

ALB HOT 25

Over the past year, a host of legal practitioners have performed outstandingly in their field, or courted controversy and turned heads in the legal arena. Here is *ALB* China's pick of the best

The past 12 months have turned out to be one of the most colourful and interesting times in the history of the legal industry. For the first time, the industry was affected by the global economic and financial turmoil, and once over-stretched firms were given the opportunity to slow down and rethink their business strategies.

China's economic resilience and strength has been tested and proven, however, while some of the nation's leading law firms have expanded their global market reach by simply following in their clients' footsteps.

New laws and regulations came into effect, yet the past year has served as a pilot for practitioners, regulators and courts, who are handling emerging – and important – issues relating to new laws in antitrust, employment and bankruptcy work. As the enforcement

of these new laws advances, several lawyers have become pioneers and experts in certain fields. Those lawyers, who are involved either in landmark events, achieving outstanding success in business, or are making an impact on advancing the rule of law, have formed the basis of this year's *ALB* China **Hot 25** list.

Now in its sixth year, the list aims to provide an – admittedly subjective – overview of the past year, listing those legal identities that have performed outstandingly in their field, or courted controversy and turned heads.

After all, winning the game is not always the “be all and end all” – it's the style, poise, and class with which you play that most counts. We hope that this list provides some food for thought for our readers, or perhaps an interesting read amid busy schedules. The point is to entertain, not offend. **ALB**

THE STATESMEN

Name	Firm
Lv Hongbing 吕红兵	Grandall Legal Group 国浩
Wang Ling 王玲	King & Wood 金杜
Wang Zhongde 王忠德	Dacheng 大成
Zhang Xuebing 张学兵	Zhong Lun 中伦
Zili Shao	Linklaters

THE STRATEGISTS

Name	Firm
Bernd Stucken	Salans
Cui Liguó 崔利国	Guantao 观韬
Matthew Laight	Bird & Bird
Robert Lee	Diaz Reus
Wang Li 王丽	DeHeng 德恒

THE EXPERTS

Name	Firm
Charles Duan 段祺华	Duan & Duan 段和段
Michael Han 韩亮	Freshfields 富而德
Xu Jiali 徐家力	Longan 隆安
Xu Shouchun 徐寿春	V&T 万商天勤
Yao Jun 姚军	Ping An Insurance 平安保险集团

THE MOVERS

Name	Firm
Charles Liang 梁飞	Run Ming 润明
Jiang Zhipei 蒋志培	Fangda Partners 方达
Li Xiaoyang 李晓阳	Kirkland & Ellis
Liu Jiqing 刘吉庆	Deheng Law Firm 德衡
Martin Hu 胡光	Martin Hu & Partners 胡光律师事务所

SHINING LIGHTS

Name	Firm
Ahmad Kusayer	Zhonglun W & D 中伦文德
Gary Locke	Davis Wright Tremaine (former firm)
Li Changqing 李长青	George Wu & Partners 邦道
Yan Yiming 严义明	Yan Yiming Law Firm 严义明律师事务所
Zhu Xiangyang 朱襄阳	Lantai 兰台



Name: **Zili Shao**
 Title: **Asia managing partner**
 Firm/Company: **Linklaters**
 Location: **Hong Kong**

Why hot: It has been a comparatively easy step-up for Shao to the position as the firm's new Asia managing partner, replacing the outgoing Giles White. Having already headed the firm's Greater China practice since 2003, his appointment is a clear indication of where the firm will be looking for growth.

THE STRATEGISTS

Foresight, business acumen and a large measure of skill are the traits of lawyers profiled in this category. Meet the names behind some of the watershed events in the industry this year.



Name: **Bernd Stucken**
 Title: **Managing partner for Greater China**
 Firm: **Salans**
 Location: **Shanghai**

Why hot: Salans is known for its strengths in emerging markets and the former USSR countries. Under Stucken's management, the firm has grown its China presence significantly in the past few years. Salans opened its Beijing office in 2008 and recently established an office in Hong Kong. To steer the China offices through the present challenging times and sustain growth, Stucken has decided to shift the firm's practice focus from advising on FDI, M&A and investment in real estate, to restructuring, arbitration and outbound M&A.



Name: **Matthew Laight**
 Title: **China managing partner**
 Firm/Company: **Bird & Bird**
 Location: **Beijing**

Why hot: Quashing rumours that the alliance forged with Singapore firm ATMD was not because Bird & Bird was unsuccessful in its attempt to obtain a QFLP in the Lion City, a very busy Laight had to also facilitate the expansionary firm's launch in Shanghai last October.



Name: **Wang Li 王丽**
 Title: **Chief global managing partner**
 Firm: **DeHeng Law Offices 德恒**
 Location: **Beijing**

Why hot: At the helm of Beijing-headquartered DeHeng is global managing partner Wang Li. The M&A practice is headed by Wang, and has posted a stellar performance for the first half of 2009. It was involved in five major deals to date, valued at US\$19.1bn.



Name: **Robert Lee**
 Title: **China managing partner**
 Firm: **Diaz Reus**
 Location: **Shanghai**

Why hot: Robert Lee, the partner-in-charge of Miami-headquartered Diaz Reus's Shanghai office, sees opportunities in the increasing activity and trade between BRIC nations, particular with China's interest in natural resources in Latin America, Russia and the Middle East. He is working closely with the firm's offices in these markets to help Chinese clients achieve their goals.



Name: **Cui Ligu 崔利国**
 Title: **Managing partner**
 Firm: **Guantao 观韬**
 Location: **Beijing**

Why hot: Cui Ligu is leading the international expansion strategy, with Guantao forming an alliance with Hong Kong firm Jackson Woo & Associates. A new Xiamen office is also up and running, contributing to the firm's international trade and shipping practices, as well as facilitating economic ties between the mainland and Taiwan.