**Werner Callebaut, Bierolade: Beer and Chocolate are Belgium’s strongest Export Products**
Werner Callebaut of ‘Bierolade’ has both a tourism and culinary background. He studied tourism, but was also trained as a zythologist (beer connoisseur) and chocolatier. With his company 'Bierolade' he found a hole in the market. *"Bierolade stands for flexibility and diversity. Consequently, I can be active in all cities, throughout Belgium. I live in Wallonia and I am bilingual as well. Bierolade also offers a full range of à la carte tastings, so I can respond to the assets of different markets. Today, I am at IBTM, but on Thursday evening I have a lecture for the Davidsfonds in Halle-Zoersel. Via my company, I organize tastings for associations, personalized receptions or beer tastings for companies. However, pub-tasting tours have the greatest success, a random walk through a city. Using anecdotes, I play out the tourist features and at the same time, I bring the participants along authentic cafes where they can taste a special beer, possibly combined with a praline. People like that. It’s not merely a tourist walkabout, but it combines tourism with a culinary experience."*
Combining beer and chocolate is not obvious. It is not an exact science. *"Indeed, it does not work with all pralines or all beers,"* says Walter Callebaut. *"I had to taste a lot at home. Pure artisan chocolate is healthy. Beer is healthy too. Of course, you should not exaggerate. The charm of chocolate and beer is that they are very beautiful products. And both products can make each other better. This gives you a wow effect. People sometimes do not consider a certain beer or praline as special, but if you pair the tasting, you sometimes have an incredible experience. And that embodies the art. By looking for harmony or contrast."*
The combination of beer and chocolate is unique. *"At the end of March, I attended with Tourism Flanders a beer and whiskey fair in the Swedish city Gothenburg which was visited by 25,000 people. We had a central position, and together with chocolatier Valentino we selected four pralines. At a Swedish club specializing in Belgian beer, visitors could choose from fifteen Belgian beers and then combine the beer with the pralines. The Swedish visitors considered this fantastic and innovative. In this way, Tourism Flanders can put itself on the map abroad. Because it's a unique concept. Therefore, I think that my presence on* ***VISIT****FLANDERS is a good thing. It offers not only opportunities for myself but also for Flemish cities, it is a win-win situation. After all, beer and chocolate remain our main export products."*