

Helping UHNW families beyond their borders

Aris PrimePartners Asset Management believes its blend of independent asset, wealth and fund management services can help families in Asia and Europe fulfil their objectives to expand into each other's region to access various investment opportunities.

For Giuseppe Giammarino and Quek Peck Lim, merging PrimePartners Group's asset management business with Aris GSK Solutions' Swiss-styled independent wealth advice was a logical move for the firms and its clients alike.

After completing the deal in 2014, the outcome today is a licensed fund manager with family office capabilities under the purview of the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS).

Last year, Aris PrimePartners Asset Management (APAM) issued its third private equity fund, Asia Merchant Capital III.

On a broader scale, the firm has investment advisory and investment management capabilities, and has recently developed a family office platform, offering a holistic suite of family governance and business succession solutions to clients with succession and legacy goals.

And through the firm's associated companies, APAM provides corporate finance and fiduciary services.

As of the end of 2015, the firm had SGD300 million (USD209 million) in AUM. And it believes this is set to grow as it continues to evolve in line with the investment needs of its clients.

"Both of our firms share common roots," explains Quek Peck Lim, board member of APAM. "We have each grown our own businesses after working for large multi-nationals. This has given us the perspective of not being driven by another agenda."

For Giuseppe Giammarino, the firm's chief executive officer, and formerly of Aris GSK Solutions, having come from a more traditional Swiss private banking school, he was looking to create opportunities from the European-Asian connectivity. "For example," he explains, "there is a lot of potential for European



GIUSEPPE GIAMMARINO

Aris PrimePartners Asset Management

family offices to sit with Asian families and bring these two worlds together to try to capture opportunities from each other's region."



QUEK PECK LIM

Aris PrimePartners Asset Management

pean families when they come to Asia is knowing who to trust.

“We have been in this region long enough to know where the landmines are within the system,” says Quek.

There is also no one-size-fits-all approach in Asia. “It is important for advisers like us to know where to look for smaller deals for these clients,” he adds.

This increasingly plays into the hands of APAM, based on its family-office offering, plus due to the challenges that many of the firm’s competitors increasingly face.

“As the industry develops in Asia, those firms which operate as ‘farmers’ might face difficulty with their business model, in terms of costs and business opportunities,” explains Giammarino.

This was also a catalyst for the firm to create and then launch in October 2015 its multi-family office platform, amid its objective to be able to provide one-stop family office services to its clients and their families.

In particular, he adds, European entrepreneurs are interested to expand their businesses in Asia.

“Global tax transparency and other developments have also created a high level of standardisation where we can offer our services,” says Giammarino.

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FINDING THE RIGHT MODEL

APAM says it is well-placed to give these individuals what they want.

This is particularly important, given that one of the main challenges for Euro-

“The platform leverages our strengths in asset management but also looks at providing value-added services such as succession planning and family governance advice to clients and their families,” says Giammarino.

A win-win joint venture

January 2011 marked the birth of Aris GSK Solutions, when Giuseppe Giammarino saw the opportunity in Asia and decided to bring his 25 years of Swiss asset management ideology to Singapore.

PrimePartners Asset Management, meanwhile, was set up in 1994 by the former Morgan Grenfell senior executives to meet the financial needs of both Asia-based entrepreneurs and foreign businesses aiming to grow in Asia through providing an independent private equity investment mandate.

The combined team has an independence that allows it to provide unbiased investment advice and solutions to clients from all over the world with different risk profiles and investment goals.

In addition to helping European families, APAM’s experience also lends itself to advising Asian families on investing into Europe. “For Asian families, part of their motivation for looking outside their home markets is for growth opportunities and greater flexibility,” says Quek.

With more free trade agreements, for example, their profit margins have been affected, so they want to diversify their sources of income.

Plus, explains Quek, Asian companies are certainly no strangers to buying European assets. ■