

ALB HOT 100

A wealth of lawyers have set newsrooms abuzz in their pursuit of excellence, in one of the most challenging years for legal sectors seen across the Asian region.

Now in its sixth year, *ALB's* **HOT 100** aims to provide an – admittedly subjective – overview of the personalities of the past year. We list those who 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 also counts. This list is intended to entertain, not offend, and certainly is not a definitive guide to the industry.

Please enjoy this year's *ALB* **HOT 100**.

THE STRATEGISTS

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



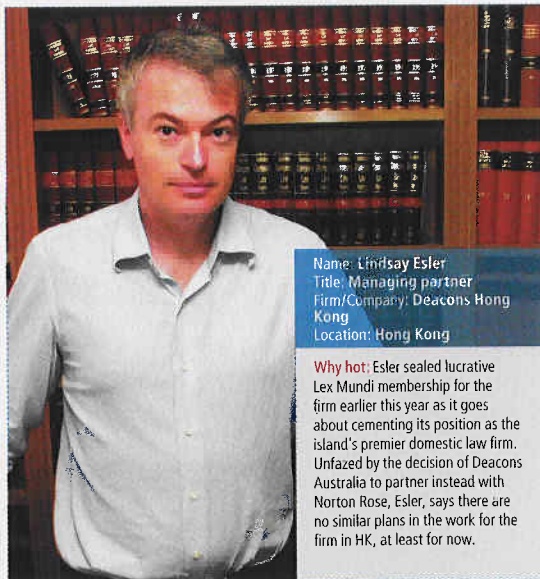
Name: Andrew Grech
Title: Managing director
Firm/Company: Slater & Gordon
Location: Australia

Why hot: Grech's Slater & Gordon legal practice remains the only law firm in the world to have listed on a stock exchange. Specialising in commercial law, the Australian firm's growth since its IPO in 2007 provides a model for other legal firms who are looking to follow in the same path.



Name: Ken Siegel
Title: Tokyo managing partner
Firm/Company: Morrison & Foerster
Location: Japan

Why hot: The downturn has proved to be fortuitous for some, and MoFo's Tokyo office is among them. Not only is it rumoured to be one of the most profitable of the firm's offices worldwide, but its headcount has substantially increased over the past year. This has come on the back of a number of high-profile deals for blue chip clients, including Fujitsu, Hitachi and Toshiba.



Name: Lindsay Esler
Title: Managing partner
Firm/Company: Deacons Hong Kong
Location: Hong Kong

Why hot: Esler sealed lucrative Lex Mundi membership for the firm earlier this year as it goes about cementing its position as the island's premier domestic law firm. Unfazed by the decision of Deacons Australia to partner instead with Norton Rose, Esler, says there are no similar plans in the work for the firm in HK, at least for now.



Name: Nicola Wakefield-Evans
Title: Asia managing partner
Firm/Company: Mallesons Stephen Jaques
Location: Hong Kong

Why hot: In an industry where glass ceilings are conspicuous, Wakefield-Evans can be widely commended for being among a rare few to have broken through it. Wakefield-Evans has also built the profile of the Australian-based firm to a level where it is rivaling US and UK firms, for a share of the most lucrative China-related work.



Name: Hwang Ju Myung
Title: Joint managing partner
Firm/Company: Hwang Mok Park
Location: Korea

Why hot: One of the Korean legal industry's most prominent figures, Hwang splits his time managing the expansionary firm while sitting on the board of Korea Telecom. Korea's first in-house counsel for Gulf Oil, he helped the firm secure a merger with boutique firm Hanseung Law Firm. HWP is widely considered as one of the firms nipping at the heels of the larger firms in the market.



Name: Sam Farrands
Title: Head of Asia major projects & infrastructure
Firm/Company: Minter Ellison
Location: Hong Kong

Why hot: One of the region's leading lawyers in projects and PPPs, Farrands is considered the brains behind the firm's recent acquisition of boutique construction firm Cordells.



Name: Kim Byoung Jai
Title: Senior partner
Firm/Company: Lee & Ko
Location: Korea

Why hot: Kim told the Korea Times "no matter who will come, we are ready to beat them all," a clear indication that his firm is ready for a good old-fashioned scrap. The firm has been upping its market aggressively over the last few years, acting on more of Korea's most prominent transactions. It will no doubt pose a strong rival for leading firm Kim & Chang in the years ahead.



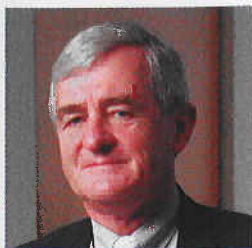
Name: Matthew Laight
Title: China managing partner
Firm/Company: Bird & Bird
Location: Beijing

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 QLP in the Lion City, a very busy Laight had to also facilitate the expansionary firm's launch in Shanghai last October.



Name: Ashley Gunning
Title: Corporate and investment funds group head
Firm/Company: Walkers
Location: Singapore

Why hot: Charged with increasing the offshore firm's footprint in Singapore, Gunning also leads its investment funds and corporate group. Two finance lawyers have been brought in to boost the new Singapore office, and the firm will no doubt be using this as a stepping stone into the Indian market.



Name: Don Boyd
Title: Chief executive partner
Firm/Company: Deacons
Location: Sydney

Why hot: The merger between Deacons Australia and Norton Rose, while certainly not a merger of equals, couldn't be more significant. Boyd was the first to do what other Australian firms were delaying, as a base for pushing into Asia. He forged a strategic plan in 2006 which may have yielded the merger with Norton Rose—but will it work?



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

Why hot: It has been a comparatively easy step-up to Shao's 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.



Name: Cui Liguo
Title: Managing partner
Firm: Guantao
Location: Beijing

Why hot: Cui Liguo 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, developing the firm's international trade and shipping practices, as well as facilitating economic ties between the mainland and Taiwan.



Name: Wang Li
Title: Chief global managing partner
Firm: Deheng Law Office
Location: Beijing

Why hot: At the helm of Beijing-headquartered DeHeng, one of the country's largest law firms and a reputable and trusted advisor to many large state-owned and private enterprises, 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, valued at US\$19.1bn.



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

Why hot: Robert Lee, the partner-in-charge of Miami-headquartered Díaz Reus's Shanghai office, sees opportunities in the increasing activity and trade between BRIC nations, particular 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: 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 the management of Bernd Stucken, 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.

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Are you moving in-house, back into private practice, joining the competition or just generally on the way up? Here are some of the more remarkable legal practitioners seen in this category over the past 12 months



Name: Desmond Ong
Title: Singapore managing director
Firm/Company: Eversheds
Location: Singapore

Why hot: One of two Eversheds lawyers to make our list this year, Ong's move from DLA Piper to head up the firm's Singapore office is as high-profile as we've seen in 2009. Expect a number of his DLA Piper colleagues to follow him once Eversheds settles into its new home in the Lion City. Was his departure the reason DLA Piper missed out on a QLP license?



Name: Nick Seddon
Title: Asia managing partner
Firm/Company: Eversheds
Location: Hong Kong

Why hot: One legal practitioner to benefit from the collapse of international player Heller Ehrman, Seddon, with all his management experience, was quickly scooped up by the UK-based Eversheds to lead its operations in Singapore and Hong Kong.



Name: Shibeer Ahmed
Title: Partner
Firm/Company: Baker Botts
Location: Dubai

Why hot: As Lovells' Dubai office managing partner, Ahmed was widely credited as being one of the biggest reasons behind the firm, which was without peer in the Gulf for Islamic finance. However, Ahmed surprised many in May this year by moving across to Baker Botts's global projects practice, to work under managing partner David Emmons.



Name: Zia Moily
Title: Managing partner
Firm/Company: AZB & Partners
Location: India

Why hot: It's been an extremely busy year for the impressive Moily. After securing a 'best friends' alliance with Clifford Chance, the firm swallowed Bangalore boutique Anup Shah—in addition to taking home two trophies at the ALB Southeast Asian Law awards: for its involvement in Nomura's acquisition of Lehman's assets in Asia and as the "India deal firm of the year".



Name: Chris Wyman
Title: Partner
Firm/Company: Clifford Chance
Location: London/Mumbai

Why hot: Wyman leads Clifford Chance's India team, relocating to Mumbai earlier this year to tighten the firm's relationship with its Indian best friend, AZB & Partners. Certainly this is one to watch, as impetus for the long-awaited liberalisation of India's legal market gathers pace.



Name: Abhishek Saxena
Title: Co-founding partner
Firm/Company: Phoenix Legal
Location: India

Why hot: The ambitious Saxena left with two other partners from Trilegal to create Phoenix Legal in October last year. The firm's bevy of high-profile clients, along with its work on some of the subcontinent's most prominent transactions, has drawn the attention of many, notably Lovells, who reportedly courted the firm for a 'best friends' agreement. This was denied by both parties.