

# TRAVEL

## Huge Viking

It had been a crazy spring night when the winter that never really was tried to get in some wild but belated kicks: rolling thunder, fierce little gusts of wet snow. There was general traffic chaos on Copenhagen streets and the airport experienced sporadic though brief shut-downs as visibility waned and waxed. Yet this was the morning when it was to receive the largest airliner ever to touch ground in Scandinavia. Fingers were kept crossed.

The big ship, coming in nonstop from Seattle, appeared against a patch of blue sky. It circled up there for a while. Runway 12/30 was handling traffic by lesser planes this morning due to the direction of the wind, but it had not

yet been made quite ready for the giant. What a shame if it were to be necessary to divert it to Amsterdam. Airport manager Hans Jensen finally granted dispensation so the big one could come in on 12/30. At the same moment the wind jumped about and 04/22, the main runway, came into service. And so Pilot Petrus Ericsson brought his huge charge in and the waiting crowd murmured with wonderment for it made hardly a sound and there was no exhaust smoke trailing from its immense engines. As aviation writer Povl Westphall of the daily *Berlingske Tidende* put it, the giant made the noisy, smoky little jets "look like naughty brats." Altogether, the most aptly named plane at the airport that morning had made an auspicious debut.

Scandinavian Airlines digs into old Norse mythology and Viking sagas for the names of its airplanes, and found an especially appropriate one for its first

Boeing 747-B superjet. The 353-passenger "jumbo jet," flying between Copenhagen and New York from April, was christened *Huge Viking* as powerful Scandinavian aquavit was splashed across its nose in ceremonies earlier in the spring.

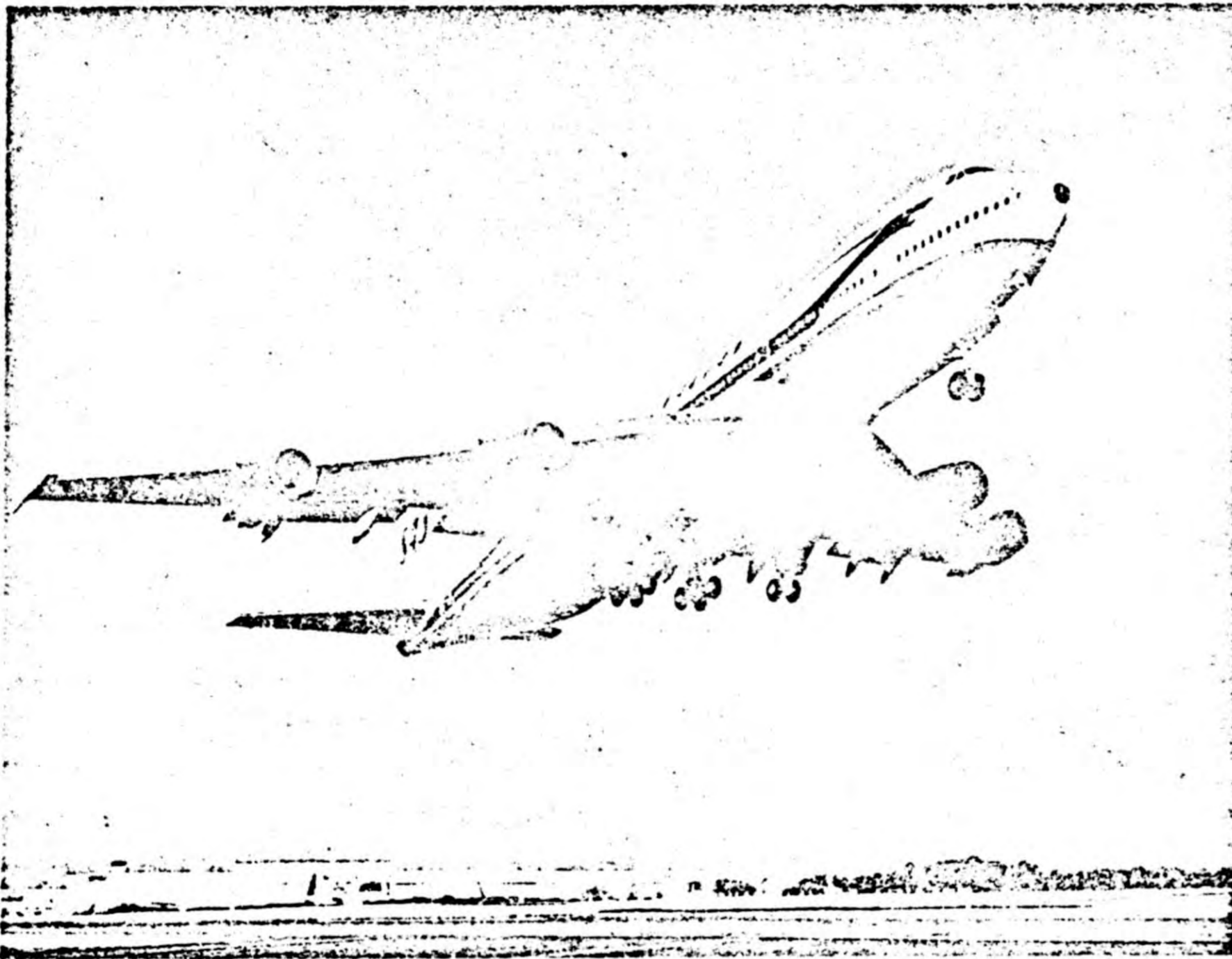
The name is more than a pun, for Huge in Norse mythology was a servant of the god Loke. Huge—also spelled Hug, Haag and Hugh—could run faster than thought (the 747-B has a maximum speed of 625 miles per hour) and he, like the namesake, had an immense capacity. The mythological figure's forte, though, was in emptying Viking drinking horns.

The second SAS 747-B, scheduled for delivery later in the year, will be dubbed *Ivar Viking*, after an expansionist Viking chieftain known as Ivar of the Broad Embrace, who gathered control of much of Scandinavia, England and Northern Germany in his eighth-century reign.

Although SAS has been a major Douglas airliner operator for many years, Boeing is no stranger to the Scandinavians. In fact, the first Scandinavian air services across the Atlantic a quarter of a century ago were performed by Boeing aircraft, albeit converted B-17 bombers in which the pilot had to lower the tail wheel whenever a passenger visited the toilet. Altogether, SAS has bought \$300 million worth of planes in the United States since 1946.

The 747-B, the advanced, ultra-long-range version of the superjet that has been flying for a year, says more about itself by its very size and the way it looms over its predecessors than any list of technical specifications could. The 747-B, however, has a bigger crew (18) than those first Scandinavian Boeings had passengers.

More than its physical dimensions, the price of the giant jetliner (\$25 million) and related equipment was enough



For all its bulk and weight, the 747-B Huge Viking is an astoundingly graceful bird whose steep climb from takeoff seems somehow effortless (photo above). The plane is also, despite its immense power, quieter in operation than smaller jet airliners. The cutaway drawing below shows the first-class cocktail lounge in the "penthouse" behind the cockpit. A winding staircase leads down to the compartment. Stretching aft are the three economy-class sections, with galleys between. In the jumbo's belly, cavernous containerized baggage and cargo holds.



SAS

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to make any airline think twice about its implications. SAS went the cooperation route, as it has done so many times before, ever since the national carriers of Denmark, Norway and Sweden pooled their resources and multiplied their international potential to form the SAS Consortium 25 years ago. Joining with KLM and Swissair, SAS agreed on common specifications for the 747-B, thus establishing the prerequisites for an exchange of maintenance and overhaul services, and the pooling of spare parts and engines. Joint flight training was also achieved, with specifications standardized.

Instead of investing in three flight simulators, for example, the so-called "KSS" group bought just one, to the tune of \$3 million, which is shared by all.

#### STRAINING'S REWARD

In the air, though, the service on *Huge Viking* is strictly Scandinavian comfort and efficiency. The 32-seat first class section has a smörgåsbord and upstairs lounge all its own. To the aft, the 321-seat economy class section has been divided into three 107-seat units, each about the size of one of the airline's Super DC-9s. Three cabin attendants are assigned to serve each section, each from its own galley. Drawing from experiences of other airlines who have flown the superjet, SAS has designed service carts that leave plenty of space in the aisles for passengers to move freely about the living room of the air. Each section, including first class, has its own movie screen, and passengers can select from eight different channels of stereo music as well.

Baggage and cargo are placed in special containers for quick loading and unloading. After the passengers and their baggage are on board, there's still space for 20 tons of cargo, nearly as much as can be put aboard a normal air freighter.

The SAS version of the 747-B is designed to take off with a maximum weight of 775,000 pounds, 65,000 pounds more than the first 747s. In testflights, though, the 747-B set a world weight-lift record for commercial aircraft: 820,700 pounds. The mammoth aircraft, as one top SAS executive aptly put it, "is an excellent symbol of that straining for perfection which has made aviation progress possible."

*Huge Viking*, he noted, "gives us the greatest possible capability in size, speed, range, comfort and efficiency . . . it represents the best of everything which airlines and manufacturers have learned through all the years of flying."