

Sets with the most barrister rankings

The table shows the fifty sets that have achieved the highest number of barrister rankings in this edition. The number of rankings includes barristers ranked more than once. Where two or more sets gained the same number of rankings, the smaller one appears first in the table.

Position	Position Last Year	Set	Number of Rankings	Number of Barristers
1	1	Blackstone Chambers	158	75
2	2	Brick Court Chambers	128	70
3=	4	Maitland Chambers	102	63
3=	5=	39 Essex Street	102	80
5	5=	Fountain Court Chambers	100	61
6	3	Essex Court Chambers	98	73
7	5=	Doughty Street Chambers	96	93
8	5=	Matrix Chambers	95	62
9	10	Serle Court	94	50
10	9	One Essex Court	90	67
11	11	3 Verulam Buildings	89	58
12	19=	Keating Chambers	73	50
13=	14	11KBW	71	50
13=	28=	Kings Chambers	71	80
15=	12	3-4 South Square	70	44
15=	16=	Wilberforce Chambers	70	50
17	12	1 Crown Office Row	69	59
18=	16=	Atkin Chambers	66	38
18=	15	Landmark Chambers	66	65
20	26	4-5 Gray's Inn Square	64	49
21	24	Outer Temple Chambers	63	69
22	25	4 Pump Court	62	49
23=	23	20 Essex Street	61	45
23=	18	Four New Square	61	67
25	21=	Guildhall Chambers	60	66
26	21=	4 Stone Buildings	59	28
27	19=	Three Raymond Buildings	57	48
28=	27	3 Serjeants' Inn	56	42
28=	30	Crown Office Chambers	56	85
28=	28=	Garden Court Chambers	56	122
31	32	Monckton Chambers	53	49
32	31	No5 Chambers	51	210
33	37	2 Bedford Row	47	73
34	34=	Francis Taylor Building	46	43
35=	37=	XXIV Old Buildings	44	33
35=	34=	7 King's Bench Walk	44	44
37=		Exchange Chambers	42	131
37=	33	St Philips Chambers	42	172
39	39=	Quadrant Chambers	41	46
40=		Enterprise Chambers	40	35
40=	36	2-3 Gray's Inn Square	40	54
42=	43=	Radcliffe Chambers	38	45
42=		Old Square Chambers	38	66
44=	42	Falcon Chambers	37	36
44=	39=	Henderson Chambers	37	37
44=	47	7 Bedford Row	37	82
47	43=	Devereux Chambers	36	41
48=	45	8 New Square	35	25
48=	39=	2 Hare Court	35	52
50	46	Littleton Chambers	34	48

Sets with the highest proportion of barrister rankings

This table measures the total number of barrister rankings as a proportion of the size of the set. The number of rankings includes barristers ranked more than once.

Position	Position Last Year	Set	Number of Rankings	Number of Barristers	Rankings as % of size
1	1	Cloth Fair Chambers	16	7	228.57
2	2	4 Stone Buildings	59	28	210.71
3	3	Blackstone Chambers	158	75	210.67
4	4	Serle Court	94	50	188
5	5	Brick Court Chambers	128	70	182.86
6	6	Atkin Chambers	66	38	173.68
7	10	Fountain Court Chambers	100	61	163.93
8	9	Maitland Chambers	102	63	161.9
9	7	3-4 South Square	70	44	159.09
10	11	3 Verulam Buildings	89	58	153.45
11	8	Matrix Chambers	95	62	153.23
12	19	Keating Chambers	73	50	146
13	13	11KBW	71	50	142
14=	18	Wilberforce Chambers	70	50	140
14=	14	8 New Square	35	25	140
16	17	20 Essex Street	61	45	135.56
17	12	One Essex Court	90	67	134.33
18	15	Essex Court Chambers	98	73	134.25
19=	16	3 Serjeants' Inn	56	42	133.33
19=	24	XXIV Old Buildings	44	33	133.33
21	22	4-5 Gray's Inn Square	64	49	130.61
22	28	Byrom Street Chambers	18	14	128.57
23	25	39 Essex Street	102	80	127.5
24	27	4 Pump Court	62	49	126.53
25	23	Erskine Chambers	30	24	125
26	19	Three Raymond Buildings	57	48	118.75
27	26	1 Crown Office Row	69	59	116.95
28	–	Enterprise Chambers	40	35	114.29
29	21	11 South Square	18	16	112.5
30	31	Doughty Street Chambers	96	88	109.09
31	32	Monckton Chambers	53	49	108.16
32	29	Francis Taylor Building	46	43	106.98
33	35=	Gray's Inn Tax Chambers	19	18	105.56
34	30	Falcon Chambers	37	36	102.78
35	35=	Landmark Chambers	66	65	101.54
36=	35=	Henderson Chambers	37	37	100
36=	38	7 King's Bench Walk	44	44	100
36=	42	Three New Square	16	16	100
39	40	One Brick Court	15	16	93.75
40	45	Outer Temple Chambers	63	69	91.3
41	33	Four New Square	61	67	91.04
42=	39	Guildhall Chambers	60	66	90.91
42=	50	Hogarth Chambers	20	22	90.91
44	44	Quadrant Chambers	41	46	89.13
45	–	Kings Chambers	71	80	88.75
46	43	Devereux Chambers	36	41	87.8
47	46	Pump Court Tax Chambers	25	29	86.21
48	48	Radcliffe Chambers	38	45	84.44
49	41	5 Stone Buildings	21	25	84
50	–	1 Chancery Lane	30	36	83.33

LEADING SETS BY NUMBER OF RANKINGS

Sets by number of rankings

Ranked in 16 practice areas

Blackstone Chambers

Ranked in 15

Brick Court Chambers

Ranked in 13

39 Essex Street

Ranked in 12

Matrix Chambers

Ranked in 11

Doughty Street Chambers

Maitland Chambers

Serle Court

Ranked in 10

Essex Court Chambers

Fountain Court Chambers

3 Verulam Buildings

Wilberforce Chambers

Ranked in 9

One Essex Court

Ranked in 8

Crown Office Chambers

Henderson Chambers

XXIV Old Buildings

Ranked in 7

20 Essex Street

11KBW

dog and anything with a regulatory tinge is meat and drink to it.

In recent years the set has built up a strong professional discipline practice and further turned itself into the acknowledged market leader for sports law, an area in which it has helped to shape the relevant regulatory framework both domestically and internationally. Other areas of expertise include employment, telecoms, IP and media law. Clients turn to it in these and other areas as it offers “consistently clear, concise and compelling advice.” Instructing solicitors particularly like the fact that the clerks, led by the highly respected Gary Oliver, succeed in matching the character of the advocate to the style of the client. They further favour the fact that “the work produced is always innovative, first class and demonstrates not just a fine legal intellect but also insight into the client’s business.”

The stars on offer here are so numerous that it is difficult to single out individuals, although David Pannick QC’s reputation probably outshines most of the others at the set. Recently ennobled, he is the undisputed doyen of public law and a familiar face in major judicial reviews. He has been acting for the claimants in the Northern Rock judicial review and SRM Global & Others v the Commissioners of HM Treasury. Others of note include administrative law supreme Michael Beloff QC, who “beats up the opposition with charm and style,” and Barbara Dohmann QC, whose “ferocious intelligence and astute tactics” have seen her triumph in many a commercial case. Amongst the younger generation, the “spectacular and passionate” Dinah Rose QC has recently enjoyed a number of triumphs over David Pannick, while the “awesome” Mike Fordham QC is a seemingly permanent fixture in the major judicial reviews of the day.

ble performers to take their place, a testament to the fact that the set is “better than most at bringing its best juniors to fruition as silks.” The current crop of stars at the set includes the “near mythical” Jonathan Sumption QC, everybody’s top choice for heavyweight litigation, who recently acted for the defendants, Chevron and Total, in the Buncefield litigation. Others of great note include Mark Howard QC, “the perfect cross-examiner” and a man who turns out “stunning performances” in high-profile banking litigations. Also present are fellow banking supreme Mark Hapgood QC, and European law expert David Anderson QC who “has every front covered” when it comes to working with the European Court of Justice. Like all the individuals at the set, they are fortunate to be attended to by “vibrant and energetic clerks” who are “very professional and have a lovely team spirit.”

Ranked in 13 practice areas

39 Essex Street

Home to some “extraordinarily bright people,” this is one of the most highly respected public law sets in the country, and a go-to destination for a variety of central and local government matters. It is especially well regarded for its health work and has an excellent reputation in community care, catastrophic injury and industrial disease cases. Ever anxious to extend its profile, it further involves itself in matters as diverse as insurance, product liability, planning and environmental law, and has had success in establishing a high-profile, commercially focused construction team. Civil liberties/human rights and costs are also important parts of the offering.

Sources praise the nationally inclusive nature of the practice, observing: “They take the trouble to visit the regions, giving seminars and presentations and getting to know our teams better.” They also commented on the increasing international strength of the practice, especially in construction. One recurring note was the set’s strong service ethos: “The practice is run in an unstuffy and businesslike way that makes instructing counsel painless,” say solicitors. Many respondents went out of their way to flag up the work of Director of Clerking David Barnes, who is “brilliant at matching our needs to available counsel and looking after us and our clients throughout the process.”

Chambers fields a number of high flyers. The “intelligent, experienced and charming” Nigel Fleming QC is “the silk you need in a heavyweight public law battle.” He is also ubiquitous in civil liberties, environment, professional discipline and more. Edwin Glasgow QC is another giant in public law and a regular in commercial disputes, while “there’s no one better on their feet in a real fight” than construction expert Stuart Catchpole QC. The set also has in Stephen Tro-

Ranked in 16 practice areas

Blackstone Chambers

The “galaxy of talent” on offer at Blackstone Chambers is such that the set excels at whatever area of the law it turns its hand to. It is staffed by individuals who are all “fun, proactive, human barristers – not formal or hierarchical – with an ‘all hands on deck’ mentality.” This “friendly and helpful nature permeates throughout the set from head of chambers to the junior clerks and receptionists such that you feel part of the family,” one instructing solicitor said. The epitome of a modern set, it has the strength in depth to cover many areas of the law with consummate ease. Most would agree, however, that its main strengths lie in general administrative and public matters, European law and commercial disputes. When it comes to public law it is seen as the top

Ranked in 15 practice areas

Brick Court Chambers

‘Head straight to Brick Court’ is the advice if you have a competition, commercial or EU law case on your hands. “One of the kings of the Commercial Bar,” it is home to “formidably clever and very user-friendly” barristers who “give off an air of serenity despite being ferociously committed to their cases.” In terms of intellectual firepower and the calibre of advocacy, “it offers a clear edge over most commercial barristers,” and involves itself in the great matters of the day. Recent examples of cases handled by the set include Stone & Rolls Ltd v Moore Stephens, and Fiona Trust and Holding Corporation & Others v Yuri Privalov & Others.

Such is the quality of this chambers that many of its members go to the Bench. There is, however, a seemingly endless stream of other, more than capa-

mans QC one of the very best in the business when it comes to environmental law.

Ranked in 12 practice areas

Matrix Chambers

This “modern, outgoing outfit” set out to be different, and succeeded. One of the first sets to organise itself in a progressive, businesslike way, it turned itself into “a flexible and creative outfit that is a cut above the rest.” Its members are all commercially aware and “excellent value for money.” They engage in “extremely high-quality work” and are “routinely at the intellectual cutting edge.”

Human rights law forms part of the set’s *raison d’être*, and its individuals are “constantly breaking new ground” before national and international courts and tribunals. The admissibility of evidence gained under torture, support for destitute asylum seekers, voting rights for prisoners, the applicability of the Human Rights Act to British-controlled Iraq and the legality of child curfew orders are just some of the issues they have addressed in the recent past. Matrix Chambers is, however, diverse in its approach. Crime, competition law and employment are mainstays and there is expertise on offer across a wide range of media-related issues. As well as defamation, lawyers also handle privacy and data protection matters.

The sets luminaries include public law maven Rabinder Singh QC, who is “a superbly skilled public lawyer” and has featured in many of the headline cases of the day. Ben Emmerson QC has a commanding reputation in crime and civil liberties cases, while James Crawford QC is respected in international arbitrations and a fixture on the public international law scene. The “superbly talented” Claire Montgomery QC’s practice ranges widely and she is especially rated for her work in crime and fraud.

Ranked in 11 practice areas

Doughty Street Chambers

This public law powerhouse is packed with “down-to-earth, practical, intelligent and thoughtful” lawyers. It is “dynamite” on the public law and human rights scene and “always found at the frontiers of change.” Sources describe it as “cohesive,” and praise it for its culture of information sharing and willingness to enter into a dialogue. It is closely identified with issues of freedom of expression and publication, as well as questions of public obligation towards children and the physically and mentally disabled. Kings of police law, its members are “professional and steadfast” in their representation of claimants.

Beyond the core civil liberties practice there is further expertise in such areas as clinical negligence, extradition, and financial and regulatory

crime. Commentators note that the barristers here are “refreshingly straightforward and not pompous.” Clients report an excellent turnaround on the service front, and are grateful for the provision of “spot-on advice” delivered by “dedicated professionals willing to go the extra mile.” Indeed, the service here generally is “superlative across the board,” with the set’s provision of educational courses and hi-tech facilities coming in for particular praise. Edward Fitzgerald QC tops the tables in public law, and has a magnificent reputation for crime and civil liberties work. He is very highly recommended, as is Phillippa Kaufmann, a civil liberties lawyer “at the peak of her game.”

Maitland Chambers

For many, Maitland Chambers is the paragon of a commercial chancery set. “Big, powerful and well tuned,” it offers strength in depth that few others come close to matching. “You need them on the meatier cases,” sources say, as they have both the quality and depth required to service such matters. The barristers here are “thoroughly commercial in their outlook, very responsive and user-friendly.” They “work exceptionally well together as a team,” and are efficiently managed by joint senior clerks Lee Cutler and John Wiggs, who run “one of the best clerking systems on the circuit.” All commercial work is undertaken, whether it be litigation or arbitration, and the members are known for being “great at unravelling transactions.”

The set is best known for its “exemplary land and property litigation practice,” and is frequently “a first choice for fraud.” It further has a robust insolvency practice and strong media law capability. Clients favour the individuals on offer as they “understand not just the law but also the mechanics of a case,” and “offer cross-disciplinary expertise that can make all the difference.” Leading lights at the set include Paul Girolami QC, whose practice covers a wide range of business disputes in both UK and foreign jurisdictions. “Confident, logical and absolutely commanding,” Catherine Newman QC is also a big-hitter in commercial dispute resolution and has had a great year on the contentious trusts side. Also recommended, Guy Newey QC has been busy as an inspector for the Department of Trade & Industry looking into the collapse of MG Rover. His practice spans the commercial and chancery fields.

Serle Court

This “top-drawer, modern set” does well across the whole of the Chancery field, tackling fraud, banking, partnership, financial services and insolvency matters, to name but a few, to a very high standard. Its “well-organised troupe of heavyweight barristers” handles top-calibre work, and its individuals are known for their “reliable judgement when it comes to the merits of a case and the question of how to win it.” Solicitors particularly turn to these barristers as they are “unafraid to give unpalatable

advice or to stand up to the Bench.”

The “outstandingly helpful, friendly and, above all, honest clerks” are another important ingredient in the set’s success. Observers note that the culture of responsiveness they instil goes all the way up to the QCs. Clients also appreciate being kept informed through regular seminars and legal updates.

The “friendly and immensely skilful” Philip Jones QC’s practice is blossoming on all fronts, from company and insolvency cases to fraud, partnership and professional negligence. He has been advising the Treasury on insolvency issues as part of its Banking Reform Team and recently acted for the claimant in *Fiona Trust and Holding Corporation & Others v Yuri Privalov & Others*. The “meticulous” and “feisty” Philip Marshall QC’s commercial chancery practice encompasses civil fraud, company, insolvency banking and professional negligence work. He thrives at a set presided over by head of chambers, Alan Boyle QC. Boyle’s practice covers chancery and commercial litigation, company and insolvency litigation, trust and probate litigation, civil fraud, financial services, property litigation, and mediation.

Ranked in 10 practice areas

Essex Court Chambers

Throw a stone through the door at this “immensely strong” commercial set and you can’t help hitting a QC. Well over 30 of them are to be found at a set that also provides a solid bank of “approachable, affordable and highly talented” juniors who “work wonderfully as part of a team and are deeply committed to all they do.” The set is a leviathan of the Commercial Bar and has further established itself in pole position for international arbitration and public international law. It started out as a strong shipping set and has maintained an interest in this area. It branched out long ago, though, and now proves effective in all commercial areas, especially fraud, banking, energy and high-value, multi-jurisdictional insurance/reinsurance work.

Clients praise the set for the fact that the “lawyers here are so experienced that they have no learning curve to follow.” One of the most experienced of them all is “fearsome commercial advocate” Gordon Pollock QC, a hugely admired figure at the Bar who recently appeared in the *Buncefield* litigation. No less revered is VV Veeder QC, who has built an absolutely stellar practice and reputation in international arbitrations. He is many people’s first port of call, as are the likes of Andrew Hochhauser QC, a great commercial and employment specialist, and Joe Smouha QC. Smouha recently advised Accenture in its defence against Centrica. Others recommended here include the “engaging, witty and devastatingly effective” David Foxton QC.

Fountain Court Chambers

Fountain Court “is stuffed to the gunnels with incredibly conscientious, hard-working and approachable individuals” who are “proactive, responsive and quite superb in all they do.” These barristers are “in a different league in terms of ability and intellect to much of the rest of the Bar,” and yet “display neither pomposity nor arrogance.” “Gifted advisers” on complicated technical points, they adopt an “easy-going but highly professional” approach to their work, and prove “great team players who are good fun to work with.” The “helpful and flexible” clerks also come in for plaudits with regard to fee negotiations and their cheerful demeanour.

Strong from silk to junior, the individuals here perform well across a raft of commercial disciplines. Banking is clearly the set’s strong suit, as evidenced by the sheer numbers of practitioners it contributed to the recent bank charges litigation. However, the set’s expertise is called upon in a majority of the largest and most high-profile commercial trials across the board, with members often finding themselves on opposite sides in court. Further to this, Fountain Court has great expertise in niche areas, aviation being one that springs most readily to mind. Of its individuals, the “fabulous” Bankim Thanki QC’s “formidable intellect” is always in high demand in prestigious banking and general commercial cases. He recently defended Lloyds TSB in the bank charges litigation, and often advises the CAA on the aviation side. “Open-minded and sound in judgement,” Michael Brindle QC’s place in the pantheon of banking litigators is assured. He is “superb in super-complicated frauds” and has a fine arbitration practice. He recently advised the claimant in *Stone & Rolls Ltd v Moore Stephens*. “Effortlessly excellent,” Tim Howe QC has an “astonishing grasp of complex financial products,” while new silk Richard Handyside QC is widely seen as one of the set’s great coming men.

3 Verulam Buildings

Although synonymous with banking and finance, 3 Verulam Buildings is strong across a broad front, and handles insolvency, civil fraud, insurance and professional negligence matters to a very high standard. Sources report that the individuals present “have a modern mind set” and provide advice that is “original and always spot-on.” “Blending legal prowess with commercial acumen,” they handle a broad range of commercial disputes and are the “first port of call” for many clients in the media, telecoms and technology sectors. Clients report that they are “good-natured individuals, happy to bat round ideas in a round-table discussion.” They are “receptive to ideas” and “thoroughly unpretentious.”

Nick Hill’s “proactive and accommodating” clerking regime was much commented on as being a real positive at an outfit that “exudes professionalism.” Its ranks contain the likes of the “phenomenal” Ali Malek QC, “a great character”

and an “excellent tactician” who excels in banking disputes. He and Richard Salter QC acted in the OFT’s bank charges test case (the former for Abbey and the latter for Clydesdale bank). Ewan McQuater QC’s insight is highly prized in finance circles, especially where there is an insolvency twist. He recently advised the Bank of England on available remedies in the wake of the collapse of the Icelandic banks. Sonia Tolaney is one of the strongest banking juniors in the business. She is seen everywhere in high-profile cases and is a preferred adviser to several investment banks. She recently advised Centrica in its action against Accenture.

Wilberforce Chambers

Wilberforce Chambers dominates the traditional chancery field and further has an excellent and ever-growing reputation in commercial circles. Seen by many as the Bar’s equivalent of Coutts in the banking world, it caters to a private client base of some distinction, and to a host of leading commercial names. It has a fantastic grounding in pensions, trusts, probate and tax, and a strong reputation in real estate litigation. Its “quick, incisive and efficient” barristers are also said to be appearing more frequently in professional negligence matters. The set is blessed in having individuals with “huge depth of experience and brilliant minds,” as well as first-class clerks who “deliver what they promise.”

Wilberforce is by no means the cheapest set going, but the general feeling among clients is that, given the quality on board, it has “surprisingly reasonable fees.” Its key players include the “superbly clever and analytical” Christopher Nugee QC, who excels in all of the set’s major areas and is known as someone who is “not afraid to get down to business.” Others of note include chambers head Jules Sher QC, who caters to a highly prestigious client base, and Brian Green QC, who is hailed by many as “the perfect chancery silk.”

Ranked in 9 practice areas

One Essex Court

This “out and out commercial set” has the necessary “intelligence, clout and finesse” to handle any high-value commercial dispute. It has an especially strong reputation in energy and natural resources, fraud and banking. A real one-stop shop, its members are as at home in arbitration as in litigation, and have the backing of colleagues in supporting areas such as forensic accountancy. For many clients, they are “the best in the business and the natural place to go” to get “more bang for your buck” and “consistently good advice and results.” The “bright, sensible, client-friendly and hard-working” lawyers are constructive and, “whilst realistic, they sit less on the fence than most.” Clients declare them “all up to the mark” and value the fact that “they all jump

to it – they roll their sleeves up and do the job.”

Chambers takes a commercial attitude that clients impute to strong leadership and good clerking: “Their lead silks’ interest in business clients permeates the whole chambers.” Chambers head Lord Grabiner QC “inspires total confidence.” One of the great statesmen of the Bar, he “can turn his hand to anything.” He is an experienced and respected arbitrator, and director of the London Court of International Arbitration. Other renowned names at the set include the universally revered Laurence Rabinowitz QC, who tops several of the tables, and new silk Alain Choo Choy QC, a man with a glittering career as a junior behind him.

Ranked in 8 practice areas

Crown Office Chambers

This “top-drawer” outfit, headed by the highly respected Antony Edwards-Stuart QC, “sets exceptional standards” in personal injury and is a byword for occupational diseases work. It also offers a strength in construction that may surprise first-time users. Clients with tricky insurance issues come here for “a depth of resource and talent at all levels that is difficult to match.” The knowledgeable barristers “bring a broad-shouldered approach to weighty issues,” and sources are particularly struck by their business acumen. Rounding off the picture, observers report “great tactical ability,” meticulous attention to detail and “a team-focused approach that doesn’t tolerate prima donnas.”

Solicitors with anxious professional clients particularly value the members’ “calm, reassuring and unflappable” bedside manner. Clients also praise the “friendly and quick-witted” clerks, who “will move heaven and earth to help.” Of the individuals on offer here, the “frightfully clever” Roger Ter Haar QC is a familiar figure in high-profile professional negligence and construction cases at home and overseas. He is also a major figure on the international arbitration scene. Christopher Purchas QC has been at the top of the Personal Injury Bar for as long as most observers can remember. He frequently appears in the Court of Appeal and acts for both claimants and defendants.

Henderson Chambers

A specialist regulatory and litigation chambers, this “capable and reliable” outfit handles a wide range of cases and has a substantial track record in public inquiries. It is especially recommended for its product liability and health and safety expertise, and is frequently also found in personal injury and clinical negligence matters. Sources comment that the set is large enough to offer a versatile and wide-ranging service, but “not so large as to be impersonal.” It houses “friendly and approachable” barristers who offer a high level of client care and are “always helpful and eager to work in a team.” Clients agree that the clerks deserve a specific mention for producing a “tone and culture” of service

that is a cut above other sets.

Roger Henderson QC's close association with major fatality inquiries belies the fact that he has an extremely varied caseload. His wisdom is prized in many areas, especially professional discipline, public procurement and health and safety. Prashant Papat QC is a major figure on both the health and safety and product liability scenes, and a familiar face in high-profile public inquiries.

XXIV Old Buildings

This classic chancery set covers a wide range of work, impressing in the areas of partnership, pensions, company and insolvency law, to name but a few. Members are kept busy by a solid stream of commercial and private client work, and also offer a nice line in aviation. Much of the work is international, which some sources suggest may account for the set gaining "a lower profile in some areas than it deserves." Indeed, XXIV Old Buildings can claim to be something of a pioneer in offshore work as it was one of the first sets to explore the possibility of instructions in places such as the BVI. As further evidence of its outward-looking approach, it has an office in Geneva that supports a vigorous offshore trust and estates practice, and is also building up an international arbitration capability.

The set is studded with "outgoing and dynamic" barristers who attract a stable of fiercely loyal clients. Highlighting the lawyers' "spot-on commerciality," clients note: "They recognise the commercial basis of our situation and adapt themselves to it – even down to flexibility on fees, if necessary." Clients also praise the user-friendly clerking, singling out head clerk Nick Luckman as someone who "never fails to fit the right barrister to the job in hand." The best-known name here is Alan Steinfeld QC, a "compelling, brilliant performer" who commands the respect of the Bench. A terrier in asset-tracing cases, his "mammoth intellect" ensures that he "succeeds at whatever he turns his hand to." His broad practice ranges from chancery and company to pensions and fraud.

Ranked in 7 practice areas

20 Essex Street

Highly visible and well regarded, this is "one of the strongest commercial disputes stables in town" and often encountered in shipping, insurance and banking matters at home and internationally. It also has an excellent reputation for public international law and for international arbitration work. Dry shipping and commodities are part of this set's heritage, and the barristers' understanding of shipping documents and international trade/sale of goods contracts makes it ideal for banks facing international trade/letter of credit dispute issues. Members are considered "masters of complex jurisdictional issues," and sources report that "they operate to a very high standard at every level." The clerking here also gets the thumbs up from clients.

To many, Iain Milligan QC is "a superstar" of commercial litigation and international arbitration, excellent in both banking and shipping. He recently defended Barclays in the bank charges litigation. Stephen Morris QC is a favourite for EU/competition law advice and advised on Visa/Morgan Stanley (EC Commission) and Visa v EC Commission (Court of First Instance). New to silk, Philip Edey QC has carved a name for himself in insurance and shipping, and handles both litigation and arbitration. Charles Kimmins is one of the best international arbitration juniors on the circuit and specialises in shipping matters.

11KBW

An award-winning employment practice is the jewel in the crown at a superb set that has more strings to its bow than most others. Solicitors comment that the "professional, ethical and very bright" individuals here "crop up in all sorts of places." They are particularly well attuned to all public law-related matters and are seen as the pre-eminent advisers to public bodies, especially local government. The set has nailed down those areas that concern public clients. For example, it proves particularly effective at information, governance, employment, education, procurement and discrimination matters. Education law also provides a strong source of work and, in that context, members have been instructed in a rising tide of discrimination cases.

Instructing solicitors like the set not just because of the barristers on offer, but also because it produces "masses of training materials that deal with precisely the problems solicitors face." The quality of the members is a recurrent theme, with interviewees observing that silks and juniors alike are "confident, courteous and approachable." The clerks receive great feedback, too, with the "always funny, friendly and efficient" Lucy Barbet being singled out for her "gift for making clients feel special." Great silks abound here, such as Christopher Jeans QC, who remains at the cutting edge of employment litigation. John Cavanagh QC is another major figure at the Employment Bar, who also offers expertise in education. "Devastatingly effective" Clive Lewis QC's broad practice sees him appear in an astonishingly diverse range of cases. Clients seek out his expertise in public and EU law in particular.

STARS AT THE BAR

Ranked in 9 practice areas

Alan Steinfeld QC of XXIV Old Buildings

Commentators explored many and various ways of defining "exceptional" when describing this "ingenious and hard-hitting" silk. He is a "compelling and brilliant performer" who marshals arguments with "a sure hand and a sharp mind," commanding the respect of the Bench as he launches round after round of fire with "pin-point accuracy." His "balls" style is not for the fainthearted, but is very much in demand when the chips are down. Thus, he is generally to be

found fighting a corner in high-stakes commercial disputes. A penchant for appearing in the most challenging cases wins him a reputation as something of a miracle worker, able to pull rabbits out of the most unlikely hats. Solicitors note that "his mammoth intellect ensures that he succeeds at whatever he turns his hand to," although asset tracing, company law and pensions work prove particular fortes.

Ranked in 8 practice areas

Philip Jones QC of Serle Court

The blossoming of this high-flying barrister's practice since he took silk in 2006 owes much to the fact that he is "a delight to work with." His combination of "an acutely analytical mind and clarity of purpose" pleases clients, but the real secret to his success lies in his mix of personality and generosity of spirit: "He never fails to charm, and makes sure everyone is involved all the time." What is more, commentators say, "he never blames others when things go wrong" – a rare

Stars at the Bar

Ranked in 9 practice areas

Alan Steinfeld QC
of XXIV Old Buildings

Ranked in 8 practice areas

Philip Jones QC
of Serle Court
David Pannick QC
of Blackstone Chambers
Jonathan Sumption QC
of Brick Court Chambers

Rankings in 7 practice areas

Thomas de la Mare
of Blackstone Chambers
Richard Drabble QC
of Landmark Chambers
Ian Glick QC
of One Essex Court
Roger Henderson QC
of Henderson Chambers
Richard Hill
of 4 Stone Buildings
Timothy Howe QC
of Fountain Court Chambers
Philip Marshall QC
of Serle Court
Nigel Pleming QC
of 39 Essex Street
Anthony Trace QC
of Maitland Chambers

trait indeed. Not afraid of hard work, he rolls up his sleeves and “gets a firm, no-nonsense grip quickly and confidently, even on really heavy cases.” He is closely identified with commercial disputes and has been active in civil fraud cases, being up to his eyebrows recently in asset recovery proceedings pertaining to the Madoff affair.

Jones is a well-known favourite of HMRC, and more than one client declares him “my only man for tax.” He is a skilled advocate who is “effective with high-profile clients,” among whom oligarchs seem to loom large. Sources put his success with difficult clients down to the fact that “he has very broad shoulders.” In court, he focuses ruthlessly on winnable points and is “very quick on his feet.” “He always seems so reasonable,” complain opponents. Of late he has acted for Sovcomflot in its wrangles with former executives and third parties.

David Pannick QC of Blackstone Chambers

The “confident presence” and “quicksilver mind” of this “consummate all-rounder” are great comforts to his fiercely loyal clients, who get decidedly nervous if they can’t secure his services. His “quick, straightforward approach is a hit with judges” and he is “a must-have in high-stakes cases.” Sources

describe him as “intellectually commanding, incisive and confident, but never overbearing,” and value his “amazingly concise” advice. “You simply can’t go wrong with him,” they say, for anything involving public and regulatory issues. Pannick is a key feature in the civil liberties and human rights landscape, regularly appearing in the High Court, Court of Appeal, House of Lords and the European Court of Human Rights. Ubiquitous in the causes célèbres of the day, he recently led for SRM Capital in the judicial review brought by former shareholders of Northern Rock against the decision to nationalise the bank, and advised The Crown in R (on the application of Purdy) v Director of Public Prosecutions.

Jonathan Sumption QC of Brick Court Chambers

Captains of industry, trade and government resort to more than sharp elbows to secure the services of the legend that is Jonathan Sumption QC. “A totally flawless brief,” he is a man of such sterling reputation that “on any given case his presence alone is enough to hasten a beneficial settlement.” The reputations of most barristers are secured on the stature of the matters they handle. For Sumption, “the cleverest man of his generation,” it is rather the other way round, and he may be expected to appear only when the number of zeroes on the brief fee and the intellectual challenges fuse in a critical mass.

Sumption is “the complete package; a perfect combination of sharp analysis, irresistible advocacy and damned hard work.” His attention to detail and “awesome ability to absorb acres of facts, solve complex intellectual puzzles and distil answers with a crisp, clear and inexorable logic” make him “simply the best in the business.” “Supreme in any field,” he is a powerful advocate who “inspires tremendous confidence” in his clients. He defended HM Government in the Hutton Inquiry and his reply on Moore Stephens in the Court of Appeal was “stunning – even the judges were amazed.” It is with relief that *Chambers* hears rumours of his possible appointment to the Supreme Court, which should it ensue will release us from the burden of rounding up the dizzying maelstrom of superlatives and hyperbole that surround this “brilliant, astonishing, versatile, sharp-as-a-knife, polymathic one-off.” His status as “one of the finest barristers of all time” is secure.

Ranked in 7 practice areas

Thomas de la Mare of Blackstone Chambers

Tom de la Mare is “the perfect antidote to the usual notion of a dry, stiff barrister,” according to his many votaries. A man of immense charm, he acts in a wide range of public law matters, both for and against public bodies, and enjoys getting his teeth into cases involving substantial ele-

ments of ECHR and EU law, often in a commercial or competition law context. He is also interested in privacy, property and social security matters. Pharmaceutical regulation is a further forte, and he advises on MHRA, NICE and marketing authorisations. His “open and accessible” nature is popular with clients, who like dealing with this “bright and human” junior. A “committed, passionate and impressive” advocate, he can go at a case “like a battering ram” when the situation demands it. His recent high-profile work includes acting for thousands of small shareholders in the ongoing challenge to the fairness of the Treasury’s compensation scheme established after the nationalisation of Northern Rock.

Richard Drabble QC of Landmark Chambers

The “thoughtful and balanced” Richard Drabble QC is noted for his “outstanding ability to work as part of a team.” Instructing solicitors “can’t stress enough just how good he is at his job,” whether he is handling public law, planning or local government matters. Always ready to pitch in and fight, he is especially rated for his knowledge of the minerals industry. Despite giving an impression of being “serenity personified” (something which is extremely appealing to local authorities), Drabble is totally committed to what he does and “will drill right down into detail others never even suspected existed.” He “pulls together an extremely compelling case” and the other side has been known to fold even before he has finished presenting it.

Commentators note that he has no equal in compulsory purchase and compensation law, areas in which he is described as “the best you’ll ever work with.” Such is his talent that he “has the ear of the judges and the respect of even the most hard-nosed clients.” In formal settings he strikes “precisely the right balance between pushing the client’s agenda and monitoring the responses of tribunal members.” He “makes the right points at the right time and doesn’t overstep the mark,” say solicitors. Declaring him a “fantastic thinker and fantastic advocate,” clients attribute their successes directly to his “sheer brilliance and intellectual ability.”

Ian Glick QC of One Essex Court

The “unbelievably clever” Ian Glick QC is a long-standing grandee of the Bar, best known for his “masterly” contributions in banking, financial services, oil and gas, and arbitration matters over the years. He is especially well regarded in regulatory matters. Observers praise his “excellent old-school courtroom style,” declaring him “cut from a cloth of rare quality,” and peers are moved to salute an “always formidable opponent who cuts right to the chase.” Quiet and unassuming, he “metamorphoses as he walks into court,” becoming an “astonishingly charming man with an intelligence you can only dream of.” He was a trailblazer in

terms of barristers entering the world of arbitration and his advice is sought as a matter of course in major financial and oil and gas cases.

Glick runs an efficient ship when heading up tribunals, being “able to see both sides clearly and move things along at a good lick.” “Nobody has a better technical grasp,” say sources, and his advice is “so diligent and so thorough” that “clients are always deeply impressed.” He sits as a deputy High Court judge in the Commercial Court and the Chancery Division. In addition, he is a fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators and a chairman of the Disciplinary Tribunals of the International Petroleum Exchange. As part of a wide-ranging practice, he provides a range of high-level strategic advice to the FSA on policy issues.

Roger Henderson QC of Henderson Chambers

If ever there was a doyen of the Bar, this luminary is it. His close association with major fatality inquiries belies a varied diet of work that makes him one of the most protean figures in practice today. His highly prized store of wisdom has been applied to many areas, with professional discipline, public procurement, local government finance and health and safety matters proving particularly fertile sources of work. Clients “bring him in on difficult cases that touch on many areas of law,” as they realise he provides “clear and unequivocal advice” and “brings so much more to the party than most other barristers.”

He recently advised in the Buncefield litigation and is representing the LFEPA at an inquest into the first London firefighters to die during firefighting in a decade. He also spent much of this year and last chairing a Joint Disciplinary Scheme tribunal considering accountants’ disciplinary proceedings arising out of the Equitable Life affair; this was the longest-running Joint Disciplinary Scheme tribunal ever held.

Richard Hill of 4 Stone Buildings

“Class act” Richard Hill’s thriving commercial practice is centred on City-based litigation work. He is frequently found wherever banks, companies, funds and bondholders are failing to see eye-to-eye. On the chancery side, he handles a lot of fraud and asset recovery work. Whilst often thought of as a banking lawyer, he increasingly finds himself at the sharp end of insolvency cases. Those who have been “thoroughly beaten up by him” speak admiringly of this “talented courtroom operator,” noting that “he can turn on the aggression when need arises.” “Thorough,

decent, hard-working and tenacious,” he is further valued for his “creative and innovative” approach. At the same time, he is “always safe and pragmatic,” and “you just know you’ll get good service from him.” Hill was recently involved in some eye-catching work for an Egyptian businessman in *Benedetti v Sawiris & Others*, a claim arising out of an LBO of an Italian telecoms company.

Timothy Howe QC of Fountain Court Chambers

“A wizard” when it comes to complex financial products, the “hugely bright” Timothy Howe QC has an “effortless grasp” of the many byzantine financial instruments and products on the market. His practice extends further than mere banking law, however, and he is in high demand for insurance, energy, telecoms, civil fraud and professional negligence work. To the relief of instructing solicitors, he is a team player who gets on well with clients, who value both his commercial and strategic acumen, and the fact that he is “no prima donna.” In advocacy he is eloquent, and “in court he is a terrier,” say sources. Something of a “street fighter,” he “throws himself into cases and drives for the win.” An expert at both arbitration and litigation, his recent work has included acting in *Ixis v Terra Firma* and appearing for HBOS in the bank charges litigation.

Philip Marshall QC of Serle Court

Philip Marshall QC is a “tough and fearless” barrister who “has a formidable grasp of detail and is excellent on his feet.” His deep familiarity with banking and financial products, and the “concise and punchy” zeal with which he fights his clients’ corner, make him a hugely popular figure among solicitors. Those that instruct him admire his “superhuman meticulousness” and “measured but forthright” approach in court, particularly favouring him for fraud and insolvency matters as well as his banking work. “Something of a courtroom animal,” he is “one of the few advocates who you feel really gives his all to win.” His “keen eye for strategy” and “ability to keep his eye on the ball in large-scale, multiparty litigation” serve him well. Marshall’s commercial chancery practice covers civil fraud, company, insolvency, banking and professional negligence. Of late, he has handled a number of fraud claims arising out of insolvencies, and has tackled a series of cases involving offshore jurisdictions.

Nigel Pleming QC of 39 Essex Street

Clients beat a path to Nigel Pleming QC’s door due to his “ability to explain things to the judge in a way that makes everything sound perfectly sensible.” “Knowledgeable and supportive,” he is a user-friendly barrister who is known for “lightning-quick responses” and “assured advocacy.” His “suave and easy manner” is accompanied by “a clear sense of direction” in court. “Top of the tree” for heavyweight public law battles and judicial reviews, his cases range from nuclear power consultations to immigration. Much of his work involves advising the government, but he may also be found acting against it on behalf of organisations such as Greenpeace.

Opponents have learned to respect the “remarkable rigour” with which Pleming prepares a case, and clients love the “tactical nous” he displays at all times. His varied caseload is currently dominated by his defence of what used to be the Council for Social Inspection against a challenge by local authorities to the third runway at Heathrow. He also recently acted in *Secretary of State for the Home Department v Lord Alton of Liverpool* and others in the Court of Appeal on a matter relating to the removal of an allegedly terrorist group from the list of proscribed organisations. He has also been spending quite a bit of time in Belize acting for Belize Bank and Belize Telecommunications.

Anthony Trace QC of Maitland Chambers

This “punchy and assertive” barrister is a “strategist par excellence,” say sources, and “a force to be reckoned with.” He is a “practical and tenacious litigator who is always on top of his material,” and is known for fighting to the death for his client. His success stems from the fact that not only is he a potent cross-examiner, but he also has “a great instinct for what to say and what not to say.” Clients prize him and judges respect him due to the fact that he “steers a clear path through complicated problems to attack the heart of the issues at hand.” Opponents, too, are obliged to doff their caps to him, admitting that “his performances in court are phenomenal – you really have to raise your game.”

Trace is a stalwart of the chancery commercial scene and a regular in arbitrations at home and internationally. His broad practice takes in chancery, fraud and restructuring with equal aplomb. He recently succeeded in *North Principal Investments Fund Ltd v Greenoak*, a matter concerning ownership rights in a billion-euro wind farm.