's pretty obvious that CorelCAD has been developed with great emphasis on compatibility. It offers complete compatibility with the **DWG** format, which is integrated natively, so that you don't need to export or convert your work to this most common format prior to sending it to your colleagues.



Other compatible formats are PDF, SVG, DWF, ACIS (.sat), CorelDRAW® X5 (CDR) and Corel DESIGNER® X5 (DES).

Summary

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As you can see in this review, I personally believe that this product is a **serious alternative to AutoCAD**. It offers practically the same features for a lower cost. It has impeccable performance and no useful resource for the designer has been spared! It only remains to be seen if this tool is in an advanced development state or if, as you would expect in a brand new release, it has some downfalls that will need to be addressed in future releases.

If my personal experience is of any use, I can say that I have been using the tool since yesterday and haven't experienced any downfalls at all. If you want to get more information, I suggest you visit the CorelCAD channel on YouTube™ where you will find some demos. Also, as I mentioned earlier, there's always the trial version. Confirm for yourself that this really is a good solution that will set people talking in the months to come.