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Six years ago **GCR** undertook a survey to identify competition's bright young things, and we felt the time was ripe for an updated snapshot of the rising generation. Editor **DAVID SAMUELS** explains the methodology used

Before Christmas we launched a vote on our website to find the best competition practitioners under 40. The response was gratifying. The vote ran for a week, but no fewer than 3,311 people took part. Many of them annoyingly waited until the afternoon of our Christmas bash to register their votes.

The online vote wasn't our only avenue of research. We have just completed an intensive research process for our sister publication *The International Who's Who of Competition Lawyers and Economists*. To make the two surveys consistent, the *Who's Who* votes were read across. They were also given a little extra weighting to reflect their better provenance.

(It is good that we had the *Who's Who* research. Our website software suggests a fair amount of tactical voting goes on in online voting. This ranged from individuals voting multiple times to voting circles, in which members all vote for each other.)

Here then is the result: 39 lawyers and 10 economists. A further 10 lawyers are included for luck (see 'Ten more to watch'). The list spans 15 nations. The youngest person is 30 and the oldest 39. Three are women. Everybody in the list is under 40 (as of the 31 December 2003).

This is the second time that we've published a list of 'bright young things'. In 1998 we produced '45 under 45'—a similar survey. However, it included no economists. You can find out who appeared then, and what has happened to them since, from page 23 onwards.

As in 1998 we have singled out 11 indi-

viduals who we think are destined for great things. These appear in the tinted boxes with a Q&A section.

### A word on the selection criteria

The 40 all but selected themselves, once the votes were tallied. Next to no GCR editorial discretion was required. As usual, we erred on the side of making it international; so the only nudge we gave was to keep the number of US lawyers low—hence the inclusion of 'Ten more to watch' as a complementary measure at the very end. Half of the final 10 are from the US.

In all 110 practitioners earned votes during research on the final list and if we had space we'd mention all of them. Some of these fell by the wayside once we started checking ages. They all had at least one person out there who thinks they are the greatest. Certain firms should be especially proud of how they performed overall, even if only one or two of their members made the final cut. Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton, Wilmer Cutler Pickering LLP, Clifford Chance, Linklaters and Allen & Overy all supplied between four and 13 practitioners. They clearly have large 'next generations' coming through.

Looking at which firms figure most often in the actual 40, we find:

- Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer has four members included;
- Linklaters has three;
- Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton has two

and one in the 'Ten more one to watch' section; and

- Slaughter and May and Gleiss Lutz each has two.

This is all but identical with the order in which firms appeared in the 45, it so happens. What has changed between 1998 and now is perhaps the centrality of economics. In 1998 having a degree in economics was unusual (if you were a lawyer). The CVs of the 40 suggests it has become the norm.

### Also . . .

We have omitted enforcers from the list. There is a reason for this. We are working on a separate project for later in the year that will deal exclusively with competition officials. We hope those who generously proposed enforcers will be patient for now.

Finally, congratulations to Nick Levy and Ronan Harty, who become the first people to appear twice. Nick and Ronan were both selected in 1998 too. Diplomacy prevents us from including 'before' and 'after' photos.

Please enjoy reading the report, which was fun as well as informative to research. In addition to biographical information it includes a ton of predictions on where the practice area might be headed.

It isn't the done thing to refer to these lists as a head-hunter's charter. You have to admit, though—if that were your business and you saw someone had done this, you'd be pleased. ■

curement law (1998); and commentaries on the Vertical Block Exemption Regulation (2000), the New Motor Vehicle Block Exemption. Two further commentaries—on Reg 1/2004, and the New Technology Transfer Block Exemption Regulation—are underway.



**Name:** Luis Santos  
**Age:** 35  
**Age became partner:** 28  
**(at Von Wobeser y Sierra)**  
**Firm:** Santos y Quijano  
**City:** Mexico City

**Practice focus:** Luis's work is balanced across all competition disciplines. He has just founded his own firm.

**Clients:** these have included Mexico's five main GasLP (cooking gas) dealers on a major cartel matter; Estrella Blanca, a coach company, in connection with price discrimination proceedings (charges dropped); a German company, Henkel, that has invested heavily in Mexico; Diageo (including on Diageo/Seagram portfolio and on Diageo's tequila joint-venture); and Alcan in Alcan/Picheney

**Previous employment:** pre-1993 Rubio Villegas y Asociados; 1993-2003 Von Wobeser y Sierra; this included in 1995 a stage in Paris at the ICC Court of Arbitration.

**Why competition?** "It was semi-accidental. In 1994, I began to handle pre-merger notifications after Mexico introduced merger control. Then I handled a monopolistic practice complaint for the firm on behalf of an important local cable TV company in Mexico City—this was against the Mexican media giant Televisa. From then on I was seen within the firm as the 'competition specialist'."

**Affiliations:** "I am on the Mexican Competition Commission's panel of advisers in connection with ICN recommendations; I am also a member of the ICC Task Force in charge of reviewing the arbitration of competition matters, chaired by Marc Blessing."



**Name:** Thomas Mueller  
**Age:** 38  
**Firm:** Wilmer Cutler Pickering LLP  
**City:** Washington DC\*

A source at a rival firm says: "Thomas has it all—he is bright and articulate, has a good understanding of economics and of both US and EC law, and gets to the heart of the issues quickly."

Thomas's clients include Time Warner, Bayer, United Airlines and VeriSign. Indeed, within Wilmer Cutler Tom is credited by many with having kept Time Warner as a client at a critical juncture. He was part of a team that steered *AOL/Time Warner* to a clear-ance decision in Brussels.

"I got into the competition practice through civil antitrust litigation," Thomas says. "In the second witness deposition that I took as a young associate, I was able to get the witness to confess a previously unknown price-fixing arrangement. And I have been hooked on the practice ever since." Before joining Wilmer Cutler he read law at Harvard Law School and clerked for US Judge Walter Jay Skinner in Boston. He also had a visiting fellowship at the Max Planck Institute in Munich.

Thomas's practice is unusual in the degree to which it straddles the Atlantic. Although he is now based in DC, one of his major assignments recently has been for a Norwegian chemical tanker carrier, Odjell ASA, that is cooperating with authorities over a cartel matter in the US and across Europe. Thomas was based in Brussels from 1998 to 2000. "I spend about one week out of three in Europe." He is an adjunct professor at Georgetown University Law Center, where he teaches a course on comparative US and EU competition law with Wilmer Cutler Pickering LLP partner Lee Greenfield.

#### Q&A

**What age did you become partner?**  
 Thirty-three.

#### Trends: where is practice heading in the next five to 10 years?

In merger clearance, I expect more on coordinated effects/joint dominance theory from the US agencies and the Commission. I think, too, that countries that have adopted merger regulations in the last 10 years are becoming more probing, less willing to rely on the conclusions of other regimes. On the behavioural side I foresee debate on vertical restraints and abuse of dominance/monopolisation, leading to change. This is where the EU and US diverge at the moment, and recent court cases in both jurisdictions are in tension with thinking at enforcement agencies in each.

In cartel enforcement, we will see cartels exposed on the Pacific Rim. EC practice will begin to mirror US practice in factual intensiveness.

#### Did you benefit from a mentor?

Bill Kolasky taught me to tackle the tough issue head-on and to strive continually to find solutions; Jim Venit taught me to worry cases and search for their weaknesses; Bob McCaw (one of the preeminent securities lawyers in the US) taught me to dig deep for the facts and to work on every submission until you get it just right.

**How many hours did you bill last year?**  
 2,100.

#### Best restaurant in Brussels or DC?

Kinthead's in Washington, 2000 Pennsylvania Avenue. My current favourite in Brussels is Tomate Rouge, Avenue Louise 190.

\*and Brussels



**Name:** Robbert Snelders  
**Age:** 35

**Age became partner:** 32  
**Firm:** Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton  
**City:** Brussels

**Practice focus:** Broad experience in chemicals, energy, IT and technology sectors; merger work for clients including ExxonMobil, IBM, Sony

in *Sony/Bertelsmann* and Alitalia in *Alitalia/Air France*; European court work for clients including General Motors and Crédit Lyonnais; cartel work in lysine, nucleotides, natural gas, refined products and semiconductor chips (for Hynix Semiconductors).

**Affiliations:** Member, scientific council of Global Competition Law Centre, College of Europe; editor, *Antitrust Law Developments in Europe* yearbook (Kluwer Law International).

**Past employment:** After degrees from Leiden, the College of Europe and Harvard, Robert joined Cleary Gottlieb (New York) in 1992 and moved to Brussels in 1993. He took a leave of absence between 1996 and October 1997 to work for Justice Kapteyn at the ECJ.

**Why competition?** Snelders says his early inspiration came from teachers in Bruges (Mario Siragusa and Valentine Korah) and Harvard (Phil Areeda).

**What trends are developing in your country?** "EC modernisation will likely increase work before national competition authorities and national courts in the European Union. At the same time, I expect the Brussels practice to grow with the enlargement of the European Union and the Commission's increasing focus on State aid, major cartel, and policy-defining abuse of dominance cases."



**Name:** Martijn Snoep  
**Age:** 35  
**Age became partner:** 32  
**Firm:** De Brauw Blackstone Westbroek  
**City:** The Hague

**Practice focus:** Dutch and EU-level advocacy before the competition agencies for clients such as Shell, Akzo Nobel, VNU, Philip Morris, Rabobank, Texaco and Telfort.

**Affiliations:** Chairman of the Dutch Association for Competition Law; foreign associate of Cravath Swaine & Moore in New York (1997); regular speaker at IBA conferences in particular.  
**Past employment:** Martijn has worked at De Brauw Blackstone West-