

MIR-ACULOUS

Boutique crowned Fund Manager of the Year

By Liam Egan

MIR Investment Management has taken out the top prize in this year's *Money Management*/IMCA Fund Manager of the Year Awards, living up to the potential shown last year, where it won both the Rising Star and Australian Equities categories.

MIR also won the Australian Shares – Mid and Large Cap category, and was a finalist in the Rising Star and Australian Equities – Small Cap categories.

Its success this year is all the more striking for occurring against the backdrop of a late-stage commodities bull run. In an investment climate that should ordinarily favour growth managers, this year's result amply demonstrates the value of the boutique's much vaunted bottom-up stock picking skills.

Another broad-based value boutique, Souls Funds Management, was runner up in the Fund Manager of the Year category, and in doing so helped affirm value investing and boutiques as the prevailing ideal industry types in the minds of the judges.

This year, for the first time, the Investment Management Consultants Association (IMCA) partnered with *Money Management* in judging the awards.

According to the IMCA judg-

ing panel, the success of the two value boutiques was "perhaps not surprising, as over the last three years value has dominated in the larger and mid cap space, as well as small caps, and even in international shares".

Neither manager would make a forecast on the outlook for equities, although MIR managing director Michael Triguboff volunteered that the market will "inevitably become more favourable" for value managers.

The awards also affirmed both managers' faith in their belief that the "optimal organisational structure for a fund manager is a boutique", as Triguboff put it.

However, he said that an optimal boutique has to be "adequately resourced, with no external shareholders, and where all the investment team have invested in the products".

Other winners in the 20th year of the Fund Manager of the Year awards included Credit Suisse Asset Management, in the International Shares category.

Head of international equities Russell Bye said: "There have been all sorts of different market conditions ... and the fund has performed well virtually all of the time through that."

In other global markets, Acadian was placed first in the Emerging Markets/Asia



Michael Triguboff

(ex Japan) category.

Managing director of Acadian Singapore Richard Barry said: "Our stock selection focuses strongly on value, but we enrich that with additional factors dedicated to earnings forecasts, quality and price movements."

On the domestic front, Souls Funds Management triumphed in Australian Shares – Small Cap, trumping finalists MIR and Pengana Capital.

However, the latter left a strong impression on the IMCA panel, with Pengana receiving

the trophy for Rising Star.

Pimco took out the prize in the Fixed Interest (Diversified) and Credit categories.

In Property Securities, winner Morgan Stanley said its valuation approach was the foundation of its out-performance.

Barclays Global Investors (BGI) was awarded first place in the Hedge Funds – Multi-Strategy category; the only single-manager among the finalists.

Full awards coverage on page 20 ►



FUND MANAGER OF THE YEAR
MIR Investment Management

AUSTRALIAN SHARES
(MID & LARGE CAP)
MIR Investment Management

AUSTRALIAN SHARES
(SMALL CAP)
Souls Funds Management

INTERNATIONAL SHARES
Credit Suisse Asset Management

EMERGING MARKETS/
(EX JAPAN)
Acadian Asset Management

PROPERTY SECURITIES
Morgan Stanley Investment Management

FIXED INTEREST
(DIVERSIFIED)
Pimco Australia

CREDIT
Pimco Australia

HEDGE FUNDS
(MULTI-STRATEGY)
Barclays Global Investors

RISING STAR
Pengana Capital