



Marisa Hernandez

A  
Legal  
Career

**You qualified as a Barrister in 2011 and joined Isolas directly from university. What made you select Isolas as the first step in your career ladder and how are you finding your chosen career so far?**

Isolas is a progressive, dynamic and highly respected law firm with a highly esteemed team of lawyers, and when I was given the opportunity to join the firm, I felt privileged.

During my university years and prior, I undertook summer work placements with Isolas and it is here that I had an insight into the real world workings of a busy chambers, and, I'd like to think, the partners had the opportunity to see a potential in me as a future team member.

It is just over a year since I joined Isolas, and I am finding the challenge stimulating, never a dull moment, and a real life realisation of a career path I chose as a goal early in my teens and for which I worked hard.

Working in the legal world is much more than understanding and applying legal principles, it's about working with real life problems which create stimulating challenges that will demand hard work and dedication. Lawyers need to be workaholics most of the time.

**We understand you are an certified**

**“ Mediation is the best thing since sliced bread. I think it's absolutely brilliant as it helps people resolve disputes without having to go to court ”**

**accredited mediator. Tell us about mediating and its uses in Gibraltar and beyond? What kind of cases is it especially suited to?**

Mediation is the best thing since sliced bread. I think it's absolutely brilliant as it helps people resolve disputes without having to go to court and, in most cases, proves to be more cost effective.

For those who are reading this and don't know what mediation is, mediation is a process whereby parties involved in a dispute have sessions with a mediator in order to try and find a quick resolution to the dispute at hand. The mediator is a neutral third party who aids in trying to get the parties to reach a settlement without giving her own opinion or passing judgement.

Mediation is growing popular in the United Kingdom with mediation becoming compulsory



in various disputes, for example in matrimonial law. The reason behind this is that mediation can provide a quick, efficient, cost effective, flexible process which aids in preserving relationships between the parties involved. Mediation is suited to most cases for example contractual disputes, employment disputes, family matters, personal injury matters, family business conflicts, neighbour disputes and the list just goes on and on.

**Do you think this is something which will develop and increase in popularity as an alternative to litigation?**

Unfortunately mediation is not very popular in Gibraltar but I hope that as time goes by it will become more popular as it really is an excellent tool. Mediation is a developing trend in the UK and I am hopeful that it will increase in popularity in Gibraltar with time. Hopefully people will realise that not all disputes need to be resolved in court and that using mediation will not only provide them with a quick solution but a much more cost effective one which the Judges encourage.

**Sharing your time between corporate finance work and ship arrest work – it sounds like you have a varied day, including a chance for litigation. You must have gained some fascinating insights into the working of two areas important to Gibraltar. How has this insight changed your view and how do you see your future in law progressing? How do you enjoy litigation and the challenge of the courtroom?**

Gibraltar is an important centre, both in areas of corporate finance and in shipping, more so in current times of economic unrest. Isolas has

built up an international reputation in these two fields and it has gained a reputation for the quality of its legal work. I am now part of a team and have learned that our customers, especially so in the field of corporate finance, expect VIP legal diligence and as our professional duties dictate we need to be "on the ball" at all times and pay "attention to detail" in all transactions.

The area of ship arrest has become very important for Gibraltar, and is an area that demands the lawyer to be proactive, quick thinking and, on occasions, play detective. No doubt exciting but demanding!

As a lawyer with Isolas I see myself progressing in these two fields, learning every day and providing legal expertise to our clients, or so I'd like to think!

**We know you have a particular interest in dance with tap, modern jazz, contemporary and even a little bit of Irish dance as part of your repertoire, but are you getting a chance to pursue your passion for classical ballet since being called to the Bar in Gibraltar?**

It is true that I love and enjoy dancing, something which I have been doing since my early years, having participated in a number of local dance productions. Dance keeps my senses alight; it stimulates my sanity! Besides it keeps

me in shape, which is very important for me. I don't practise much classical ballet these days, but have taken up "zumba" and yoga.

**Tell us more about Marisa "off duty". What do you enjoy most about living in Gibraltar?**

Off duty I am quite an outdoor type person. I often enjoy hiking in the nearby Spanish countryside, having taken this from my parents who seem to have instilled this in me.

I have recently taken up surfing, which recently took me to Bali, where some of the world's best surfing beaches are located.

In winter I practise skiing and I am keen to learn how to snow-board this season! Overall, I am not the "couch-potato" type, although I do enjoy a good cuddle with a good film or book.

Gibraltar is my homeland, and home is always good! Here I feel part of a community that strives to maintain its identity as a people. We are a very closed linked community, and I like this. One always feels wanted... like part of a big family. I guess one has to be a Gibraltarian to understand this. All my family is here and family is important in my life! If you ask me where do I want to be in 40 years time I'd say here, older, probably wiser, probably fatter (I hope not too much), but much the same Gibraltarian I feel now! ■

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## Gentleman Jeweller's Last Ring



On the threshold of his 80th birthday Louis Posso, affectionately known in the trade as 'The Gentleman Jeweller' is retiring from his jewellery business.

To mark the occasion, HE the Governor kindly agreed to cast the last item of jewellery he will be fashioning. Sir Adrian is seen here casting his own gold signet ring in the age old traditional way, so often used by Benvenuto Cellini himself in 16th Century, on a cuttlefish shell.

Asked about the most significant piece of jewellery he has ever crafted, Louis replied with a joyful smile on his face "I myself have done signet rings for Governors, Bishops, well-known local families and even a local celebrity. I have also been fortunate to have had competent jewellers working for me over the last 50 years. The most important piece that has come out of my workshop must surely be the set of scaled down silver keys of the Garrison of Gibraltar as held by HE The Governor and Commander-in-Chief. It was presented to the Holy Father John Paul II in 1998 by the then Chief Minister. His Holiness has already been beatified and is on the road to becoming a Saint." ■