

ASIA PACIFIC LEGAL 500 RELEASED FOR 2004 / 2005

Now in its sixth edition, *The Asia Pacific Legal 500* is a guide to the leading commercial law firms in the jurisdictions listed. Editors for the Singapore section produce independent commentary speaking to hundreds of lawyers and clients in addition to researching deals worked on when compiling their recommendations as to the premier practices. As with the other editions of The Legal 500 - UK and Europe - the strength of *The Asia Pacific Legal 500* lies in its editorial independence, the objectivity of its recommendations, and the depth of research undertaken by its writers.

We are pleased to have maintained our top tier ranking for Dispute Resolution, and Intellectual Property. Some comments received were:

Banking, Finance and Capital Markets

“David Ang heads a combined corporate, banking and capital markets team at Drew & Napier LLC, which advised Singapore Technologies Pte Ltd, The Great Eastern Life Assurance Company, United Overseas Bank and Overseas-Chinese Banking Corporation on various permutations of high value loan facilities. The firm also advised LKN-Primefield Limited on the second round of the restructuring of the group’s S\$290m debt, following successful involvement in the first round. Sin Boon Ann advised United Overseas Bank on the largest debt issue on the Singapore market of the year. The firm also advised the APP group on its huge debt restructuring programme.”

Construction and Projects

“Drew & Napier LLC’s contractor-focused practice advised on local arbitrations on disputes in respect of, among others, the MRT system, a sewerage project, a public housing project, as well as a petrochemical project and a hotel development in Taiwan. Group head Tan Liam Beng’s engineering background gives him a working knowledge of the construction industry, and clients find him ‘well-versed’. The team as a whole is praised for speed and efficiency, although the loss of department head Christopher Chuah to Wong Partnership is a blow.”

Corporate/M&A

“Drew & Napier LLC advises private and listed Singapore companies and governmental agencies on acquisitions, divestments and joint ventures. Department head David Ang advised SMRT Corporation Ltd on its divestment through a subsidiary of a 100% stake in TIBS Leasing Pte Ltd, and Diethelm Singapore Pte Ltd on the transfer of shares and the transfer of business pursuant to a global restructuring and tax planning exercise. Gary Pryke advised a UK-quoted company on joint venture with a Singapore-listed company, was active in MBOs, and was instructed on several acquisitions with subsequent restructurings. Sin Boon Ann advised Singapore companies on cross-border acquisitions, while Christina Ng advised a consortium led by Changi Airport Managers Pte Ltd on the proposed privatizations of Delhi and Mumbai airports.”

Dispute Resolution

“Allen & Glenhill and Drew & Napier LLC boast the twin titans of Singaporean litigation in K Shanmugam SC and Davinder Singh SC, respectively; ‘the driving personalities behind both practices’ says one rival, which elevate the firms above the rest.”

“Drew & Napier LLC’s grand reputation is due in no small part to its stellar disputes team. Highlights for 2003/4 included advising international institutional investors in a US\$150m fraud claim, and represented several individual shareholders of the Samta Group in a multitude of High Court claims and counterclaims approximating S\$100m (US\$59m). The firm successfully defended UBS AG against claims of, amongst other accusations, breach of fiduciary duty, and also brought actions on behalf of several clients against a consortium of Japanese banks and Sumitomo Corporation on subrogation matters. A libel matter is pending in August 2004. Indranee Rajah SC is an ‘excellent litigator’, say clients, while Davinder Singh SC is at the top of everyone’s list. Raj Singam has a penchant for human interest case; he advised a well-known Singaporean actress on product liability issues in a front-page case involving complications allegedly arising from slimming pills which led to a liver transplant, and is representing the family of victims of the Nicoll Highway disaster.”

Information Technology

“‘Phenomenal business lawyer’ Andrew Ong at Drew & Napier LLC is strong on regulatory matters, advising the Info-Communications Development Authority of Singapore in connection with the review of the Telecom Competition Code, the Media Development Authority of Singapore in connection formulation of the Media Market Conduct Code. The firm also advised a multinational corporation on a major IT outsourcing project, and acted on the implementation of an online property auction.

Intellectual Property

“Drew & Napier LLC’s highly regarded disputes team opposed Allen & Glenhill in the ‘Mac’ dispute. The firm also secured the transfer of a domain name for Samsung Electronics from a Singapore company, and is advising Trek Technology Singapore Ltd on the alleged ‘Thumb Drive’ patent infringement against four defendants. Morris John heads a practice which handles around a third of all IP registration in Singapore, and almost all overseas registration.”

International Arbitration

“Although Drew & Napier LLC’s disputes practice is weighted 80/20 in favour of litigation, the firm maintains a healthy reputation in arbitration. Davinder Singh SC and Managing Director of disputes Jimmy Yim SC are notable by their frequent presence in most of the high-profile arbitrations. Aside from construction claims, the firm has defended Indonesian clients against the Sumitomo Corporation in a S\$92m claim, while issuing a US\$290m counterclaim alleging breaches of a joint venture agreement. Indranee Rajah SC draws praise from clients and arbitrators alike for efficiency, courtesy and knowledge.”

Property

“Drew & Napier LLC operates a small real estate practice advising a range of clients from developers to foreign banks on the acquisition, development and divestment of real estate in Singapore.”

Shipping

“Drew & Napier LLC is our ‘first port of call’, say shipping clients. The firm represented a ship charterer caught in difficulties following the collapse of the South Korean oil company Petaco Petroleum Inc, obtaining an injunction ordering the sub-charterer to pay a cash deposit to secure the release of the ship arrested by two Korean banks holding the bills of lading, a case involving back-to-back letters of indemnity. The firm also advised on a breached shipbuilding contract and acted for an oil merchant on a wrongful rejection claim against the purchasers. The ‘pragmatic and solution-centred’ Ian Koh has ‘a good grasp of the legal issues surrounding a variety of areas’ and ‘gets good results’, while his well co-ordinated team ‘provides efficient and timely responses’.”