

# Private equity team of the year

## WINNER

# Weil, Gotshal & Manges

## Michael Francies

### *Lion Capital and Blackstone's Orangina Schweppes exit*

Elite Wall Street firm Weil has had a remarkable year. Although mandates on the bankruptcies of Lehman Brothers, AIG and General Motors meant that its restructuring practice has rightly been the centre of attention, this year's US Firm of the Year Award winner proved that it is far from a one-trick pony. Francies' team once again demonstrated its private equity prowess through advice to Lion Capital and Blackstone on the €2.6bn sale of European drinkmaker Orangina Schweppes to Japanese brewer Suntory. The hugely successful deal was one of the largest exits of the year, marking the continued return of private equity sales following almost two years of inactivity. It also represented a lucrative payout for Lion Capital and Blackstone, with each more than doubling their original €300m investments at an impressive annual return on investment of 30%.

## HIGHLY COMMENDED

### CLIFFORD CHANCE

#### David Walker

CC underlined its private equity credentials through advice to Barclays Private Equity, the Barclays Integrated Infrastructure Fund and BIIF Bidco on the £558.6m acquisition of Infrastructure Investors. The deal was funded by a £346m debt facility, despite turbulence in the market, and also required the

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cancellation of Infrastructure Investors' Financial Services Authority authorisations.

### KIRKLAND & ELLIS

#### Stephen Gillespie; Neel Sachdev

In a year when debt-led deals were in scarce supply, K&E won highly sought-after mandates to advise Irving Place Capital and Oaktree Capital Management on their joint \$485m acquisition of Chesapeake, and KPS Capital Partners on its acquisition of Waterford Wedgwood. The Chesapeake sale was conducted under the Bankruptcy Code, requiring Gillespie and Sachdev's team to resolve pension deficit issues and reach an agreement with the pre-petition secured lenders on a discounted payoff.



(L-R) Weil, Gotshal & Manges' Barry Fishley and Sarah Priestley with Ian Moulard of Moulard Bloom

### PINSENT MASON'S

#### Gregg Davison

Pinsents punched above its weight by scoring a role advising HSBC Private Equity and Newco on one of the year's biggest deals: the £170m secondary buyout of Scottish oil and gas services company Viking Moorings from Inflexion Private Equity. Over 40 lawyers from practices throughout the firm acted on the deal, which was financed by a four-bank club and saw Inflexion roll over £25m of proceeds into the transaction to maintain a minority stake in the business.

### SLAUGHTER AND MAY

#### Mark Horton; Roland Turnill

Having advised Global Infrastructure Partners on its acquisition of City Airport in 2008, Slaughters further strengthened the relationship with advice on the company's \$1.46bn purchase of London Gatwick Airport. The firm also acted on the £1.13bn debt financing for the deal, which comprised acquisition, capex and working capital facilities.

### TRAVERS SMITH

#### Jeremy Walsh

Walsh's private equity team is acknowledged for its work advising Bridgepoint Capital on its €312m public offer for Finnish healthcare company Terveystalo. The first private equity-backed public-to-private takeover in Finland, the deal included refinancing facilities totalling €160m to rollover and deleverage Terveystalo's existing debt.

# MOULAND BLOOM

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For a further discussion in complete confidence, contact:  
Jane Glassberg - 020 7269 9253 - [jane@moulandbloom.com](mailto:jane@moulandbloom.com),  
Lawrence Bloom - 020 7269 9251 - [lawrence@moulandbloom.com](mailto:lawrence@moulandbloom.com),  
Ian Mouland - 020 7269 9252 - [ian@moulandbloom.com](mailto:ian@moulandbloom.com)