

Totally "Green House"

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(ABC 6 NEWS)--- It doesn't take much to make a few "green" changes in your home. From energy efficient appliances to CFL bulbs, everything makes a difference. But a German-born engineer's passion to go green fills his Minnesota home.

From the outside, it looks like an ordinary home. And on the inside, it too looks like most other modern houses.

That's the goal.

It's off the grid, off the well, and off the battery, meaning the house is energy independent.

But walking through Christian Milaster's home, you'd never know.

"It has every comfort of a 21st century home," he says.

Every detail of the home, located just outside of Lanesboro, is part of a complex design that took Christian years to research.

From the recycled plastic deck and aluminum rails to the milk painted walls and bamboo floors, everything in this house is eco-friendly and energy independent.

"Right now, my only source of energy is my wind generator," he says.

And instead of hooking up to the local well, Christian collects the rain his basement.

One inch of rain provides 1,500 gallons of water, which is enough to last 30 to 40 days.



Energy efficient appliances keep use to a minimum.

He still buys purified drinking water, but soon, he'll filter his own.

Christian didn't want to look very far to find supplies to build his home.

His fireplace is from Decorah, the granite countertops came from Cold Springs and the staircase and doors are from Edina.

Comfort was key, from the custom built kitchen to surround sound throughout the house.

And coming soon: a home theater that will seat up to a dozen guests.

Every room has a special purpose to make the most of renewable energy.

While it's hard to improve on improvements, Christian says there's always more he can do.

"It's 90% done and I know it will always be 90% done."

Over the next 25 years, Christian says he'll save nearly \$300,000 when compared to the average American home.

He says if you want to start making improvements, the first step is to measure how much energy you use to see how much you can save.

Christian's home is part of the Solar Home Tour coming up in October.

To find out more go to www.lichtnstein.org