

MEDIA BACKGROUNDER

1. The Business: About **Vanisle Ecolog Homes, Inc.**
2. The Concept: The History of the Ecolog Building Concept
3. The Look: Square Timbers and Striped Walls
4. The Process: Custom Homes delivered as Building Kits
5. The Wood: Hemlock as a Construction Material
6. Sustainability
7. Owner's Bio

1. About Vanisle Ecolog Homes, Inc.

Vanisle Ecolog Homes is owned and operated by Hermann Thoene, who founded the business in 2008 and incorporated in January 2010.

Vanisle Ecolog Homes serves Western Canada.



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2. The History of the Ecolog Building Concept

The square log building method is not a novel idea, but is rooted in pioneer construction techniques. Ecolog custom log homes have a very successful track record. The building method was developed in 1998 by Ecolog Building Concepts, a

Canadian company located in the Haliburton Highlands of Ontario. Since then, more than 100 Ecolog log homes have been built with timber generated from the 70,000 acre privately owned Haliburton Forest & Wild Life Reserve Ltd., Canada's first FSC certified, sustainable forest.

In western Canada, customers can purchase Ecolog home design and kits from Vanisle Ecolog Homes in Victoria BC. Timber is sourced from sustainably managed forests on Vancouver Island.

3. The Look: Square Timbers + Chinking = Striped Walls

Ecolog buildings differ from other log homes or timber frame structures in several ways:

- The log walls are built with alternating 8" square timbers and 2" insulation covered with chinking. These layers give Ecolog buildings their unique and light natural appearance.
- The solid outer walls are constructed from 8" square timbers, not round logs. Square timbers are easier to produce and work with than round timbers, making Ecolog homes more affordable.
- The honey-colour of Hemlock gives the home the warm, rustic, yet bright appearance.
- Square timber walls cause fewer problems for home owners: No exposed checks on angled surfaces, which could hold moisture and then cause rot.



4. The Process: Custom Homes delivered as Building Kits

- Ecolog Homes are custom homes, cottages or commercial buildings, designed individually for each customer. Sample floor plans are available for homes from 500 to 3,000 sq ft. These serve as a starting point for the custom design, a service provided by Vanisle Ecolog Homes.
- Ecolog homes are very affordable: The typical "turn key" cost of Ecolog homes is comparable to, or even lower than a similarly sized stick frame construction building. As all Ecolog buildings are custom designed to fit the

needs of every customer, cost estimates are provided based on individual design.

- Vanisle Ecolog Homes assembles the building kit based on the custom design, containing all material for the shell of the home.
- The building can use any common foundation type, i.e. crawl spaces, full basements or slab on ground.
- Interior walls are built as standard frame walls and can be covered with drywall, wood panelling or stone. This makes for a flexible, bright interior that is easy to decorate and furnish.
- The custom building kits are produced in partnership with Cowichan Lake Timber Ltd, a sawmill in Lake Cowichan on Vancouver Island.

Customers can

- a) build the home themselves as owner-builder
- b) use project management services from Vanisle Ecolog Homes to coordinate all required trades, or
- c) hire a general contractor of their choice for turn-key delivery of their new Ecolog home. In that instance, Vanisle Ecolog Homes works as a supplier to the general contractor

5. The Wood: Hemlock as a Construction Material

- The outer walls and roof of most Ecolog homes are cut from Hemlock logs. Douglas fir or Red Cedar is also available as an option.
- Hemlock is an often overlooked and under-utilized building material, although it has a century old tradition in timber frame and log construction. Inexpensive, durable and insect resistant, it is one of the hardest of all softwoods, especially as it dries. Its warm, honey coloured wood gives Ecolog homes a friendly and welcoming character.
- Western Hemlock grows abundantly in the Pacific Northwest in both pure stands or among other native hardwoods and softwoods. A plentiful species, over 3 billion board feet are harvested annually in the Pacific Northwest (including British Columbia).
- The price of Hemlock is lower than that of many other types of wood, an advantage which Ecolog Homes can pass on to their customers by offering very affordable log home kits.

6. Sustainability

- Ecolog Homes are energy efficient. The show home underwent an official [Energide](#) rating process measuring the total energy performance of homes in a standardized way. The results are great - the home in Central Saanich achieved an Energide rating of 79. Typical new frame construction homes are between 68 and 72.
- The show home is fitted with [solar panels](#) supporting the radiant floor heating and domestic hot water use. These and many other energy saving measures can be integrated into the building process, if the customer wishes.
- Due to the thermal mass created by solid log walls, Ecolog homes provide a balanced living climate: The homes cool down very slow in winter and stay cool longer in the summer.
- As part of the custom design process, Ecolog Homes provides advice on how to optimize the energy performance of homes. A detailed energy model based on the Hot2000 software (also used for the Energide rating process) shows the home owner the heating and cooling costs of his future home already at the design stage. Such an energy model is included for each Ecolog home customer.
- For construction on Vancouver Island, we use second growth wood harvested in sustainably managed forests on Vancouver Island, thereby creating a market for value-added forest products locally.
- We work with a mill in the Cowichan Valley, thereby generating business locally beyond the tree harvest.
- By using local resources, we avoid unnecessary use of fuel and costs.
- Studies have shown that the cradle-to-grave Ecological footprint of building with wood is smaller than that of other building products, such as steel and concrete.



7. Owner's Bio

After a successful career as a Consultant and Project Manager, most recently with Oracle, Hermann Thoene followed his dream and founded Ecolog Homes in 2008.

His passion for log homes was ignited by his long time friend Peter Schleifenbaum, general manager of Haliburton Forest & Wildlife Reserve Ltd in Haliburton, Ontario. Peter created the Ecolog Home concept in 1998 to provide higher value products for local use of his sustainably harvested wood.



Hermann was fascinated by the simplicity of the building concept and the natural look of the homes and cottages. Peter Schleifenbaum offered Hermann an opportunity to build and market Ecolog homes in Western Canada.

Based on extensive market research and time spent in Ontario to learn from the Ecolog building experts, Hermann founded Vanisle Ecolog Homes Inc. and built the first Ecolog Home in BC.

Hermann is motivated by his concern for the environment and buys local wherever possible. In that vein, he has formed a partnership with a sawmill in the Cowichan Valley on Vancouver Island to provide the timbers from locally harvested trees. He is currently building a network of reliable local trades people to provide the necessary materials and services for future customers of Ecolog Homes.

After learning about the advantages of the Energuide rating process, Hermann is convinced that optimizing new homes for energy performance will become increasingly important in future. He completed the "Certified Energy Advisor" training to offer energy performance modelling for every Ecolog home customer.

Find out what makes Hermann tick in his blog:

www.Ecolog-homes.com/blog