

California, New York Litigation Boutiques Combine to Create Bicoastal Firm

By **Samson Amore**

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What You Need to Know

- San Francisco-based Bartko combined with New York boutique Pavia & Harcourt March 3.
- The combined firms will operate as Bartko Pavia both bicoastally and internationally.
- The new outfit employs roughly 61 lawyers spread across the country.

Complex litigation outfit Bartko combined with international-client focused Pavia & Harcourt to create a new litigation boutique Monday.

The new outfit will be called Bartko Pavia and operate out of the firm's existing three offices in Los Angeles, San Francisco and New York City. Following the combined, the combined Bartko Pavia outfit will have 61 lawyers and is actively hiring more.

Bartko has roots in the Golden State dating back to 1968, while Pavia & Harcourt has operated in New York since 1951, servicing a range of European clients. The two firms had worked together on compliance issues and labor and employment litigation for at least a decade before combined, Pavia & Harcourt managing partner and head of its



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international practice Giovanni Spinelli said. He noted that being based in New York, Pavia had limited West Coast reach and was consistently asked by clients to handle issues in California.

“At least a third, if not half of our European clients’ problems stem from California, where we New York lawyers of course cannot [practice],” Spinelli said. The continuous stream of inquiries about West Coast legal issues led Spinelli to ring up Bartko CEO and co-managing partner An Nguyen Ruda and inquire if

she'd like to make the firms' relationship more official—and the Bartko team agreed.

"No fear is very important," Ruda said, adding that this mindset was what motivated the combined. "The mutual dedication to client service and well-matched strengths will create a synergy that will benefit long-time clients and position us to better represent both established and new clients," Ruda added.

The Bartko team is experiencing "tremendous growth" in demand for antitrust litigation, "both on the defense and plaintiff side," co-managing partner and litigation head Patrick Ryan told *The Recorder*. "We are a leading law firm representing hospitals in California, and we are on the verge of filing probably 11 new lawsuits for hospitals against Blue Cross Blue Shield entities," he said. "We do a lot of work for hospitals, not just in litigation [but also] labor and employment... We never represent the insurance companies, we stand up for the rights of hospitals."

Some of Bartko's ongoing trial work includes a "\$100 million-plus" trade secret case in Little Rock, Ark. against Walmart, a "major copyright" case against online design market-

place Zazzle in July and a number of antitrust cases this fall and in 2026, Ryan said.

Pavia & Harcourt operates a robust European practice, and that further expands Bartko's geographic reach. Spinelli works with Italian, French and Spanish luxury brands that operate and retail internationally. "A lot of [the work] is driven by retail leasing: negotiating leases, amending them, dealing with landlords in New York [and] all over the country," he said. Spinelli also works with international clients to advise on labor and employment, privacy and compliance with regulations including the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Keeping the firms at boutique status was appealing to clients partly because it offers more flexible billing rates. Spinelli noted that approximately 80% of the firm's clients are international.

"There's just no way that these clients are accustomed to the very high hourly rates of large firms," Spinelli said. "Our rates and Bartko's rates are quite compatible, there's a lot of flexibility there," he added. "I think we will remain very competitive with this bicoastal sweet spot."