

High Flyers

Withers launches Global Asset Finance Business from Hong Kong and strengthens its foothold in Asia.



Headquartered in London, Withers is a 125 year-old international law firm with a world-renowned distinct focus on the personal and commercial interests of highly successful and ultra-wealthy individuals. Currently one of the largest international law firms in Hong Kong, the firm further expanded its office by launching its Global Asset Finance practice in 2022 from the city, with the hiring of Hong Kong-based senior partner Paul Jebely and team. Jebely is widely regarded as one of the top private aviation lawyers in the world. The dedicated asset finance team significantly enhanced the profile of the firm's existing work for ultra-high-net-worth individuals and family offices, tapping into the opportunities arising from the booming private wealth in Hong Kong and globally.

Promising Prospects in the GBA

Understanding and serving the legal needs of the ultra-wealthy requires both special client service skills as well as a multidisciplinary service offering. In 2008, Withers established its Hong Kong office to offer on-the-ground support in

Asia for the firm's international client base. Originally the Hong Kong office focused on private client matters but has since expanded into a full-service firm, covering family law to investment funds.

Jebely believes that Hong Kong is a unique gateway to Greater China and Asia beyond. "The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) has enormous potential," he said. "It really embraces the entrepreneurial spirit. I see Zhuhai coming up as one of the next destinations, for example. Law firms and legal services are needed in the GBA, and lawyers will always gravitate to financial centres where there is a local market for legal services, though they will also need to be able to travel freely when necessary to capture regional and global work. It is also exciting to see the airport's three runway system and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge that expanded connectivity."

Highly Skilled Talent with International Mindset

Jebely believes that one of the city's best traits is its people's inherent work ethic and international outlook. Professionals

here have the opportunity to hone their legal skills while working on large deals and cases with big firms. "The infrastructure is all here," he stated. "We have an ecosystem of commerce that rivals London, and the fact remains that Hong Kong remains one of the top three global financial centres and a city with very significant private wealth and other deep pockets of capital."

On the personal front, the father of three children all born in Hong Kong feels that the city is one of the best places to raise a family. "I could be based almost anywhere in the world, but I have been based in Hong Kong for the past 13 years, and have no plans to leave. One of Hong Kong's best features is its connectivity. I could have dinner in Central and breakfast in Johannesburg without much hassle," Jebely enthused. "The natural side of Hong Kong is spectacular. We have extraordinarily low crime rates and low tax rates. I believe Hong Kong on its worst day rivals most other cities on their best days, and that Hong Kong's best days are still yet to come."

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Paul Jebely
Senior Partner and Global Head of Asset Finance
Withers

Withers

- Founded in 1896 in London, Withers is an international law firm with 18 global offices, more than 180 partners and US\$307 million in total revenue
- Established in Hong Kong in 2008, the firm offers a full range of legal services to clients

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