



PROVENCE PROMOTION

In Silicio's story ...

Good Bye Silicon Valley !

This is the story of a Belgian... and a Frenchman! They were both specialized in nanotechnologies and were working in two different companies before they met in Silicon Valley. Each developed a project, and everything was to be decided when they met in a Californian market. Or almost everything... Because they have now founded "In Silicio", a very high technology company in Aix-en-Provence, after the Mountain View Home Sweet Home seminar and the farsightedness of Provence Promotion.

History of a "master stroke" (sic) by Provence Promotion.

> In Silicio flirts with nano...

Thierry Valet: In Silicio intends to satisfy simulation, modeling and design needs in nanotechnologies and micro-technologies, which are now ubiquitous in micro-electronics.

For example, if you purchase a PC in a supermarket, it will have a microprocessor equipped with transistors using nanotechnologies, since they are only half the size of a 'flu virus'!

This is equally true for computer hard disks, which have read heads about the same size, flying at a height of 50 atoms above the disk.

Jacques Kools: Therefore, these nanotechnologies use new physics that is very difficult to model with existing software. In Silicio's ambition is to satisfy these needs by new software modeling and design tools, these new tools assisting with and increasing the dependability of the design process, so that these nanometric components can then be manufactured.

Knowing that the microelectronics industry alone is worth 150 billion dollars of sales per year, these new needs offer a major opportunity that In Silicio intends to exploit.

> Jacques and Thierry in the market...

Jacques Kools: In early 2003, we met at the Saturday morning market in Sunnyvale in the center of Silicon Valley, where we lived with a large number of other French expatriates! I had already realized the need for new modeling methods for nanotechnologies, and my meeting with Thierry accelerated the process since he was also thinking of concentrating on a more personal project. We then started to think about founding a company in Silicon valley which is the obvious choice for the location, since all specialties are represented here.

> Home Sweet Home like an attractive refrain...

Thierry Valet: this is when we had the opportunity to participate in a Provence Promotion seminar in January 2003 in Mountain View, which opened up the possibility of returning to Europe to create our company.

The Home Sweet Home program set up by Provence Promotion is genuinely exceptional, since due to its direct and regular presence close to the European expatriate executives community in North America will enable them to realize opportunities associated with returning home bringing a creation project with them.

We met serious, skilled and motivated persons who worked closely with us throughout the development phase of our project. This is worth emphasizing, since it is unusual, to have genuine long-term assistance and dialogue.



Jacques Kools Thierry Valet

Our two guests in a few lines

Jacques Kools

Jacques Kools is 40 years old and was born in Belgium, and has a PhD in applied physics. He joined Philips Research in the Netherlands in 1986. He then met Thierry Valet, himself working for Thomson-CSF, when they were both working on European research projects, and then in 1997, he left for the United States where he stayed for seven years.

He worked in Silicon Valley as a senior research executive for two companies (CVC then Veeco), making equipment for the manufacture of semiconductors and components for data storage.

(NASDAQ: VECO) is a leader in the nanotechnologies field).

Jacques Kools moved to France with his family in November 2004, where he founded In Silicio with Thierry Valet.

Thierry Valet

Thierry Valet, 39 years old, was born in Brignoles in the Var department of France, and is physicist by training since he graduated from the Paris Higher School of Physics and Chemistry. He was awarded a DEA (French Higher Studies Diploma) in physics of solids at the Faculty of Orsay.

He started his carrier in 1989 at Thomson CSF at the central research laboratory specialized in data storage, particularly for giant magnetoresistance and high density optical and magnetic recording technologies.

In 1999, he joined Seagate Technology USA (the world's leading manufacturer of magnetic hard disks) as director of the "optical storage" research group.

At the end of 2000, he became Engineering Vice-President of Vega Vista (start-up financed by Cisco) that develops chips for mobile telephony and PDAs, in order to make them easier to use. He joined the Grandis Company in 2003 as Scientific Director and developed magnetic memory on silicon technologies (MRAM).

He created In Silicio with Jacques Kools in August 2004.



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> From Silicon Valley to the Bouches-du-Rhône

We thus met with Provence Promotion representatives again shortly afterwards at the SEMICON conference in July 2003, having made further progress with our project.

An interaction was set up with the Home Sweet Home team throughout the year 2003, with new meetings. This provided us with an opportunity to think carefully and honestly about our geographic location, which we were planning to leave in Silicon Valley before we met the Provence Promotion staff.

We were then seduced by the Bouches-du-Rhône Department, since there is a genuine pool of human, scientific and technical skills that are competitive worldwide, with considerable flexibility. Provence Promotion genuinely leaves the initiative to companies.

> The Provence way of life

Jacques Kools: Yes, and it is fairly unusual in Europe, since there is not very much authoritarian control, somewhat like the "American style". This is the sense in which Home Sweet Home is a master stroke. This assistance, which can successfully set up an environment favorable to the materialization of creator projects, reminded us somewhat about what makes the Silicon Valley so strong, and I am quite sure that a large number of French expatriates will follow our footsteps if this operation continues!

Thierry Valet: Don't forget the working costs for very highly qualified positions - which are very competitive in France - and startup subsidies that are also very significant.

> ANVAR? Very attractive services!

Furthermore, and very importantly, we were the prizewinner in the 2004 national competition for assistance with the creation of companies based on innovative technologies, organized by the Ministry of Research.

This prize, which genuinely satisfies the need for start up funds for an emergent project like ours, also considerably accelerated the process, and enabled us to actually startup the company.

> High speed trains, schools, banks and everything we could want ...

Thierry Valet: Therefore, we founded a Simplified Joint Stock Company in August 2004, registered at the Aix-en-Provence Registry of Commerce. Our premises are located within the CEEI that welcomed us at the Arbois Europôle, very close to the Aix-en-Provence HST Station.

When we arrived, we were warmly welcomed and assisted by the Provence Promotion team, who helped us to find housing and schooling. In this respect, it is interesting to note that the Luynes International School and its Aix International College are obviously attractive to us, because we have children that have been attending school in the United States for several years.

Finally, Provence Promotion assisted us by depositing In Silicio's articles of incorporation while we were in the US, in partnership with the Landwell and partners office, and helped to set up a partnership with a bank (the Société Marseillaise de Crédit), also while we were still in the United States. All these actions very much facilitated our approach.

We are now recruiting three senior engineers and scientists. We hope to increase the capital and hire more staff in 2005.

> Conclusion: don't trust accepted ideas!

Jacques Kools: I would like to finish this interview by looking at the perception of Provence in the United States. When I announced my departure, at least ten persons in Silicon Valley said "Hire me - I'll come with you!" In my opinion, this must say something! No doubt, the result of the American elections had an influence; 70% of Silicon Valley votes democrat! I really believe that Home Sweet Home provides a genuine opportunity for a very successful future, particularly in Silicon Valley.