



James Barton

Featherstone Partners

Outstanding in field

FIRM SIZE *Boutique* FOCUS *Flexible portfolios*

‘Deliberately different’ is how James Barton describes the approach that the small but highly experienced team at Featherstone takes.

Barton positions himself in opposition to the prevailing winds of the industry. ‘We are all escapees from large banks,’ he tells *Spear’s*, ‘and feel that clients no longer want the bland industry stereotype, but prefer a smaller firm whose interests are aligned with theirs. The industry is ever-homogenising – and unfortunately seems to focus more on shareholders than on clients.’

Barton joined Featherstone from Odey, where he helped to establish their private client team. ‘Prior to joining Odey, I considered leaving the industry, as I was disillusioned by the herd mentality which seems ubiquitous [in the industry],’ he explains. ‘Odey did things differently, which I enjoyed,’ he continues. ‘The traditional wealth management model is outdated and broken. I have always been a non-conformist. Unfortunately, my sons have inherited that trait!’

Barton is known for a friendly and congenial approach. ‘My friends think I just go for lunch with clients all afternoon ... which is only partly true,’ he jokes.

Featherstone Partners is born of a single-family office, and provides clients with the many benefits that a boutique family office offers.

‘We invest alongside our clients and provide them with access to lesser-known and harder to discover funds than private clients typically have exposure to,’ says Barton. ‘The truth is that the best funds can be off the menu for larger firms, who are often restricted to mass-market mediocre investments – thus constraining their clients to a bleak existence of “benchmark tracking”.’

The firm has been described by one client as ‘financial advisors for people who don’t like financial advisors’ – and Barton says that this is the greatest compliment the firm could possibly receive.

The firm’s investment advisory arm is rooted in the belief that it is ‘simply not possible’ for a single investment management company to succeed across all asset classes, geographies and sectors. Accordingly, Featherstone hand-picks the best specialist practitioners around the world, in what it calls a ‘multi manager’ investment advisory.

Barton is a dichotomy... old school with an affable establishment bonhomie, but modern in his approach with a sharp, disruptive and forward-thinking mind. His preference for questioning the rules, combined with a friendly nature, is why clients seek his insightful advice and why he is regarded as one of the top practitioners in the industry.
