

Allen & Overy

WINNER ALLEN & OVERY
John Rink, managing partner,
Guy Beringer, senior partner

In London and across the globe, Allen & Overy's 2002 was one of momentous progression. Its US practice is thriving – especially from those in its London headquarters. Indeed, in many areas, the firm outperformed the rest of the Magic Circle in 2002 and growth in partners and clients from Paris to Beijing made for a stunning year all round.

Rink's phenomenal nine-year reign will be capitalised upon by his replacement, David Morley, who is, deservedly, one of the most popular and respected leaders in the legal market. He begins his role on 1 May this year, when he will slot into tandem with the existing senior partner Guy Beringer.

Allen & Overy's year got off to a great start with the headline-grabbing hiring of a high-profile four-partner leveraged finance team from Norton Rose. Since then, hires in all four corners of the globe and some major client achievements in the finance and corporate fields have reinforced the relative strengths of this firm,



Wim Dejonghe and Anne Baldock of Allen & Overy (centre, forward) accept the award for Law firm of the year from Christopher Rees of the International Bar Association (right, forward)

amid the already strong field of the world's finest law firms.

> RUNNER-UP
BARLOW LYDE & GILBERT
Kennan Michel, managing partner;
Richard Dedman, senior partner

Coming third place (behind Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer and Slaughter and May, no less) in *Legal Business's* brand new composite rankings, was a strong affirmation of Barlow Lyde & Gilbert's stunning 2002. Dedman's firm has

quietly established itself as one of the powerhouses of insurance and litigation expertise, while building a highly regarded corporate group.

It has, through an extensive one-year evaluation process, consulted all its lawyers and other staff to establish just how the firm can recognise what it is striving to achieve, and how best to do so. Such a team-led approach stems from the tight-knit pure equity partnership and extends right across this hugely successful firm. **LB**

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

Burges Salmon **Guy Stobart, managing partner;**
Richard Wynn-Jones, senior partner

When Burges Salmon became the South-West's most profitable firm, for the first time, in 2002, it marked the return on a strategic process that had taken several years of planning. The profits have come from a national UK practice that is admired by clients of an increasingly international nature, such as Coca-Cola HBC, EMI Group and Reuters – all new clients in 2002.

Clyde & Co **Michael Payton, senior partner**

Clyde & Co used 2002 to raise its international profile and up its performance level in the UK. Both missions were achieved with resounding success, most notably through the merger with leading French insurance firm, HPMBBC; the combination creates a European leader in its field. Profits and turnover are up and, with the global insurance markets operating with frenetic activity, Payton's firm has much of which to be proud.

Herbert Smith **Richard Fleck, practice partner;**
Iain Rothnie, executive partner; Richard Bond, senior partner

Legal Business, which created the term 'Magic Circle' many years ago, enlarged its membership in early 2002 to accommodate Herbert Smith.

Its performance across the board, but most spectacularly in corporate and litigation, over recent years has necessitated the enlargement of the elite.

Irwin Mitchell **Howard Culley, managing partner;**
Michael Napier, senior partner

This Sheffield-based national firm recorded a rise in partner profits of 49% in the financial year that closed in 2002, as well as a 20% rise in turnover, to just over £70m. Its market-leading litigation specialties – most notably in group action cases, and all-spheres personal injury claims – is complemented by a focused London presence and increasingly high-profile regional offices.

Lovells **Lesley MacDonagh, managing partner;**
Andrew Walker, senior partner

Stunning new headquarters premises now play host to a firm that is global, rich, well-hedged, and justifiably ambitious. Through strong and respected management and an unusually consensual international partnership, Lovells faces 2003 and beyond with firmer foundations than many of its peer group top City firms.



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