



From left: Sharon Beesley, Stephanie Paiva Sanderson, Kiera Petty, Marco Montarsolo (seated), Chris Buchan, Brenda Lehmann, Domonique Rivas, Alan Doughty and Saul Froomkin

## The Rise of ISIS Law

When Marco Montarsolo and Sharon Beesley decided to establish ISIS Law in 2008, in the middle of the global economic crisis, it was a discouraging time. Yet five-and-a-half years later, ISIS Law is a thriving boutique law firm boasting nine lawyers, seven support staff and a reputation as a mould-breaking and dynamic firm. In August 2013, ISIS Law grew out of their modest office in the old Crow Lane Bakery building and moved into Andrew's Place on Church Street. Stepping into their bright and airy penthouse overlooking Hamilton Harbour, one can immediately appreciate this is a firm fast becoming a major player in the Bermuda legal-services landscape.

ISIS Law specialises in corporate and commercial law, investment funds, banking, finance, insurance and litigation, and in a few short years has made great strides in expanding its legal capabilities. The firm has recently worked with some of Bermuda's most sophisticated businesses on market-leading transactions and has seen new overseas investors injecting capital into commercial enterprises in Bermuda. Significant recent transactions include the acquisition of Butterfield Fulcrum Group by Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group and its subsequent acquisition of the Meridian Group; the acquisition by Clarien Group of a controlling stake in Capital G Group; and the acquisition of Alea

Group Holdings (Bermuda) Ltd. and American Safety Reinsurance Ltd. by subsidiaries of Catalina Holdings (Bermuda) Ltd. ISIS Law is also supportive of several small- to mid-size local businesses. Yo Cherry, a popular new frozen yogurt retail enterprise on Bermudiana Road, is just one example of the successful smaller companies ISIS Law has worked with.

ISIS Law's burgeoning reputation is also attracting a number of top lawyers to the firm, including the well-known litigator Saul Froomkin, OBE, QC, who has been with the firm since 2012 and is a director and the head of the firm's litigation department. In turn, ISIS Law's strategy to attract key talent has fuelled its rapid growth.

Looking back on the firm's progress over the last few years, cofounder and director, Beesley, says, "Perhaps the most remarkable part of ISIS Law's success is that we have achieved this at a time when most firms have been cutting back." Beesley attributes the firm's success to two main factors: ISIS Law's unique "boutique" approach and its special relationship with Bermuda.

The term "boutique" refers to a culture in which client satisfaction is the ultimate goal. By virtue of the nimbleness resulting from the firm's size and structure, the expertise at ISIS Law can be tailored to the client's individual needs and the lawyers can be very personal, flexible

and innovative in their approach. "We work hard to understand what clients are looking for when they seek our services and encourage our lawyers to be approachable yet knowledgeable and responsive to clients' needs," Beesley says. Given the economic crisis, she adds, "We also are dedicated to building long-term, trusted relationships with clients to help them structure their businesses to optimise results, remain commercially aware and be able to take advantage of opportunities for growth as they arise." ISIS Law staff are keen to add that they also see "boutique" as referring to a collaborative, non-stuffy, family-oriented working environment. "We enjoy what we do," says Montarsolo, cofounder and managing director.

The ISIS Law style has won much admiration and praise from the firm's clients. Tim Calveley, deputy CEO of Mitsubishi UFJ Fund Services, speaks highly of the firm's handling of Mitsubishi's important milestones: "We have trusted ISIS Law to handle our legal matters since its inception. Their lawyers are down-to-earth, hard-working and responsive; they understand how to work with their clients to achieve ultimate goals." Mitchell



Hedstrom, a founding member of the Clarien Group, similarly recognises the strengths of the ISIS Law team. Of the recent acquisition of a controlling stake in Capital G Bank and its subsidiaries by the Clarien Group, he says, "[It] could not have been accomplished without the dedication of the team at ISIS Law who stuck by our vision and did everything in their power to see the deal come to fruition."

As a Bermuda resident for over 21 years, Beesley recognises the importance of business for the future of Bermuda's economy. She is

also highly appreciative of the role Bermuda's unique legal and financial environment plays in the creation and growth of new business.

"ISIS Law understands the importance of encouraging investment into Bermuda's economy and we are here to facilitate such transactions to the fullest extent. We have been extremely pleased with the increase in business opportunities for Bermuda, both domestically and internationally, in the recent months and are encouraged by this trend," she says, adding: "We are also very appreciative of the efforts of the Bermuda Monetary Authority which is always willing to work with quality investors and business opportunities for Bermuda, yet at the same time works hard to ensure that we maintain a reputation as a clean, sound and innovative jurisdiction."

It is this special relationship between Bermuda and business that Beesley and Montarsolo credit with fostering unique businesses such as ISIS Law, which can give back to Bermuda's economy in many different ways. For as well as profiting Bermuda's business community, they believe it is essential that ISIS Law plays a socially responsible role in Bermuda, too.

ISIS Law is committed to investing in Ber-



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muda's youth by giving opportunities to, and training, young Bermudians. As Montarsolo explains, "The future growth and stability of Bermuda will be greatly assisted if the younger generations of Bermuda are well-educated and skilled." To this end, and despite only comprising six lawyers in 2011, ISIS Law engaged two Bermudian pupils, one of whom was called to the Bar in February and the other is expected to be called in May. Beesley knows well the benefits of nurturing Bermudian talent and attracting skilled non-Bermudian lawyers. "We are proud to have so many Bermudians as members of our team and also appreciate and need the wealth of knowledge our non-Bermudian members bring to the table." Ultimately, Beesley says, "ISIS Law is stronger for this union, and both our lawyers and our clients benefit at the end of the day. ISIS Law is a true meritocracy."

ISIS Law is also committed to the wider community through partnering and supporting local not-for-profits. Its team has been involved with such organisations as Caron Bermuda, Summerhaven, The Women's Resource Centre and the Bermuda Equestrian Federation. In addition, ISIS Law partners

with KatKids, a volunteer fund-raising organisation dedicated to supporting projects which help children in need of food, shelter, health care or education. The founder of Katkids says: "We're so grateful for the support that the ISIS Law Group has given over the years. They have been extremely generous and the support, passion and involvement of their staff have made a significant positive impact on our fund-raising achievements to date. This type of partnership between nonprofit and business is essential for small charities like us."

When asked what he sees as the defining elements of ISIS Law, Montarsolo concludes, "We are a very family-oriented firm and have been fortunate to bring such an interesting team together and look forward to growing our practice and increasing our client base. We believe we have broken the mould of the traditional law firm and want to thank our clients who have been with us through the more difficult times. As we look to the future we know we will be judged by our actions and our work ethic and we welcome the opportunity to show what we are made of. ISIS Law is a firm that is looking forward to a positive future, for itself and for Bermuda."

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