

Simon Birt KC

YEAR OF CALL: 1998 YEAR OF SILK: 2015

"Simon is, quite simply, brilliant. ... His urbane courtroom demeanour has a steely core – he won't be pushed around and is the intellectual equal of anyone at the Bar."

Legal 500 2023

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Practice Overview

Simon's practice covers all aspects of commercial litigation and arbitration, including banking and financial services, insurance, civil fraud, professional negligence and shipping. Described as a "true master of the courtroom" (Chambers & Partners, 2023), he is listed in the legal guides as a leading silk in the fields of commercial dispute resolution, civil fraud, banking and financial services, energy and shipping. He has appeared in a wide variety of cases in the High Court in London, in offshore litigation and in arbitration.

He has recently been acting in a range of heavy commercial disputes, among which are the group action Ingenious litigation, *Recovery Services v Rukhadze* (dealing with profits made from recovering the assets of Badri Patarkatsishvili) and the long-running dispute in the BVI in *Renova v Emmerson*.

Commercial

Simon has been involved in numerous pieces of heavy commercial litigation in the UK and a number of other jurisdictions. Recent examples include the Ingenious Litigation – a large-scale piece of litigation dealing with disputes about a series of film investment schemes – and *Recovery Services v Rukhadze* (dealing with profits made from recovering the assets of Badri Patarkatsishvili following a claim for breach of fiduciary duty). His recent offshore work has included a long running dispute in the BVI between Russian oligarchs relating to a joint venture concerning electricity generation and distribution (*Renova Industries v Emmerson*) as well as an anti-suit injunction dispute in the Cayman Islands.

Other high profile cases have included *The Ocean Victory* in the Supreme Court, the multi-billion

dollar DeutscheBank v Sebastian Holdings dispute, the Fiona Trust v Privalov fraud case, Bank of St Petersburg v Arkhangelsky, the Masri litigation and the Buncefield trial.

Simon's cases include:

- *Recovery Partners v Rukhadze* [2023] EWCA Civ 305 and [2022] EWHC 690 (Comm)
- *Ingenious Litigation* [2021] 1 WLR 3189; [2020] EWHC 1731 (Ch); [2020] EWHC 235 (Ch)
- *Bank of St Petersburg v Arkhangelsky* [2020] 4 WLR 55, [2018] EWHC 1077 (Ch), [2016] 1 WLR 1081
- *Emmerson v Renova Industries* (BVIHCMAP2016/0029) (BVIHCMAP 2021/004), *Emmerson v Starlex* (BVIHCMAP 2018/0044)
- *Gard Marine & Energy v China National Chartering ("The Ocean Victory")* [2017] 1 WLR 1793
- *Scottish Power UK plc v BP Exploration Operating Co Ltd*
- *Slocom Trading v Tatik, Sibir and Maritime* [2014] EWCA Civ 831, [2012] EWHC 3464 (Ch) (and [2013] EWHC 1201 (Ch))
- *Deutsche Bank AG v Sebastian Holdings Inc* [2013] EWHC 3463 (Comm)
- *Masri v Consolidated Contractors International* [2011] EWHC 1780 (Comm)
- *Fiona Trust v Privalov* [2010] EWHC 3199 (Comm) (and at [2011] EWHC 715 (Comm), [2011] EWHC 664 (Comm) and [2011] EWHC 1312 (Comm), [2015] EWHC 527 (Comm))
- *Colourquest v Total UK: the Buncefield litigation* [2009] 2 Lloyd's Rep 1
- *Lansat Shipping Co v Glencore Grain BV, The "Paragon"* [2009] 2 Lloyd's Rep 688
- *Datasat Communications v Swindon Town Football Company Limited* [2009] EWHC 859 (Comm)
- *Standard Life v Oak Dedicated* [2008] 1 Lloyd's Rep I.R. 552
- *Fiona v Privalov* [2008] EWHC 1748 (Comm)
- *Real Estate Opportunities v Aberdeen and UBS* [2007] 2 All ER 791
- *Ecuador v Occidental Exploration & Production Company* (No.s 1 & 2) [2005] EWHC 774 (Comm), [2005] All ER (D) 06 (May), [2005] 2 Lloyd's Rep 240, CA: [2005] EWCA Civ 1116, [2006] 1 Lloyd's Rep, [2006] QB 432
- *Masri v Consolidated Contractors International (UK) Ltd; Masri v Khoury & ors* (Comm Ct), [2005] EWHC 944 (Comm), [2005] All ER (D) 254 (May); Court of Appeal: [2005] All ER (D) 275, [2006] 1 WLR 830
- *Yukos v FSA* [2006] EWHC (Admin) 2044
- *Linelevel Ltd & Ors v Powszechny Zaklad Ubezpieczen SA* (Comm Ct), [2005] EWHC 421 (Comm), [2005] All ER (D) 289 (Mar), [2005] 2 Lloyd's Rep 534
- *Bonner v Cox (Aon 77)* [2004] EWHC 2963 (Comm)
- *Corporate Aircraft Dispatch v MBI Aviation* [2004] EWHC 587 (QB)
- *Sodeca SA v NE Investments & Ors*, Commercial Court [2002] EWHC 1700
- *Normans Bay v Coudert Brothers* [2003] All ER (D) 248; CA: [2004] EWCA Civ 215
- *Mousaka v Golden Seagull* [2001] 2 Lloyd's Rep 657
- *ABTA v British Airways* [2000] 1 Lloyd's Rep 160
- Various Arbitration proceedings in fields of Insurance, Reinsurance and Shipping

Qualifications and Appointments

- Deputy High Court Judge (sitting in Commercial Court and London Circuit Commercial Court)

Academic:

- MA (Oxon), First Class (first in year)
- BCL, First Class
- Brasenose College, Oxford

Scholarships and prizes include:

- Reid Scholarship (Gray's Inn)
- Du Cann Prize for Excellence in Advocacy
- Prince of Wales Scholarship (Gray's Inn)
- Martin Wronker prize for the best overall performance in Finals (Oxford University)
- Senior Hulme Scholarship (Brasenose College)

Directory Quotes

- "Simon is extremely bright and extremely able." (Chambers & Partners 2025)
- "Simon has an extraordinary intellect with strong tactical sense. When the chips are down, he is the calmest person in the room." (Chambers & Partners 2025)
- "Simon is a very strong technical lawyer who likes to think. His advice is extremely well structured, which is to the benefit of his solicitors, clients, the court and even his opponents." (Chambers & Partners 2025)
- "Simon is very good. He is very meticulous, with a steady, direct and reassuring style." (Chambers & Partners 2025)
- "Simon has an excellent legal brain and he works immensely hard." (Chambers & Partners 2025)
- "Simon Birt is really on top of the detail." (Chambers & Partners 2025)
- "He is a very strong technical lawyer. His advice is highly organised to the benefit of his solicitors, clients, courts and even opponents." (Chambers & Partners 2025)
- 'Simon is the best barrister of his call bar none. Formidably clever as well as formidable on his feet.' (Legal 500 2025)
- 'Simon is extremely impressive in his ability to absorb and understand complex details. He is excellent in cross-examination.' (Legal 500 2025)
- 'Simon is outstanding. He remains unflustered, and is always on top of the details.' (Legal 500 2025)
- 'His advocacy inspires confidence - he is thoughtful, measured, precise, persuasive and

completely robust and resolute.' (Legal 500 2025)

- "Simon is a very effective advocate." (Chambers & Partners 2024)
- "Simon is an incredibly measured advocate. He is very calm and very methodical." (Chambers & Partners 2024)
- "Simon is incredibly bright, sharp and a compelling advocate." (Chambers & Partners 2024)
- "Simon is so detail-oriented - nothing is left to chance. He has a really smooth and eloquent advocacy style." (Chambers & Partners 2024)
- "Simon Birt is a very helpful, serious and conscientious barrister." (Chambers & Partners 2024)
- "Simon is a very effective advocate." (Chambers & Partners 2024)
- "Simon Birt is good at sitting back and looking at the bigger picture as regards what the clients are trying to achieve. He then directs the course of action beautifully." (Chambers & Partners 2024)
- "Simon is so detail-orientated, so nothing is left to chance. He is also really good on paper and has a very smooth, eloquent advocacy style." (Chambers & Partners 2024)
- "Simon is able to get up to speed on complex facts and the law very quickly." (Chambers & Partners 2024)
- "Simon is super-quick, super-responsive and a superb strategist, which makes him the ideal counsel for complex international litigation." (Legal 500 2024)
- "Simon is completely on top of his brief - he is thorough, diligent and thoughtful in everything he does. He has a great ability to predict which arguments will win, and which will not - and is therefore able to pitch a position brilliantly. He is a great team player, liked by everybody he works with, and has the trust and ear of judges." (Legal 500 2024)
- "Simon is super intelligent, and will get to the heart of any issue extremely quickly to identify the critical points. As an advocate Simon carries with him great authority - judges trust him and he achieves excellent results time after time." (Legal 500 2024)
- "Simon's advocacy is very clear. He is extremely prepared and has a really nice manner with the judges." (Chambers & Partners 2023)
- "Simon is very much on top of the detail and is an effective advocate." (Chambers & Partners 2023)
- "Simon is user-friendly and responsive." (Chambers & Partners 2023)
- "A true master of the courtroom." (Chambers & Partners 2023)
- "A highly intelligent barrister who deals diligently with everything that comes up." (Chambers & Partners 2023)
- "A fine advocate who wins the trust of the judge." (Chambers & Partners 2023)
- "Simon Birt KC is a first-rate advocate who wins the trust of the judge and is detail-orientated. The quality of his drafting is also very high." (Chambers & Partners 2023)
- "Simon is very calm under pressure, and gets into the detail of matters, providing well-considered advice." (Legal 500 2023)
- "Incredibly authoritative and persuasive, he has a knack for taking the judge with him when presenting submissions." (Legal 500 2023)
- "Simon is, quite simply, brilliant. Incredibly detail-oriented, he never cuts corners and prepares

for hearings assiduously. His urbane courtroom demeanour has a steely core – he won't be pushed around and is the intellectual equal of anyone at the Bar." (Legal 500 2023)

- "Simon has heavyweight analytical skills. He displays a razor-sharp ability to analyse facts into logical advice and legal argument. A great asset in complex and multifaceted litigation." (Legal 500 2023)
- "The brightest and most effective commercial barrister of his call, bar none. He combines sharp forensic insight with commercial acumen, can digest vast quantities of information quickly, and has an instinct for the next right step in the most complex litigation." (Legal 500 2023)
- "A really good advocate, whom judges like and trust, he is brilliant on the detail." (Chambers & Partners 2022)
- "He's very perceptive of where the judge is going and is excellent at reading people." "He's extremely bright, very switched on and is a very measured advocate." (Chambers & Partners 2022)
- "He is brilliant at controlling the courtroom by how persuasive and authoritative he is in his submission. He is an extremely good advocate." (Chambers & Partners 2022)
- "He is very responsive, smart, on point, and has a good grasp on the main points." "He is a brilliant and clever lawyer." (Chambers & Partners 2022)
- "Incredibly diligent and detail-oriented, while always remaining alive to the big picture. An urbane courtroom presence, Simon has a steely core and will never be pushed about." (Legal 500 2022)
- "Simon is exceptionally bright and a great advocate with a very calm but forceful manner in the courtroom, and he is capable of demolishing opposing arguments." (Legal 500 2022)
- "He may be the calmest person in the world which is an incredible strength for a heavy piece of litigation. The judges really trust him and he is very good at clearing away the noise." (Legal 500 2022)
- "His attention to detail and knowledge of the documents is first-rate. He is also a compelling advocate, who has a reassuring and effective style in the courtroom." (Legal 500 2022)
- "A very smart lawyer and a very smart tactician." "He gets into the detail and has good judgement in court." (Chambers & Partners 2021)
- "He's very into the detail and someone who will roll up their sleeves and get into the the nitty-gritty of a case." (Chambers & Partners 2021)
- "He's very good, thorough and diligent. A very measured barrister with a nice court manner." "He's very available, to the point, quick on the uptake and understands the issues immediately. He is also very technical and amenable to understanding foreign law concepts." (Chambers & Partners 2021)
- "Rapidly developing into a senior silk capable of leading and winning the largest matters." (Legal 500 2021)
- "Very calm and authoritative in the courtroom, he can dissect very complex issues and deliver commercial and strategic advice." (Legal 500 2021)
- "He is an excellent shipping silk." (Legal 500 2021)
- "Has established himself in silk as a skilled advocate in banking and general commercial

disputes. His work in financial matters often concerns cases arising from the financial crash and credit crisis. He is also instructed in film partnership litigation involving FSMA issues. Birt works both for and against banking institutions, often undertaking cases with cross-border elements." "Cerebral in his approach," he has the "ability to grasp complex matters quickly and provide both high-level and detailed advice in a succinct manner." (Chambers & Partners 2020)

- "Noted for his commercial practice and his representation of oil companies in a wide variety of cases, including North Sea disputes. He has experience acting for Russian oligarchs in joint venture disputes. His recent work has also included complex natural resources disputes in Eastern Europe." "Simon is exceptionally bright and user-friendly. He impresses with his ability to grasp complex matters and provide high-level and detailed advice in a succinct manner." "He is a strong, technical lawyer who is great with clients and rolls his sleeves up." (Chambers & Partners UK & Global 2020)
- "Simon is exceptionally bright and user-friendly, and impresses with his ability to grasp complex matters quickly and provide both high-level and detailed advice in a succinct manner." (Chambers & Partners UK & Global 2020)
- "He is unflappable and remains serene however pressured the situation." (The Legal 500 2020)
- "Skilled in high-value oil and pipeline cases." (The Legal 500 2020)
- "He is excellent." (The Legal 500 2020)
- "A super brain with an incredible work ethic. Simon is a tremendous team player who you want on your side in the largest, most hard-fought matters." (Chambers & Partners 2019)
- "Simon Birt KC is extremely clever, and the level at which he engages with the detail is incredible." "He has the ability to provide both high-level and detailed advice in a succinct manner." (Chambers & Partners 2019)
- "Highly intelligent and pragmatic; superb both on paper and in the courtroom." (The Legal 500 2018-19)
- "He is very detail-orientated." (The Legal 500 2018-19)
- Simon Birt KC is a key name in the area with a wealth of experience litigating in the banking and financial services sectors. Sources effuse that he is "extremely talented, charming and simply first-class". (Who's Who Legal - UK Bar: Banking & Finance 2018)
- "Has established himself in silk as a skilled advocate in banking and general commercial disputes." (Chambers & Partners 2018)
- "Simon is an excellent barrister. He is extremely intelligent, user-friendly and someone who fully grasps complex details." "Immensely hard-working, very bright and a real team player." (Chambers & Partners 2018)
- "He is extremely intelligent, user-friendly and he always has a full grasp of complex details." "A brilliant draftsman, who is very measured and very methodical." (Chambers & Partners 2018)
- "His ability to convey a point succinctly and clearly is second to none." (The Legal 500 2017)
- "Simon Birt KC impresses clients with his "dedication and incredible work ethic". He is known to be "very bright and analytical" with the ability to "remain calm under pressure and always demonstrates great common sense."" (Who's Who Legal - UK Bar: Banking & Finance 2017)

- "He is a great example of the new generation of top silks - he's not as bombastic as the old breed while still producing a brilliant work product." "He is extremely intelligent, highly user-friendly and always has a full grasp of the complex details in any given case." (Chambers & Partners 2017)
- "Simon's great strength is that nothing ever fazes him. Throughout twists and turns in proceedings, he is calm, collected and analytical." "He is brilliant: incredibly hard-working, approachable, responsive, fantastic on paper and very good with difficult clients." (Chambers & Partners 2017)
- "Simon Birt KC is "one of the best commercial barristers around" and is widely praised for his "deep legal knowledge, business nous and enthusiastic and committed approach" to cases. He was "especially impressive" on the multibillion-dollar DeutscheBank v Sebastian Holdings dispute according to peers." (Who's Who Legal UK Bar 2015)
- "An extraordinarily thoughtful, bright barrister whose drafting is excellent. A very, very smart guy who has great advocacy skills." "Unbelievably hard-working, he was a pleasure to work with on a super-stressful case." (Chambers & Partners 2015)
- "He has an inner drive and confidence and provides superb technical analysis of legal issues." "He's extremely hardworking and incisive." (Chambers & Partners 2015)