

WINNER

# DLA Piper Rudnick Gray Cary

**NIGEL KNOWLES, FRANCIS BURCH,  
LEE MILLER, CO-CHIEF EXECUTIVE  
OFFICERS; GEORGE MITCHELL, CHAIRMAN**  
*Momentum, merger, metamorphosis*

While sceptics anticipated the bursting of DLA's bubble in 2004, Nigel Knowles simply set himself 'Mission America' and carried on delivering. While this firm may not rival Slaughter and May for elite M&A work, it's leaving many rivals feeling less dynamic.

Knowles dedicated 2004 to securing a merger with a United States law firm. The negotiations with Piper Rudnick took a further twist when the Baltimore-based law firm merged with a slick Californian outfit, Gray Cary Ware & Freidenrich – home to superstar corporate partner, Greg Gallo. DLA took the diversion in its stride and global merger took place with a worldwide vote on 4 December. The process was managed smoothly, rainmakers at all three legacy firms are still there, and the brand-new combined management of the three co-chief executives display a genuine chemistry in talking up the respective opportunities now on the table for all of the offices. DLA Piper is leading the legal business community by example. It will become increasingly important for the top-end firms to recognise the dynamism on show with a firm of this structure. The market is changing so rapidly that some ancient partnerships still prominent in the City may become bystanders to a corporate world offering widely different possibilities.



(L to R): Ian Hislop, with Tom Freeman and Claire Smith of *Legal Business*, Nigel Knowles, and Dan DiPietro of The Citigroup Private Bank Law Firm Group

## HIGHLY COMMENDED

### ADDLESHAW GODDARD

**Mark Jones, managing partner; Paul Lee, senior partner; Paddy Grafton Green, chairman**

This team is an example of more strong management from the north of England in 2004. The Addleshaw leadership duo of Lee and Jones enacted an acquisition in London that transformed an ambitious but too diminutive London office into what is becoming, with the addition of Theodore Goddard, a credible mid-to-upper market UK outfit.

### BEACHCROFT WANSBROUGHS

**The Right Hon The Lord Hunt of Wirral, MBE, senior partner; Robert Heslett, managing partner;**

The combination of leading practices in commercial health, projects, and insurance capabilities has worked

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**DLA Piper is truly leading the legal business community by example.**

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for Beachcrofts. Since its 1999 merger, the firm has been playing a long game, setting up a business model that should be perfectly placed to capitalise on Clementi's proposed market changes.

## BIRD & BIRD

**David Kerr, chief executive officer;  
Hamish Sandison, non-executive chairman**

It has been a watershed year for Bird & Bird – this year's winners of TMT Team of the Year. The firm is best judged by comparing its status with similar TMT-focused firms that have stood still over the past five years; not so Bird & Bird. The year 2004 saw its international ambitions coming to fruition with debuts in Germany and Beijing.

## SLAUGHTER AND MAY

**Tim Clark, senior partner**

Slaughter and May needs no introduction, nor does it lend itself to hyperbole. But it is worth juxtaposing the position the firm is in after ten years of watching rivals spread around the globe, recoil during a downturn, and deal with the aftermath. Slaughters' client wins remain impressive, its global profile is rising, and it was without doubt the M&A team of 2004. All this with a partnership clearly the most secure of any major European firm.

## WHITE & CASE

**Duane Wall, managing partner**

This is the first-ever inclusion in the shortlist for the ultimate *Legal Business* award for a firm founded and headquartered in the US. It has been making the case that the depth and quality of its English capability means that it should be judged on the same basis as a UK firm. We believe it demonstrated this in 2004.

THE CITIGROUP PRIVATE BANK  
CONGRATULATES

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**DLA PIPER RUDNICK GRAY CARY**  
**2005 LAW FIRM OF THE YEAR**

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*Thinking for Generations*

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