.eu takes your website all over Europe

- 500 million people
- 27 countries
- 1 Internet identity

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Nothing brings people together like good food, except perhaps a .eu address. In this edition of .eu identity magazine, our theme is Food and Drink and, as this publication coincides with the 38th ICANN meeting in Brussels, Belgium, we are exploring two Belgian passions: beer and chocolate.

Also, we spoke with Mik le chef who uses his .eu website as a visiting card to tempt customers from all over Europe; and caught up with Cecilia Berglund who blogs about what’s for dinner (in Swedish, but you can follow her through a translation tool).

ICANN is the organisation coordinating the unique identifiers (IP addresses) that allow computers to find one another all over the world. .eu identity has an interview with the head of this organisation, Mr Rod Beckstrom. We also have an exclusive interview with the new Digital Agenda Commissioner and Vice-President of the European Commission, Ms Neelie Kroes. You will not want to miss those interviews, as they touch on the future of the Internet and domain name industry.

I hope you enjoy this issue, bon appétit!

From the Editor in Chief

Caroline Gravel

Contributors
Caroline Gravel
Maria Göth
Megan Vosloo

Do you own a successful .eu website? Would you like to be featured in Identity? Write us at identity@eurid.eu.

Words of wisdom

The road to success is rarely smooth. Below are some thoughts to inspire you when the going gets tough.

On the nature of his growing empire: “It’s not an empire... I have restaurants, bookshops... but it’s not an empire, more... a puzzle. If it were an empire, all my restaurants would be the same.”

Alain Ducasse

I refuse to believe that trading recipes is silly. Tuna fish casserole is at least as real as corporate stock.

Barbara Grizzuti Harrison

Find something you’re passionate about and keep tremendously interested in it.

Julia Child
Europe, the European Union and .eu

A quick overview

Europe
When travellers think of Europe, they picture Mont Blanc, the Berlin Wall, the Eiffel Tower, the Colosseum, Hagia Sophia, the Red Square, la Sagrada Familia, Big Ben... There are multiple internationally-recognised landmarks in Europe, just as there are multiple nations that share its territory. Europe comprises of nearly 50 different states and around 730 million people, about 11% of Earth’s population.

Europe is the world’s second smallest continent by surface, covering little over 10 million square kilometres. It is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the West, the Arctic Ocean to the North, the Ural Mountains and the Caspian Sea to the East and the Black and Mediterranean Seas to the South.

The European Union
The European Union (EU) is an economic and political partnership entered into by 27 European countries. The EU is based on the Treaty of Rome (1957) that has since been amended and integrated into other treaties, with the aim to promote peace, prosperity and freedom for all citizens of the member nations. The 27 EU countries cover an area of more than 4 million square kilometres, and boast a population of nearly 500 million.

The EU is run through an annual budget of more than 120 billion euros.

The main EU bodies are the European Parliament (representing the people of the Member States), the Council of the European Union (representing national governments) and the European Commission which is responsible for initiating legislation and the daily administration of the EU.

One of the EU’s most important achievements is the creation of the single market. This has been realised by gradually eliminating the restrictions between member countries on trade and free competition.

.eu
The European Commission has contracted EURid, a private not-for-profit organisation, to manage the .eu top-level domain (TLD). .eu is reserved for the exclusive use of companies, organisations and private individuals located within the European Union. Think of it as the European Union’s place on the Internet.

More than 3 million names have been registered since .eu was launched in 2005. .eu is among the ten largest TLDs in the world.

More information on Europa.eu and Eurid.eu.

The EU at work in your plate
A recent example of the work the EU is involved in is the harmonisation of the standards for the production, processing, distribution, labelling and controls of organic foods. Starting 1 July 2010, pre-packaged organic foods will mandatorily bear the EU organic logo and indicate the origin of their ingredients. “I’m delighted that we now have a fresh EU organic food logo,” said Mariann Fischer Boel, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development. “This exercise has raised the profile of organic food and we now have a logo which everyone will be able to identify with.” This way, consumers can be assured of sustainable farming practices.

Text: Caroline Gravel
.eu is the top-level domain (TLD) that denotes the European Union on the Internet. It is just over four years old, and already boasts over 3 million names, making it one of the world’s largest TLDs. We caught up with Mr Marc Van Wesemael, the General Manager of EURid.
“Having a designated space on the web for Europe can be very advantageous. It is a way to signify not only where you come from, but also to welcome visitors from many countries.”

Text: Caroline Gravel  Photo: Veldeman Photo Brussels

The .eu registry venture began a few years ago, on the heels of an idea that the European Council had been floating around, the idea of creating a European TLD. At the time, Mr Van Wesemael was Director of DNSBE, the company that administers .be. Considered to be one of the more cutting-edge registries in Europe, .be began to imagine this European TLD, and the challenge became more and more appealing.

“Of course, we wanted some partners in this venture, and found that the national registries in Sweden and Italy were interested in joining forces with us. It was a great collaboration, the three of us got along quite well and learned from one another,” he recalls.

The European Commission found the bid placed by the coalition to be the winner of the contract in 2003. The European Registry of Internet Domain Names, or EURid, was then taking its first steps toward becoming what it is today, the registry of one of the top ten TLDs worldwide.

“We launched the Sunrise period in 2005, during which only protected names could be registered by their rights holders. To verify those rights, we introduced a novelty: the sunrise validator, an independent authority that verified all rights. This has been proven a success as all later sunrises have been based on this model. There were just over 100,000 applications on the day of the launch.”

The launch of general registrations followed shortly. On the very first day, EURid handled over 3 million transactions and registered over 1 million names. “I’m very proud of that, and the credit goes to all of EURid’s employees,” says Mr Van Wesemael. “In fact, I am very lucky to work with some of the best people in this industry, thanks to whom .eu is what it is today.”

A registry for Europe and Europeans
As the successful numbers indicate, it made sense to create .eu. Europe is increasingly gaining influence politically, at the international and national levels and thus touching people’s lives more and more. Concretely, membership in the European Union has done a lot of good for many member countries, and it has also improved business.

.eu still has a lot of growth potential. “People have yet to see the importance of the European Union as a factor in their lives. But increasingly I see younger people becoming more European and less local,” mentions Mr Van Wesemael. “A very good thing the Commission did was the Erasmus programme, which brings students to other countries. This helps to see a bigger Europe.” Having a designated space on the web for Europe can be very advantageous. “It is a way to signify not only where you come from, but also to welcome visitors from many countries,” Mr Van Wesemael says. “.eu is about a European web-identity, something that has to do with being open to different cultures and not being limited to your very close area. When I think of a European identity, I think: openness, trustworthiness and innovation. Incidentally, these qualities are very important to EURid. Our product, .eu, resonates with these qualities when we look at market surveys, and that is very important to our customers, to have a name that inspires trust.”

Trust
When dealing in the digital world, trust is a very big priority to both users and businesses. Online safety directly impacts reputations, and because of this, EURid is moving toward Domain Name System Security Extensions (DNSSEC), an Internet standard that verifies and validates nameserver responses. In practical terms, this means that when someone wishes to reach eurid.eu for example, the underlying systems will have a mechanism to verify the correctness of the domain name information, preventing re-direction to ill-intentioned websites for example.

“All the major players on the Internet should be moving toward this protocol,” cautions Mr Van Wesemael. “This is another example of why .eu inspires trust.”

EURid is also active internationally, cooperating with organisations that promote the development of the Internet. In 2009, EURid became a member of ICANN’s country code Names Support Organisation (ccNSO). ICANN has a bottom-up decision making process that takes into account all interested groups and parties. The different communities meet and discuss agenda items, and then present their results to ICANN’s board. “We joined ccNSO so that through our stakeholder group, we can have a voice in ICANN’s decisions.”

EURid is hosting the 38th ICANN meeting in Brussels this year.

More information on Eurid.eu.
Cecilia was often being asked for dinner tips by friends and family, so she decided to start blogging to share her ideas with more people. She writes under CecillasVardagsmat.eu (“Cecilia’s Weeknight Dinners” in Swedish) where she writes daily about what is for dinner that night.

“First I had a blogspot.com address, but it was difficult for people to remember, so I decided to register my own address. As I think of myself as more European than just Swedish, I thought a .eu address would be suitable. I also have plans to start blogging in English and perhaps also Italian in the future, so it makes sense to think bigger than a .se address right from the start,” she says.

At the moment, it is mainly friends and family who follow her blog, but she is also getting visitors from other places. “Some food critics have recommended and linked to my blog. That is of course great marketing and I have many new visitors coming that way. I am already making a little bit of money via food-related ads that are showing on the blog.”

Cecilia’s inspiration comes from the contrasts among European cuisines. There are some fundamental differences between Northern and Southern Europe, she notices. “The older generations, that haven’t grown up with or adopted the Mediterranean diet which has spread all over Europe because of its wholesomeness and taste, they especially tend to prefer their own traditional food. Lots of potatoes and butter in the North, pasta and rice in Italy, rice in Spain and Portugal, and of course the olive oil down South as well.” Cecilia also ponders the differences in eating habits:

“Up here in the North, we tend to eat only one dish at dinner time, at least as a weekday meal, whereas in Southern Europe, people tend to eat several dishes, even on an ordinary Monday evening. Also the time at which we eat varies a lot. In Sweden, the average family has dinner at 17:30, but in Spain they don’t eat until 21:30.”

To help with the daily preparation of dinner, Cecilia has written a cookbook with Italian recipes. All come with a mention of how much they will cost to prepare. “Many people complain about how expensive it is to cook tasty, healthy food and I wanted to show that it needn’t be expensive to eat well.”

When asked how to make the chore of cooking dinner easier, she mentions that her kitchen is never without olive oil, pasta and some kind of vegetable. With those in hand, the possibilities are endless.

Cecilia Berglund has developed some recipes exclusively for .eu identity’s readers. You can find them on page 10. They are inspired by our articles on beer and chocolate and reflect her European–fusion style. Let them inspire you!
**Beer stew, serves 4 - 5**

**Ingredients:**
- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1kg stewing beef
- 1 ½ tbsp flour
- 2 carrots
- 12 baby onions
- 1 leek
- 1 handful of fresh thyme
- 1 handful of fresh parsley
- 1 bottle (33cl or 330ml) beer (dark or blond but preferably sweet)
- 2 tsp honey
- juice of 1 squeezed orange
- salt
- pepper

1. Cut the meat into small pieces. Fry them in the butter and oil until they colour nicely. Place the meat in a stewing pan and dust with flour. Stir.

2. Peel the onions and fry them in what is left of the butter and oil. You might have to add some extra butter or oil. Place the onions and what is left of the juice in the stewing pan.

3. Peel the carrots and cut them into pieces. Add them and the rest of the ingredients. Cook for 45 minutes to 1 hour depending on the meat you have chosen. Add the orange juice minutes before serving.

4. Serve with potato purée and green peas cooked until really tender.

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**Salmon gratin, serves 4**

**Ingredients:**
- 2 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 2 tbsp butter
- 8 - 10 potatoes
- 250g smoked salmon
- ½ a leek
- ½ a small fennel bulb
- 2 eggs
- 250ml 10% cream
- juice of ½ a lemon
- ½ tsp salt
- white pepper to taste

1. Grease an oven dish with butter.

2. Chop the leek and fennel finely. Fry gently in the rapeseed oil and butter. Add the juice of ½ a squeezed lemon.

3. Peel the potatoes and slice them thinly. Line the bottom of the dish with a layer of potatoes. Place salmon slices on top of the potatoes, then a layer of the leek and fennel mix. Repeat for 2 or 3 layers. The top layer should be of potato.

4. Beat the eggs with the cream, add salt and white pepper. Pour the liquid over the potatoes and salmon. Cook in the oven for approximately 45 minutes at 200°C.

5. Serve with rucola salad and pieces of orange drizzled with olive oil.

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**Chocolate mousse delight, serves 6**

**Ingredients:**
- 200g chocolate (60% – 70% cocoa)
- 3 eggs
- 4 tbsp caster sugar
- 250ml whipping cream
- 2 tsp Cointreau or juice grated zest of ½ an orange
- 1. Place the chocolate in a metal bowl over a pan of hot water. Leave it to melt, stir occasionally. You can also place the chocolate in a plastic bowl and melt it in the microwave oven at 350W for 1½ to 2 minutes.

2. Whip the cream lightly with a whisk.

3. Whip the eggs and the sugar with the whisk until white and double in size.

4. Stir the melted chocolate into the whipped eggs with a metal spoon. Stir until well blended.

5. Add the cream and blend well. Add the Cointreau or the orange juice and zest and stir.

6. Pour the liquid into serving bowls or glasses and refrigerate for a couple of hours. Serve as is or topped with fresh raspberries.
Blogging gives everyone a voice on the Internet. Blogs have changed the media landscape dramatically and some of the most influential media personalities today are bloggers who have expert knowledge about specific topics. By following some simple advice, you too can attract a bigger audience than your circle of friends.

Text: Maria Göth

When setting up your blog, you first need to decide where to host it. You can choose as a host one of the bigger free blog services like Google’s Blogger, Microsoft’s Spaces or Wordpress. There is also the possibility to start a blog under a media site. Just go to your favourite news site or portal, see if they host blogs and follow their instructions. An advantage of hosting the blog with a media site is that you can benefit from their flow of visitors and be promoted by their site. However, your blog’s name will come under their name, so it may be difficult to transfer should you wish to have it hosted somewhere else later. You might not be able to receive advertising revenue either.

A third option is to create a blog on your own web page, hosted by any number of registrars or companies offering hosting services.

Once you have set up your blog, you will naturally be looking to attract an audience. A good first step is to register your own blog name just like Cecilia. She discovered that the Blogspot address her blog came with was too difficult to remember and registered her own .eu address instead. She instructed her registrar to point the .eu address to her Blogspot address. Her blog is now found under CeciliasVardagsmat.eu, although it is still hosted by Blogger. (Blogger operates under the name of Blogspot in Sweden where Cecilia is based).

To get visitors to your blog, there are some steps you can take:

- Submit your blog to search engines. If you have your blog on your own website, it may take a long time for search engines to find you. To help them along, go to google.com/webmastercentral and click on guidelines to find information on how to submit your website to Google’s search engine.
- Submit your blog to blog directories. There are many local, but also European blog directories like http://europe.blogranking.eu. A blog directory is a place where you can find different blogs by category. If you submit your blog, it will be featured and easily found by people interested in your subject. Search engines also like blog portals therefore your blog will be easily found.
- Make sure you let the portals and news sites you have registered your blog with know when you have posted something new (“ping” your blog) either manually or automatically. More information on how to do this can found on your respective portal or news site.
- Let people subscribe to your blog via RSS feeds.
- Allow people to share what you posted on other social networks like Facebook and Twitter (add little sharing icons – your blog tool can tell you how).
- Think about search engines when writing post headlines – what do people search for? You can check the popularity of certain words with Google’s keyword tool.
- Post often, it makes it more interesting for regular readers. It also makes search engines index your blog regularly.
- Comment on other people’s blogs and recommend good blogs to your readers. Chances are, the favour will be returned. Make sure to use Trackback links. If two blogs support the TrackBack protocol (your blog tool will tell you if it does), then the commenting blogger can notify the other blog with a “TrackBack ping”. The receiving blog will typically display summaries of, and links to, all the commenting entries below the original entry. This allows for conversations spanning several blogs that readers can easily follow.
- Use your blog to comment on interesting news articles and get noticed by thousands of readers! Bear in mind that some news sites require you to register your blog before you are allowed to comment.
A look behind BeerPlanet.eu

More than 1 000 types of Belgian beer in 40m². Impossible perhaps, but Beer Planet, a unique beer boutique in the heart of Brussels, offers its customers just that.

Text: Megan Vosloo   Photos: Courtesy of Beer Planet and Megan Vosloo

Whether you’re in the market for a chocolate beer, a limited edition Duvel Triple Hop, or a bottle of much sought after 40-year-old Westmalle Triple: virtually or in person, Beer Planet is the place to go.

Nowadays, the store is known for specialising in Belgian beers, but the original concept that inspired the owners, Aram Ettibaryan and Sam Tamazian, to set up shop was a little less specific. The beer lovers wanted to establish a hub that sold a large variety of European beers. Only, once they started doing business, they realised that Belgian beers outshine their European counterparts. “Belgium is famous for its speciality beers and no other country can offer the same quality or variety, so we decided to focus on Belgian beers exclusively,” Aram says.

The partners gradually built up their product offering to a point where they now offer over 1 000 types of Belgian beer, a number that fluctuates depending on the season.

In a country renowned for beer, you might wonder if there is room for another beer store, but Aram and Sam know that their store offers its customers something unique. “Obviously there are the beers,” Sam notes. “We carry the largest collection of Belgian beer in Belgium - no other store comes close. But there is also the store interior – it’s very intimate and inviting.”

Apart from having created the homey atmosphere that draws you through the doors, the partners introduced their own beer classification system based on copious research and their own significant experience. Signs around the store indicate which kinds of beers are available, making it possible for customers to browse around, choose their own beers and make a good selection. Sam and Aram are also always on hand to answer questions and share their expertise.

This effort is appreciated by those who frequent the store. “We thought we would mainly attract tourists, but no - as it turns out, the typical Beer Planet customer is a local connoisseur who keeps coming back because they know that we stock the stuff that is difficult to find,” comments Sam.

Beer Planet goes online

Increasingly, it’s not just local beer connoisseurs who seek out Beer Planet in Brussels. A growing number of international beer lovers also enjoy their wares, via the online shop, BeerPlanet.eu.

The business partners, who had planned to have an online shop from the outset, registered BeerPlanet.eu in 2006, when the .eu top-level domain first came into being.

“At the time we were still playing with the idea of being a European beer hub,” Aram explains, “so .eu was a good fit because it signifies that you are European. Since then, the store’s concept has evolved, but .eu still suits us well because we now do business across Europe.”

The partners took as much care in planning the design and operation of the online store as they did with their Brussels boutique, putting in many months of groundwork before it went live in September 2009. Their preparations included the design and implementation of a custom-made backend software program to manage stock levels and synchronise the online store with the Beer Planet warehouse. Much work also went into making sure BeerPlanet.eu was secure enough to accept credit card payments.

“But the biggest difficulty we had was packaging,” Sam says. Aram explains, “There wasn’t a box on the market suitable for shipping beer bottles. So eventually, after mulling over the problem for months, we came up with our own packaging: a universal beer box.”

The box’s innovative design allows the partners to ship up to eighteen 75cl bottles or forty-two 33cl bottles in a single box and is strong enough to survive even the most careless courier. Aram and Sam apply this kind of creativity and enthusiasm to everything involved in running Beer Planet and their dedication is clearly paying off.

Aram confirms, “In our experience more and more countries are discovering Belgian beer. And we have been approached by many people who want us to help them export Belgian beer or set up a similar store in their own country. It’s very gratifying to know that people value what we offer and appreciate all our efforts.”

Visit BeerPlanet.eu.
Here’s to beer!
Beer has been enjoyed for more than 10,000 years, as documented by historical evidence of brewing and consumption found in Ancient Egypt, Sumeria (modern-day Iraq) and China. In Europe, beer was popularised by Germanic and Celtic tribes as far back as 3,000 BC, as they migrated throughout the continent.

By the Middle Ages, many European monasteries had their own small-scale breweries to provide beer for the local population, as around this time it was commonly believed that it was better to drink beer than water. Cholera could be transmitted by water, but the cause of the disease was eliminated in the brewing process.

Beer basics
There are two basic types of beer: lager and ale.

Lager – The word ‘lager’ comes from Old High German and means to store at cold temperatures. Beers falling into this category are fermented at cooler temperatures, between 5°C to 9°C, and stored at near-freezing temperatures. Fermentation takes place at the bottom of the vat, making lagers bottom-fermented beers.

Lager is the most popular type of beer to drink, which is good news for breweries as the ingredients needed to brew lager are cheaper than those needed for ale.

Ale – The word ‘ale’ is thought to stem from the Old English alium, meaning bitter. It has a warmer fermentation than lager, between 15°C to 25°C, and historically used yeast that rose to the top of the brewing vessel. This is why ales are often referred to as being top-fermented, although modern brewing equipment means that yeasts that ferment at the bottom of the vat can also be used.

Ales are usually described as “robust, full and fruity,” while lagers are “dry, crisp, and clean”.

These contrasts may make the choice of beer seem simple, but both types have many subtly different sub-categories, enough to keep even the most respected beer experts deliberating indefinitely.

Whatever beer you choose, the next time you take a swig, remember that you are participating in an ancient tradition that has bound friends, families and communities together for centuries.

Basic beer guide
Confused by the many terms surrounding beer style and production?
Our mini-glossary explains some of the most common beer jargon.

Abbey – Beer that was originally brewed by a monastery but that is now brewed in a commercial brewery under licence to the monastery according to the original monastic recipe. In Belgium, discerning beer drinkers can identify genuine Abbey beers by their logo, ‘Authentic Abbey Beer’.

Double, triple, quattro – A naming convention that stems from monastic breweries. Used to describe beers that have been fermented two, three or four times. Each fermentation increases the alcohol content of the beer and adds flavour. The fermentation that takes place once the beer has been bottled is always included when counting the number of fermentations.

Fruit – Beer to which fruit has been added during the brewing process, making it sweeter. Popular fruits include black currants, peach or raspberry. The most famous fruit beer is the Belgian Kriek, which is made with cherries. Most fruit beers fall into the Lambic category (see Lambic).

Gueuze – A type of Lambic (see Lambic), made by blending young (one year-old) and old (two and three-year-old) Lambics into a new beer, which is then bottled for a second fermentation.

Lambic – Brewed exclusively in Belgium by spontaneous fermentation, using wild yeast and bacteria occurring naturally in the immediate area of the brewery. This is different to other ales and lagers, which are fermented by carefully cultivated strains of the brewer’s yeasts. A famous Lambic bacteria is Brettanomyces Bruxellensis, so called because it is found only in Brussels and the area immediately West of the city.

Saison – French for season. The name was originally given to the low-alcohol ales brewed in Wallonia, the French-speaking region of Belgium, to refresh farm workers during harvest season. Saison does not refer to a type of beer, but rather to when the beer is brewed. Originally, Saison beer was brewed in autumn and winter in Europe, although now it is produced all year round.

Trappist – Beer brewed by or under control of Trappist monks. There are only seven Trappist breweries in the world today: Koningshoeven in the Netherlands; Achel, Chimay, Orval, Rochefort, Westmalle and Westvleteren in Belgium. Westvleteren is believed by leading beer critics to brew the best beer in the world.

Text: Megan Vosloo

Did you know that beer is the third most popular drink in the world after water and tea, and the oldest and most widely consumed alcoholic beverage?
A passion for feeding guests and do-it-yourself ingenuity took this chef all over Europe and gave him an impressive range of experiences. Today Mikael Besson, “Mik le Chef”, is based in Amsterdam and is freelancing in the gastronomy sector. We found him through his site MikleChef.eu, and were treated to a delightful three-course lunch, cooked right before our eyes.

Starter: Smoked Dutch eel (paling) with sour cream, horseradish, green apple and olive oil

As he cooks, our chef regales us with anecdotes from his experiences. Mik was born in Sweden and lived there for 12 years before moving to Lausanne, Switzerland. There he began his culinary career as an apprentice at the Lausanne Beau-Rivage Palace Hotel. After working in hotels and restaurants in several different countries, working his way up the ranks and collecting skills, he set up a Swiss business where he catered for a variety of large scale events, such as the Swiss’ mate: Snowboard World Championships. He later moved to the Netherlands and worked as a product developer for large food-industry companies before taking the plunge to self-employment. He now offers a variety of services, ranging from cooking lessons to training kitchen staff, from catering parties and events, to developing products and menus. He is even prepared to travel with his kitchen to help you.

“What made you decide to make the move to self-employment?” we asked between two bites.

“I wanted to get back to human contacts. It’s very simple. The man who puts the fork in his mouth is the one I want to talk with, and that is not possible with industrial work. I want to be able to explain what I have put into the plate. I like that format. Everyone thinks I’m crazy when I’m up at 5:00 in the morning, packing my car to go to Rotterdam to lead a workshop for 25 persons, without a kitchen. But I have a fantastic day, and when I fall into bed, it’s such a satisfaction.”

“So how does it all begin?”

“As soon as a customer contacts me and says “I’m hungry,” it begins. It ranges from a mountain-top barbecue in the middle of winter, to a party on a boat… I’m into all kinds of events. Nothing is impossible, some things are difficult, but nothing is impossible. You can always find a way to feed people. I will get involved with anything to do with food and drinks, like lessons, coaching, cooking with or for someone, helping restaurants train chefs…”

“Do you fix restaurants like Gordon Ramsay?”

“I help where I can. I trained a guy for 3 months, who worked washing dishes in a café in Amsterdam, and he became the cook there. I taught him how to do the shopping, supplied some recipes, and advised him when he ran into some problems. That was very rewarding. He now has a restaurant in Morocco.” As we pondered this, the plates were swapped.

Entrée: Chorizo pasta with haricots verts, tomato and artichoke cream

Mik explains that for the time being, he is using his site to support his activities. He sends out newsletters, business cards, he networks to recruit clients, and offers his web address as a complement of information. The photographs of tantalising dishes that can be found there are often a persuasive argument. He has recently been contacted through his website to film some cooking shows for the web, for a Belgian company. He explains, “I prefer .eu to .nl because, as I’m working in Switzerland, France, or you name it, wherever you want, I don’t want to be limited to .nl.”

And he certainly has not been limited geographically. He has worked in Switzerland, Saudi Arabia, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Germany, Austria, Italy and England. He explains that with moving around, you can train a lot. “Kitchen work is brilliant as long as you are alone and like to travel.”

“So, have you noticed a difference between what people enjoy eating in different parts of the world?”

“Of course! For example in Sweden and Germany, it is very much gravy, potatoes and meat, with perhaps a little bit of vegetables, and then in the South the approach is so differ-
ent. But I notice food is more about trends. Healthy eating, organic and sustainable food... you don’t talk about taste, but about trends.” In many ways, food tastes are culturally acquired. We asked well-travelled Mik what was the strangest thing he has ever eaten. “The Swedish surströmming comes to mind, because of the way of preparing it. You let something rot before eating it. But I don’t get so upset about things, I eat snails, frog legs, etc.” There is however one thing that is probably universally enjoyed: dessert.

**Dessert: Chocolate sorbet on an aniseed orange bed**

The combination of chocolate, aniseed and orange is remarkable. As we savour, Mik explains that although not a specialty dish, his signature in cooking is the use of interesting combinations, using spices in unusual ways. “For example, I love to make a caramel with pepper, and to use that caramel with a vegetable. Like in a pumpkin salad. I like to mix two things to get a third taste. It certainly is a forte, as this sorbet is divine.

Visit MickleChef.eu.

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**Text: Caroline Gravel**

**Photos: Anno Pieterse (cover and right) and Caroline Gravel (above)**
Europeans may only recently have started enjoying these two products, but ItaloSuisse has been around for quite some time. The Belgian family-run business was originally founded in 1923 by Joseph Dequeker, who named the company after the two countries where he learnt the craft of chocolate creation. The bustling concern is now being run by his grandchildren: CEO Pieter Libeert, his brothers Ignace and Luc, and his sister Miryam.

Working with family isn’t always easy, but there are definite advantages. “You know each other very well and there is a certain innate understanding present in all your activities. This means that the company knowledge is in safe hands and that there is good continuity,” Pieter says.

The Libeerts feel that keeping it in the family gives them the edge over a lot of the larger players in the chocolate market. Being small, they can be more flexible and creative when it comes to dealing with the challenges faced by companies in today’s difficult business climate.

No guesswork
ItaloSuisse may be small but that doesn’t mean the family leaves anything to chance. Continuous consumer trend research helps them identify exactly what their customers want.

In response to society’s growing concern over health and obesity, they recently expanded their Tonkeys seasonal St Nicholas range to include a number of low-sugar, hollow chocolate figures. And the general move toward consuming sustainably produced products led to the launch of the Tonkeys Fair Trade range in time for Easter 2010, under the slogan “A taste of happiness.”

Such careful consideration isn’t limited to the ItaloSuisse product lines. The family put much thought into their company’s online presence as well. When the .eu top-level domain opened to the public in 2006, ItaloSuisse immediately registered several .eu domain names, including Tonkeys.eu, IsisChocolates.eu and BelgischeChocolade.eu, to provide its customers with product information. “Being Belgian we already had the .be domain names, but we are also European and we wanted to promote that,” Pieter says.

The Libeerts place a lot of importance on keeping pace with trends, understanding consumer desires and providing high-quality products. The result? Their ability to understand what you want to experience in that special moment when you bite into a piece of chocolate and let a morsel rest lightly on your tongue before savouring its smooth, rich texture as it melts in your mouth.

Every business, small or large, needs to pay attention to its customers’ needs, but not every business has been as successful at doing so as ItaloSuisse. That is what has successfully carried the family-run business through three generations.
Every year, more chocolate is consumed in Europe than anywhere else in the world, according to statistics published by Caobisco, the Association of Chocolate, Biscuit and Confectionery Industries of Europe.

The Irish take the number one spot, with each Irishman or woman consuming an average of 11.85kg of chocolate per year. Second is Switzerland, itself a big chocolate producer, with 10.98kg on average, followed by the United Kingdom with 10.10kg.

**How cocoa casts its spell**

But what is it about chocolate that has captivated the continent? Scientific research hints that it might be the cocoa content, which is generally higher in European chocolate.

In the 1990s, Dr Adam Drewnowski, of the University of Michigan’s Human Nutrition Program, researched whether chocolate triggers the production of opioids. Opioids are chemicals, also found in opium, that produce a feeling of well-being. Drewnowski found that eating chocolate causes the brain to produce natural opiates, which dull pain and elevate mood.

Emmanuelle DiTomaso and Daniele Piomelli, researchers at the Neurosciences Institute in San Diego, investigated the chemical components of chocolate. They found it contained anandamide, a substance also produced naturally in the brain. Anandamide binds to the brain’s receptors in a manner similar to that of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the active chemical in marijuana, producing an effect similar to being high.

The research also revealed that chocolate contains two additional chemicals that inhibit the natural breakdown of anandamide, thereby extending our feeling of well-being.

But not all chocolate will bring on a sense of euphoria. Drewnowski’s data showed that low-quality chocolate, with low percentages of cocoa and cocoa fat, reduces the amount of natural opiates produced.

This may explain why, although chocolate is held in high regard worldwide, the higher cocoa content in Europe means they revere it more than most.
CEO of ICANN
Rod Beckstrom
and the internationalisation of the Internet

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, known as ICANN, boasts participants from all over the world dedicated to keeping the Internet secure, stable and interoperable. Its participative, bottom-up approach to policy is refreshing, yet we wanted to know more about who is at the top of this organisation.

Mr Rod Beckstrom was appointed Head of ICANN in June 2009. He agreed to speak with us in light of this special .eu identity issue, launching at the 38th ICANN meeting in Brussels.

.eu: Mr Beckstrom, you will soon be celebrating your first anniversary at ICANN. How has this experience been for you?

RB: I would describe my experience since joining ICANN as being like drinking from several fire hydrants – there is such an incredible amount of work being undertaken at any moment, on such a wide range of issues, that it’s sometimes hard to keep up. I greatly appreciate and admire the dedicated and talented group of volunteers and staff from around the globe who undertake this challenging work, as well as the unique structure and model under which it is done. The multi-stakeholder, bottom-up system that defines ICANN is truly remarkable, particularly when you actually see it in practice.

.eu: Could you tell us more about this system?

RB: As an organisation, ICANN is a much decentralised body. Policies are developed bottom-up by a broad range of constituencies in the supporting organisations. The board is also comprised of members elected by those groups as well as from an independent Nominating Committee, comprised again of other members from the community. This complex board of largely subject-matter experts from the com-
munity is the final approval body on policies developed by the community with staff support.

.eu: So we understand that a lot of ICANN’s work is done collaboratively, and participants meet thrice annually at the ICANN meetings. What are the highlights that have come out of the previous meetings in Seoul and Nairobi?

RB: The obvious highlight from the Seoul meeting was the board’s approval of the IDN ccTLD Fast-Track implementation plan. This has the potential for a significant increase in Internet access around the world because it enables the use of non-Latin scripts at the top level. Many people have been working on this for many years, in both the technical and policy communities, and I believe it is an important milestone for ICANN and arguably one of the most significant developments for the Internet in many, many years.

One of the highlights for me of the Nairobi meeting was the success of our enhanced remote participation capability. It ensured that the many members of our community who could not attend in person were able to participate online, and being in a different time zone was the only real disadvantage. One of our concerns was that many of the policy discussions would be stalled or delayed in some way because of low meeting attendance, but this simply did not happen thanks in large part to the success of our remote participation.

.eu: What does the internationalisation of the Internet mean for the domain name industry?

RB: Many have a vision for how adding new top-level domains will expand the accessibility and value of the Internet. At the end of last year, we saw the launch of the Fast-Track Internationalised Domain Name programme that allows countries in the greatest need to apply for and establish name registries completely in their own scripts and languages. For the billions around the world who don’t use Latin characters, this is a significant opportunity and change.

In the generic (non-country code) space, the most significant development is the ongoing refinement of the process that allows for the expansion of generic names. Ideas range from community identity to brand-focused presence to highly secure name spaces, and more. Clearly, identity and brand matter in the physical world, and this expansion of the name space to broaden presence and identity in names – beyond the lucky few early entrants – will be a major change. And this change will not be limited to Latin-character names, but also include all of the languages of the world.

.eu: Thank you Mr Beckstrom. Enjoy Brussels! •
Neelie Kroes is up to the challenge

.eu identity has had the chance to hear from Mrs Neelie Kroes, newly appointed EU Vice-President and European Digital Commissioner. Here are her thoughts on the challenges and opportunities that come with a digital Europe.

Interview by Caroline Gravel  Photos: European Commission

“The main challenges that my team and I will face during my term as a Commissioner are outlined in the Digital Agenda for Europe, presented this spring. It outlines the main areas in which concrete steps will be taken to encourage the wider use of digital technologies by people, governments and businesses. Eventually, this will boost the development of the European economy, allowing it to remain one of the most competitive in the world.”

It is not the first time the Commissioner mentions digital technologies as a motor for the creation of prosperity, so we asked her how she envisions this development.

“I do believe that digital technologies can change millions of lives for the better. They encourage innovation and contribute to the quality of services provided, at the same time guaranteeing the privacy of individuals. More generally, I believe that the electronic market complements the traditional market that most of us grew up with. The possibility to shop online and offline means consumers have quick access to a wider choice of products and services. It also gives businesses another channel for selling and distributing their products and services.

Currently, the online market in the EU is a fragmented patchwork of different national regulatory environments which frustrates consumers and limits businesses. One of my goals is to work with my colleagues, Member States and
the European Parliament to abolish existing obstacles to the Single Market. Small and medium-size enterprises will benefit particularly from the digital Single Market. Simplified administrative procedures that result from common EU-wide legislation will make it easier for businesses to be more active on a pan-European level. In this way, they will have the chance to grow in scale, delivering better and cheaper services for all European citizens.”

She further explains how this will be made possible through the work of the Commission. “The Commission's role is to ensure that consumers are informed about their rights online and protected against existing risks, and to give businesses the legal certainty to carry out their operations. At the same time, we work to ensure that the EU's regulatory framework meets the challenges of the continuously changing online environment and guarantees the protection of users and the smooth functioning of businesses.

European Commission policies and regulations work to provide the right market conditions for the development of businesses and to protect the rights of citizens. For example, as a result of the open-access policy, which the EU put in place during the early 2000s, broadband expansion and broadband take-up has been greater in Europe than in markets like the US where Internet access is not regulated.”

While the Commission’s actions are aimed at the EU, it is an important stakeholder at the global level as well. It is involved in multiple working groups, participating actively in multi-stakeholder dialogues on issues of Internet Governance, at ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers), CENTR (Council of European National Top-Level Domain Registries) and RIPE (European IP Networks), for instance.

The domain-name industry is an example of the policy areas the Commission discusses with other parties. Mrs Kroes explains, “Domain names and Internet addresses play a critical role in the functioning of the global Internet. With their universal visibility and interoperability they have been key elements in the rapid evolution of the Internet in the last decade. I note with some satisfaction that domain names really only came into their own with the advent of the World-Wide-Web – a European invention that transformed the Internet from a platform mainly used by academics and professionals into the truly global phenomenon that we see today.

The uniqueness of domain names is of course critical to their effectiveness. The fact that the same domain name can be used to access the same email address wherever you may be on the planet is central to user confidence. That is why it is worrying to hear suggestions that the Internet might fragment into regional or national 'walled gardens'. We must oppose this. The universal interoperability of the Internet is one of its most valuable features which has enabled it to become an important platform for free speech. Maintaining an open, universal and interoperable Internet is the objective we must all pursue. We must also ensure that the process we follow to do this is inclusive and fair. I say this because the next billion Internet users will mostly come from the developing world.”

More information on Europa.eu.
A grand continent on a small scale, it’s Mini-Europe!

Discovering Europe can take a lifetime. By visiting one of Brussels’ most famous tourist attractions, you can do it in an afternoon.

The Mini-Europe theme park, as the name suggests, houses miniatures of 350 famous monuments and sites from over 80 cities throughout the European Union, all built to a scale of 1:25.

Well-known attractions include replicas of London’s Big Ben, the Eiffel Tower, the leaning tower of Pisa and the Acropolis, all of which are contained in a 2.5 hectare garden filled with no fewer than 150 unique species of plants and flowers – an attraction in their own right for some.

Drawing more than 4.5 million visitors each year, Mini-Europe is one of Europe’s most popular miniature parks. “We think this is because we take our miniatures to a whole new level,” says the park’s Event Manager, Kristof Van Vaerenbergh.

Interactive attractions – Far from being static, many of the sites and monuments come to life. At the push of a button, visitors can witness the eruption of Mount Vesuvius or the fall of the Berlin wall.

Painstaking detail – Skilled craftsmen spent hundreds of hours ensuring that each attraction is a true copy of the original. The names on the park’s model of the Arc de Triomphe, for example, correspond exactly to the names of the 750 officers and battlefields listed on the actual monument.

Education through entertainment – A comprehensive pocket guide offers visitors interesting information on all the miniatures and countries of the European Union. At the end of their visit, guests can also walk through the Spirit of Europe exhibition and test their knowledge of Europe by playing interactive games.

The Mini-Europe personnel don’t just rely on the park’s inherent qualities to tempt visitors through the doors. They work closely with tourist authorities to market it as one of the ‘must-see’ attractions for anyone visiting Brussels, and additionally use a .eu website, MiniEurope.eu, to promote it online.

The park used to have a .be web address, but switched to .eu in 2006. “We are a theme park about the European Union, so we found it quite logical to change to .eu. .eu reaches a larger audience and it gives us a more European image, which is really important to us,” Kristof Van Vaerenbergh explains.

Most business travellers to Europe have little time for sightseeing, but if you are in Brussels you don’t need a lot of time, you just need to visit Mini-Europe – the miniature park that gives you the opportunity to experience a Europe that is alive and dynamic, albeit small.

Visit MiniEurope.eu.

Text: Megan Vosloo
Photos: Courtesy of Mini-Europe
Mini-Guide to Brussels

Brussels is the capital of Belgium and the headquarters of the European Union, earning it the title ‘Capital of Europe’. NATO has its headquarters there, as do many large multinational companies.

Text: Caroline Gravel and Megan Vosloo

Brussels’ city centre is split into a Lower Town and an Upper Town. These two distinct divisions in the city are surrounded by the Small Ring road, which borders the line of the city’s medieval walls. On the back cover you will find a map of the city centre, for the convenience of ICANN visitors.

Galeries Royales Saint-Hubert
Mall lovers everywhere should make a pilgrimage to the Galeries Royales Saint-Hubert, the very first shopping arcade in Europe. Opened in 1847, the arcade became a draw card for the cream of 19th century society and today continues to inspire shoppers and browsers alike. In between the various shops you’ll find cafes, restaurants, a theatre and even a cinema.

Address: Rue des Bouchers, Brussels

The Grand Place is the heart of Brussels and has been since the Middle Ages. One of Europe’s most beautiful squares, it lies in the centre of a confusion of small, cobbled streets, and is surrounded by richly decorated 17th century Baroque Guildhouses, various Neo-Gothic buildings and museums. It is, however, the town hall, a magnificent Gothic building, that dominates the square.

Belgian Centre of Comic Strip Art
Belgium’s love of comic book art is evident in this museum, housed in a fabulous Art Nouveau building designed by Victor Horta. You’ll see plenty of its most famous subject, Hergé’s Tintin, as well as the Smurfs and art from over 670 cartoonists.

Address: 20 Rue des Sables, Brussels
Website: ComicCenter.net/en/home

Manneken-Pis
The distinctive statue has been described as the Eiffel Tower of Brussels and tourists throng the streets in search of the tiny urinating urchin. The bronze Manneken is thought to represent the ‘irreverent spirit’ of Brussels, but there are numerous tales about its beginnings. Started by Louis XV of France many years ago, it has been the custom of foreign countries, companies, visiting dignitaries or charities to donate an outfit to the Manneken-Pis and the little boy is usually decked out in the latest costume.

Address: On the corner of Rue du Chêne and Rue de l’Îtuve, Brussels

The Atomium
The Atomium is a Belgian icon. It was built for the 1958 Universal Exhibition and takes its shape and proportions from the internal lattice of an iron atom. There are nine spheres linked by escalators and each contains exhibition rooms hosting a rapidly changing series of exhibitions. There is a fantastic view from the deck of the uppermost sphere.

Address: Boulevard du Centenaire, Brussels
Website: Atomium.be

Grand Place (Central Square)

Photo: M. Van Hulst

Photo: OPT
Autoworld
Autoworld is a great place to discover automotive history through a collection of more than 300 vehicles. Horse-drawn coaches, two-door sport sedans from the 1950s, motorcycles, commercial vehicles... there is something for everyone.

Address: 11 Parc du Cinquantenaire, Brussels
Website: Autoworld.be

Horta Museum
The museum, dedicated to Art Nouveau architect Victor Horta, is also a house that was owned by the artist. Furniture, utensils and art objects designed by Victor Horta are on display. The building itself is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Address: 25 Rue Américaine, Brussels
Website: HortaMuseum.be

Magritte Museum
The brand new museum dedicated to René Magritte opened in June 2009 and houses the world’s largest collection of the artist’s paintings, photographs and films. A surrealist artist, René Magritte’s work features unexpected juxtapositions and non sequitur.

Address: 3 Rue de la Régence, Brussels
Website: Musee-magritte-museum.be

Royal Museums of Fine Arts
Belgium’s Royal Museums of Fine Arts hold some twenty thousand paintings, sculptures and drawings. The art works are divided among the Ancient Art Museum (15th – 17th c.), the Modern Art Museum (19th – 20th c.), the Wiertz Museum and the Meunier Museum.

Address: 3 Rue de la Régence, Brussels
Website: Fine-arts-museum.eu

Hortamuseum
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Address: 25 Rue Américaine, Brussels
Website: HortaMuseum.be

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