

# Daily Journal

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## REAL ESTATE

### CALIFORNIA'S TOP REAL ESTATE ATTORNEYS OF 2012



#### **Jim Butler**

Jeffer Mangels Butler & Mitchell LLP

Los Angeles

**Specialties:** Hotels, Hospitality

Just as is the case with the classic board game Monopoly, Butler's practice is all about hotels.

Only in this case, Butler isn't limiting himself to a region, such as Atlantic City. Instead, he is dealing on a worldwide scale, most notably with China.

Butler said that the recent influx of foreign investment, particularly in regard to EB-5 visas, led him in July 2011 to develop the Chinese Investment Group™, a team of lawyers focused on aiding hotel and real estate deals with Chinese buyers.

"We had been doing international work for some time, but it had really gotten to the point where it deserved and needed its own group to focus on it," Butler said.

Now Butler said that the group is managing 40 EB-5 projects across the nation. They oversaw the \$20 million investment by Chinese investors in the W Hotel and Residences Hollywood and the purchase of the Sheraton Universal Hotel by Chinese real estate firm Shenzhen New World Group.

Butler and the firm also handle management agreements, labor and employment issues, financing and workouts, national property compliance, ADA compliance and the development of mixed-use hotels.

The issues that Butler handles on a given day remain extremely diverse. To him, that's where the enjoyment comes in.

"You never know. It could be intellectual property issues. It could be an acquisition that you're dealing with. The people are so interesting, and the business is so energetic and constantly changing. I love the energy, people and challenge."

Such high energy and excitement could help to explain why Butler and the firm's Global Hospitality Group®, of which he is chairman, produces the "Hotel Law Blog," a website with articles on topics ranging from Chinese investment to green hotels.

With nearly 500 entries on the blog and countless more responses and comments from other attorneys, Butler sees it as a strong "channel of communication."

In addition, he jokes that working on the blog helps him fill some time during his day.

"What else could I do between three and five in the morning?"

—Ryne Hodkowski