

= Norsk Spisevognselskap =

Norsk Spisevognselskap A / S , often abbreviated NSS or shortened to Spisevognselskapet , was a Norwegian state enterprise which operated restaurant carriages on Norwegian trains and restaurants at railway stations and railway hotels . The company was established in December 1918 , and started a catering service in 1919 . Originally owned by the Norwegian Trunk Railway , it was acquired by the state in 1926 . Meals served in the restaurant carriages were relatively expensive , although they were available to all passengers . In the 1950s , the company began using serving trolleys on trains .

In January 1975 , NSS merged with the convenience @-@ store chain Narvesen Kioskkompani into a new company called Narvesen ? Spisevognselskapet . This enterprise was partly owned by the Norwegian State Railways (NSB) and Fritt Ord , before it merged with the Reitan Group and was delisted from the Oslo Stock Exchange .

= = Background = =

From the 1854 establishment of railways in Norway to 1909 , no dining service was offered aboard trains ; passengers were allowed to bring food with them . Train stations also lacked dining facilities . The first dining service was started by restaurateur Carl Christiansen . He established the restaurant at Drammen Station , and in 1907 was asked by NSB to establish a dining service aboard the express trains on the Bergen Line , which would open in 1909 . After investigating similar operations in England and Germany , he ordered two carriages from Skabo Jernbanevognfabrikk . These were to be paid for by the state , but the Parliament of Norway delayed the grants after a long debate regarding the suitability of restaurant carriages on trains . The plans were opposed by the teetotaler faction of Parliament , but there was a majority in favor of dining service . To get the carriages in time , Christiansen personally guaranteed the production cost in case a state grant was not allocated . After the parliamentary decision , the cost of the carriages was refunded by NSB . In 1910 , when President of the United States Theodore Roosevelt visited Oslo to receive the Nobel Peace Prize , several restaurant carriages were ordered solely for the occasion . Two years later , restaurant carriages were put in regular service on the Østfold Line .

= = Early days = =

In 1916 , the executive board of the state railways wanted to centralise the operation of restaurant carriages and the most important station restaurants in Norway under one management . The board stated that they wanted to minimise the conflict of interest between the railway company and the dining @-@ car operator . They also saw centralising operations as a way to allocate a larger share of the revenue to the railway company , and to ensure a high quality of service on new lines . At that time the Sørland Line and Dovre Line were in the planning stages , and the NSB intended to introduce dining services on these when they opened . Oslo East Station and its restaurant were operated by the private Norwegian Trunk Railway . In an agreement signed on 18 September 1918 both railway companies agreed that a new restaurant operator would be controlled by the Norwegian Trunk Railway , but this company had to abide by the NSB 's decision of how many restaurant carriages to operate on any line .

This model was inspired by Sweden , where a separate dining company had been established ; this company paid the railway company part of its revenue and a fixed fee per restaurant carriage . The Swedish model involved including the operation of station restaurants at locations where the restaurant carriages would have depots . On 21 December 1918 , A.S Norsk Spisevognselskap was established with a share capital of 200 @,@ 000 Norwegian krone (NOK) . It had 20 shares ; 17 were owned by the Trunk Railway , and one by each of three directors : Waldemar Stoud Platou , Gotfred Furuholmen and Christian Emil Stoud Platou ? the former representing the Trunk Railway and the latter being director @-@ general of the NSB . In January 1919 , Waldemar Platou was appointed chair and Christiansen managing director . The company took over Christiansen 's four

restaurant carriages and the restaurant at Oslo Ø on 1 April 1919 .

On 2 February 1926 , Parliament voted to nationalise the Trunk Railway . During the debate , the organisation of Spisevognselskapet was criticised ; with the nationalisation , the state became the sole owner of Spisevognselskapet . On 31 March 1927 , the Ministry of Labour recommended that the company remain a state @-@ owned limited company ; the minority in parliament wanted a state enterprise . During the 1930s , Sigurd Astrup was managing director of Norsk Spisevognselskap . In 1948 , Erling Mossige was appointed managing director of the company . He was succeeded by Knut Tvedt in 1960 . The company had 75 employees in 1919 , and 591 in 1949 .

= = Restaurant carriages = =

The restaurant carriages of the NSS were open to everyone , but dining was so expensive that only passengers travelling in first class used the service . Usually , three or four dishes were offered in the restaurant carriages . A four @-@ course dinner cost five Norwegian kroner in the 1920s , which was expensive at the time . Warm dishes , such as soups and sauces , were usually prepared at a small stove in the restaurant carriage 's kitchen . On busy days , prepared steaks were delivered from rail depots . The kitchens were staffed by two maids and one attendant . Blocks of ice were often used instead of refrigerators .

With the opening of the Dovre Line , Spisevognselskapet established dining @-@ car service on 25 June 1921 . In 1921 a train ride from Kristiania to Trondheim lasted approximately 15 hours , and the average waiting time at each station was between 10 and 15 minutes . On 1 July 1925 dining service was introduced on the Valdres Line , from 1 July 1926 on the Brevik Line , from May 1934 on the Nordland Line and from 15 May 1936 on the Røros Line . In 1948 210 @,@ 000 meals were served on board , in addition to sandwiches and drinks . The company also offered a light breakfast on night trains on the Kongsvinger , Østfold and Dovre lines . During the Second World War , dining @-@ car service was discontinued .

After the war trains faced competition from aviation and automobiles , and serving trolleys were installed on Norwegian trains . In 1965 cart service on trains was centralised and standardised ; food service was faster , and prices were lowered . During the 1970s cafeteria cars were used , where passengers could serve themselves .

= = Restaurants = =

NSS derived most of its revenue from the operation of restaurants at railway stations ; in 1939 , this amounted to 80 % . Initially , the company operated the restaurant at Oslo Ø ; from 1921 , it also took over operation of the restaurants at Oslo West Station , Hamar , Koppang , Opdal and Elverum . The following year , four more restaurants were added : Støren , Myrdal , Dokka and Hell . NSS also established its first kiosk , at Bergen Station . In 1923 , the company was allowed to take over all restaurants in the railway districts of Oslo and Hamar ; by 1925 , it had taken over operation of the restaurants at Lillehammer , Hønefoss , Jessheim , Kornsjø , Halden , Ski , Eidsvoll , Otta , Dombås , Åndalsnes , Kongsvinger , Trondheim , Rena , Roa , Ringeby , Bjorli and Finse .

After this NSS decided not to obtain many additional restaurants , as it did not see value in such a strategy . From 1930 through 1934 the company took over restaurants at Ål , Jaren , Lillestrøm and Tønsberg , along with dining service on the steamship Skibladner , which ran on Mjøsa . During the first half of the 1940s it again acquired new restaurants , including the one at Kristiansand Station . In 1940 and 1941 the company made a solid profit , but lack of food from 1942 onwards transformed the profit to a loss . During the late 1940s NSS also took over the restaurants at Drammen and Sarpsborg , as well as the one at Oslo Airport , Fornebu .

= = Hotels = =

In 1919 the Norwegian Trunk Railway operated one hotel , which was built as part of Eidsvoll

Station . Operation of the 20 @-@ room hotel was taken over by Spisevognselskapet on 14 October 1924 . NSB was at the time building the Dovre Line between Oslo and Trondheim , and was considering establishing hotels where the line passed through Dovrefjell . Both Hjerkin and Fokkstua were considered , but these areas were served by other operators . Instead , Spisevognselskapet established the Oppdal Tourist Hotel adjacent to Oppdal Station and it opened on 28 June 1924 . The 60 @-@ bed hotel had a floor area of 605 square metres (6 @, @ 510 sq ft) and was marketed as a tourist destination , with bobsleigh and curling during the winter and tennis and croquet in summer . The hotel was closed for part of 1929 , because the municipality would not allow it to serve alcoholic beverages .

In Oslo , the company had its offices and workings spread around town . The main depot was at the East Station ; the head office was at Fred . Olsens gate 21 from 1919 to 1921 , at Kongens gate 29 until 1932 , and at Tollbodgaten 24 until 1938 . Management wanted to centralise both a new depot and administrative offices at a single location close to the railway station , preferably co @-@ located with a hotel . In 1936 work began on a hotel at Jernbanetorget , but the project was cancelled . The proposed hotel would have had 100 rooms across the street from Oslo Ø . However , the plans were blocked by Parliament (which was opposed to the state railway operating hotels) . Instead , the administration moved into Nylandsveien 10 , in a new building built on a lot owned by NSB .

In Bergen the company established Hotel Terminus Bergen along with other investors , but the hotel failed to make money . In the late 1940s the company bought Grand Hotell Bellevue in Ålesund , and later operated Saltfjellet Tourist Hotel for a short period . In 1952 , Oslo Municipality 's Viking Hotel was completed , and Spisevognselskapet was selected as the operator . It remained the hotel 's operator until 1976 when the government sold it to Eiendomsinvest , which outbid Spisevognselskapet by several million krone .

= = Dissolution = =

Narvesen had an exclusive agreement with NSB to operate newsagent 's shops at all railway stations , except in stations with restaurants , which were operated by Spisevognselskapet . Narvesen had a near @-@ monopoly on newsagents in Norway , and rented facilities in many public places . The owners of Narvesen intended to create a foundation to obtain the company ; when plans for this started in 1972 , they had difficulties finding a way to transfer shares to the foundation without having to pay tax on the transaction . However , the tax laws permitted a tax @-@ free transaction if it was part of a restructuring . A merger with Spisevognselskapet would be considered a restructuring , and in 1974 Fritt Ord was established to take over Narvesen 's owners ' share of the company . The agreement between Narvesen and NSB was made in July 1974 ; in December it was passed by Parliament , although the Conservative Party and Progress Party voted against the merger . A.S Narvesen ? Spisevognselskapet was established on 1 January 1975 . Fritt Ord owned 50 % of the new company and NSB 41 % . It assumed the Narvesen name in 1979 .

By the late 1980s , the company had sold all its hotel operations . The merged company retained the obligation to operate dining services on the trains , which throughout the 1980s necessitated considerable subsidies from NSB . In 1988 , NSB decided to organize the operation of the dining services through tendered contracts ; the first contract (from 1990 through 1995) was won by TogService , a Narvesen subsidiary . The owners had an agreement that neither could sell without the approval of the other . In 1995 NSB sold its shares with Fritt Ord 's approval , and the company was listed on the Oslo Stock Exchange .

In 1999 , Fritt Ord reduced its stock share in Narvesen from 51 % to 34 % . In the fall of 2000 , Fritt Ord accepted a proposal to merge Narvesen with the Reitan Group . The merged company was named ReitanNarvesen ; Fritt Ord held 16 @. @ 2 % of its shares . In November 2001 Fritt Ord sold its shares of ReitanNarvesen , which was renamed Reitan Handel and delisted from the Oslo Stock Exchange .