

<http://maisons-de-poupees.e-monsite.com/categorie,maisons-hanse,3292644.html>

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## Hanse Dollhouses

Ah, Hanse! It's probably the most enigmatic of brands. Finding authoritative information on this company is a real obstacle course, to say the least.

No one knows when Hanse began marketing its toys or when it ceased operations. I suspect it must have been bought out by Lundby in the 1980s, like Lisa. The full name of this Denmark-based brand is "Hanse of Scandinavia." It can also be found as "HANSE made in DENMARK." A box from a Hanse construction set reads, "K-E MATHIASSEN A-S, DK 8220 in Brabrand." Was Hanse headquartered there? It's a mystery.



In terms of architecture, Hanse houses are identical to those made by Lisa, differing only in their wallpapers and floors. The two brands are so similar that many believe the two were manufactured at the same plant. This is entirely likely, given the close resemblance between Lisa and Hanse houses and furniture: same materials, same design.



## Lisa Writing Desk

## Hanse Writing Desk

However, the Hanse logo appears on both sides of the house (on the bottom below the balcony and below the kitchen window on the other side), making it much easier to identify. And just like Lisa houses, Hanse houses could be expanded with two extensions—a basement and a garage floor that were sold separately. Was there ever a little Hanse car like the Lundby one? It's a mystery. I've never seen a Hanse car, nor a Lisa one for that matter.

In the 1980s, Hanse created a new house identical to the first but with a larger balcony area. The wall between the little balcony and the living room is gone, leaving a large space to furnish. The balcony railing is more delicate and extends all the way across the front of the house. The staircase and doors are now light beige instead of brown, and a reinforcement piece decorated with a climbing plant now appears below the balcony (to create a veranda?). The outside walls have changed from brown to bright red.



**Classic Hanse: Separate Balcony/Living Room**



**1980s Hanse: Large Terrace**

Hanse has special meaning for me, as that was the house I had as a child. My parents could not afford a Lundby—a brand that was already quite expensive at the time—so they chose something more economical. Hanse and Lisa were “the poor person’s Lundby,” and I don’t mean this pejoratively at all. I think it is due to Hanse’s inexpensive nature that the brand is hard to find today. First because Hanse houses were less widely distributed than “the original” and second because they passed into the less-than-delicate hands of generations of children and so had a hard time surviving. I know what I’m talking about: although I wasn’t a wrecker, I can tell you that my Hanse did suffer! It sat forgotten in the yard overnight, it was stuck with nails, colored on, and subjected to the onslaught of the thousands of hours I spent playing with it.

So Hanse remains a mystery. The We Love Lundby Club website in the U.S.

(<http://www.toysmiles.com>) mentions it briefly in a few of its newsletters, but it’s hard to learn much more. A Swedish collector named Carola has a fabulous collection of Hanse houses, including models I’ve seen nowhere else! You can see them on her website at <http://www.carolas-dollhouses.com/husnyckel.html>.

One last point: Hanse also marketed wood and plastic construction toys under the name "Hanse TEC." These were similar to Meccano and Erector sets. Did Hanse make other toys? Games? I have no idea.

