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Barrister of the Year

WINNER Robert Jay QC, Thirty Nine Essex Street

He may be quietly spoken, but Robert Jay QC has been heard by just about everyone in the UK this year. As counsel to the Leveson Inquiry, he has quizzed the most influential figures in media and politics during the high-profile review, including News Corp founder Rupert Murdoch.

While many may have found this task daunting – particularly as the inquiry is being followed so closely by the world’s media – Jay has been meticulous in his preparation, taking every point head-on and refusing to bow.

Leveson is not his first venture into the public eye this year. As a

silk of choice for the Government, Jay was instructed by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) against personal injury claims relating to the ‘Mau Mau emergency’ in Kenya in the 1950s. While the FCO defence was unsuccessful, it still helped solidify Jay’s reputation.

He was successful in representing 30,000 Ivory Coast residents in their bid to claim compensation from oil company Trafigura. The matter settled, but Jay was instrumental in the construction of the case, reflecting

an ability to digest complex scientific and medical documents, and distilling evidence to produce winning arguments.

Compelling, calm and exceptionally bright, Jay is a standout winner.



2ND Charles Gibson QC, Henderson Chambers

Not every silk keeps a set of drums in their office to help them relax after a bruising day in court, but then Henderson Chambers’ Charles Gibson QC is not your typical silk.

Praised for his leadership abilities as head of chambers, which saw him instil a ‘no excuses’ regime, Gibson is willing to set examples for others to follow. Those he has led in the courts say he is a team player full of energy, who inspires with his intelligence and strategic thinking.

In the past year Gibson was instructed by the Ministry of Justice to lead its defence of the ‘atomic veterans’ litigation. Gibson, at the cutting edge of group action law, was tasked with defeating 1,000 claimants who wanted to sue the Government for alleged exposure during nuclear tests in the 1950s.

Gibson’s ability to manage a case was put to the test as he was at the heart of the decision-making process in the litigation. All this while his opponents switched counsel and the direction of the case.

Gibson is recognised for his management capability and meticulous advocacy.

3RD Stuart Catchpole QC, Thirty Nine Essex Street

Stuart Catchpole QC of 39 Essex Street is widely regarded as one of the leading silks of the modern bar, pulling in case after case.

The breadth and diversity of his practice underpins his popularity. His practice includes public inquiries, national security work, administrative law and public procurement, through to commercial, construction and engineering, as well as the professional negligence and energy sectors.

What sets Catchpole apart is that he is at the top of his game in all his focus areas, making him in demand both at home and abroad.

Catchpole is extremely popular with litigators, who praise his commercial approach and advocacy style, and maintain that he is one of the most approachable barristers at the bar.

In court Catchpole has repeatedly shown his ability to give witnesses a good verbal pummelling without resorting to dramatics.

The hardworking Catchpole is commended for possessing a highly analytical mind and an unstuffy approach.

SHORTLIST

Thomas Linden QC, Matrix Chambers
Ingrid Simler QC, Devereux Chambers
Richard Todd QC, 1 Hare Court
Hugh Tomlinson QC, Matrix Chambers