

Private client team of the year

WINNER

Mills & Reeve

Roger Bamber

First-class innovation and services to clients

Mills & Reeve lays claim to having the largest team of family lawyers worldwide, and is undoubtedly well respected throughout the market for its overall private client practice, which was bolstered by the addition of the former Addleshaw Goddard family team in Yorkshire during 2008.

The firm was the first to launch a website providing free initial advice on family issues such as separation and divorce, a move that garnered significant media attention. It is also preparing to launch a similar site dedicated to trusts and tax advice.

The family department is recognised for its experience in collaborative law, an area headed up by Roger Bamber, and has also developed an innovative family investment company structure. It acts as a viable alternative to a traditional trust arrangement, and allows families to pass on wealth whilst keeping tax to a minimum, keeping assets protected, and retaining control.

Clients have come forward to describe the team as 'first class. Their technical expertise and appreciation of circumstances allay concerns,

and deliver satisfactory end results.' They are quick to point out that it's the personal service provided by the partners at Mills & Reeve that makes the firm stand out. As one happy customer puts it: 'They are tough and understanding. I felt I was working with a professional boutique firm. They were magnificent.'



Mills & Reeve's Nick Stone (centre) with Punter Southall Group's Julia Whittle

HIGHLY COMMENDED

BAKER & MCKENZIE

Paul Stibbard

Baker & McKenzie has real expertise in Shari'ah law trust issues, and is therefore sought after for its advice to Middle Eastern high-net-worth individuals. With enviable knowledge of Islamic inheritance law, Paul Stibbard is considered a leader in the field. The firm is also recognised for advising on Shari'ah-compliant trusts precedents. Add to this the firm's successful practice advising Russian and CIS entrepreneurs on tax structuring and it is easy to see why Bakers' international clout translates into effective private client work.

CLARKE WILLMOTT

Peter Nellist

Clarke Willmott has enjoyed a stellar year, and its profile in the market continues to grow. As well as boasting a very strong family team, the firm

for World War II veterans; work that received full national press coverage.

FORSTERS

David Robinson

Historically a leader in this field, Forsters continues to demonstrate outstanding strength in family law. As well as several high-profile partner hires over the past year, including a number of individuals from rival firm Withers, the department has seen a 26% rise in revenue growth. The firm stayed busy throughout 2008, advising non-UK-domiciled clients on changes to their portfolios to take into account the changes to non-dom tax rules.

MISHCON DE REYA

James Libson

Well known for its private client expertise, 2008 saw the Mishcon de Reya team link up with Queen Mary, University of London to offer free impartial advice to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community on legal issues, such as cohabitation and civil ceremonies.

PAYNE HICKS BEACH

Fiona Shackleton

Shackleton is considered the go-to name for high-profile divorce issues, and the firm has unrivalled experience acting for clients under intense press scrutiny. Highlights for 2008 include Shackleton's advice to Paul McCartney in one of the most expensive and highly publicised divorce proceedings to date.

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achieved a 25% increase in billings on last year. It demonstrated real expertise advising on the use of IHT death-on-active-service exemption, particularly



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