

Extract from:

Stars at the Bar 2013 – the up-and-coming barristers making their mark

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Ben Rigby profiles 10 of the most acclaimed young barristers making their mark in a fiercely competitive arena. Two of the ten are barristers at Essex Court Chambers.



Siddharth Dhar, Essex Court Chambers *Called in 2005*

Siddharth Dhar thrives on high-stakes disputes. The higher the value, the more able he appears to his colleagues. The mix of arbitral, litigious or advisory matters on which the Essex Court junior has been involved have values ranging from \$4bn (£2.5bn) to \$80bn this year alone. They all tend to involve very complicated issues of fact and law, and often involve states or state entities. For instance, Dhar teamed up with Toby Landau QC and Sam Wordsworth QC in a \$260m (£161m) expropriation claim against a central African state.

So why is Dhar so valuable? One leader says he has "an amazing ability to get to the heart of a case and to provide truly incisive comments that lead to the winning of a case". One partner says Dhar "has been very impressive as a junior with no leader in all the cases we have instructed him in, including two difficult anti-suit injunctions, both of which were resounding successes".

Dhar also "manages to combine razor-sharp legal acumen and punch with disarming charm and politeness", which is "a deadly combination". Another commends Dhar's can-do attitude in a case where he "came on board at a late stage, but got on top of a huge volume of paper very quickly indeed and saw straight to the heart of the issues". The solicitor adds that Dhar is "calm and unflappable, and instils confidence in the clients. He has the presence of a barrister far beyond his call."

Dhar says "most of my leaders have helped me in some way", and names Paul Key QC as an influence on his career to date.



Amy Sander, Essex Court Chambers *Called in 2006*

Academia might have been Amy Sander's first career choice, but "it was the independence of the job, opportunity to effect change and variety of challenges that drew me to the Bar".

She acknowledges "a somewhat wiggly route to becoming a barrister", including living abroad and teaching law at Cambridge, but in Essex Court Chambers she has found her natural home.

Sander welcomes the set's diversity in its practice areas, "including being one of the best places to practice public international law" as well as employment law where she is also attracting notice. Second, she says "because of its warm camaraderie, doors are always open if you want to bounce ideas around".

Ideas are not her only stock in trade. Solicitors call Sander "bright and very responsive", while her leaders say she "has always demonstrated a sound appreciation of limits, including assessing the limits of what can be argued on the basis of the information available, and where further instructions are needed".

One lawyer says: "Whether in terms of skeleton arguments or longer written pleadings, Amy's written advocacy is first rate," adding that "her legal and research skills are excellent and exceptional in terms of mastering and getting to the heart of issues." Another silk adds that Sander has "very quickly gained the confidence of a canny and experienced foreign client on some very delicate questions".

Sander's enthusiasm also makes her stand out as "extremely easy to work with... very keen to get on with the job in hand".