

WINNER

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom

BRUCE BUCK

Head of London Bruce Buck collected this award two years ago after Skadden topped the M&A league tables for 2003, making history in becoming the first ever US firm to claim the number one spot.

Two years on, it continues to be one of the most vibrant and progressive US firms in Europe, where it has proved its competence and commitment. Intensive recruitment has continued over the last two years and the firm defied its usual strategy of hiring individuals when it took the brave step of recruiting a five-partner private equity team from Baker & McKenzie in Germany. It paid off and Skadden is now ranked as one of the leading M&A firms in Germany. In the last quarter of 2005, it hit the headlines in London with a triple whammy, taking M&A partner Adrian Knight from Shearman & Sterling, banking partner Clive Wells from Allen & Overy and tax partner James Anderson from Clifford Chance.

On the deal front, high-profile transactions continue abound. Highlights include advising Doughty Hanson on the £1bn IPO of RHM, representing the controlling shareholders of Sibneft on the \$13.1bn sale of a 72% stake in the company to Gazprom, representing Deutsche Bank, Citigroup Global Markets and JPMorgan as financial advisers to Endesa in its defence against a hostile bid from Gas Natural, and advising Skandia on its defence of a £3.3bn hostile offer from Old Mutual.



(L-R) Skadden's James Anderson, Adrian Knight, Smith & Williamson's Colin Ives, James Healy

HIGHLY COMMENDED

FULBRIGHT & JAWORSKI

Lista Cannon

Fulbright has put together an impressive disputes and arbitration practice in London, where it is already involved in high-profile litigation for a FTSE 100 company. In the last two years, it has recruited David Howell from Baker & McKenzie, and Lista Cannon and Graham Simkin from Richards Butler.

HUNTON & WILLIAMS

Martin Thomas

Hunton & Williams has fast built a powerful and focused London presence and in two years has added 12 laterals to its ranks. Managing partner Martin Thomas brought from Hammonds one of the most respected AIM practices in the country.

KIRKLAND & ELLIS

Stuart Mills

Last year, Kirkland recruited leading name Christopher Colbridge from Shearman & Sterling, to set up an arbitration practice in London. With overall revenues up by 33%, it is now established as one of the main players in the European private equity market.

LATHAM & WATKINS

David Miles

Global powerhouse Latham has proved its commitment to quality growth in London. In 2005, it

recruited John Hull from Richards Butler and Robert Volterra from Herbert Smith to set up an instantly credible litigation practice. It has also secured its position as the leader in the London high-yield market.

LEBOEUF, LAMB, GREENE & MACRAE

Peter Sharp

LeBoeuf has hired the highly sought-after arbitration veteran Arthur Marriott QC from Debevoise & Plimpton. His appointment adds gravitas to the London office's top-tier position in energy and insurance litigation.

SIDLEY AUSTIN

Drew Scott

Sidley Austin is the only US firm that competes with the Magic Circle for a top-tier position in securitisation and structured finance. In 2005, it expanded property finance and competition, recruiting the hugely impressive Steve Clark from Ashurst and Stephen Kinsella from Herbert Smith.

SIMPSON THACHER & BARTLETT

Walt Looney

Simpson Thacher secured one of the most highly respected banking lawyers in London when it took A&O head of leveraged finance Tony Keal. It now houses an impressive three-partner UK banking team: expect it to secure the highly sought-after debt work for KKR.

Congratulations to

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom

Best US Law Firm



Smith & Williamson is the principal UK member of Nexia International, one of the longest established global networks of independent accounting and consulting firms. Our International Professional Practices Group assists firms with their overseas arrangements, as well as advising firms from other jurisdictions setting up in the UK.

Borders should not be barriers in business, so let's work together...

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