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Building West Coast Bench, Weil Adds PE Pros From Kirkland, Dechert

By Ryan Harroff

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What You Need to Know

- Jon Stott and Michael Hanna have joined Weil's San Francisco office as partners on its private equity team.
- Stott came from Dechert, where he had led the firm's San Francisco office and also its West Coast private equity team.
- Hanna came from Kirkland & Ellis' San Francisco office, where he had worked for 10 years as a corporate partner.

Weil, Gotshal & Manges has added two private equity partners from Kirkland & Ellis and Dechert in San Francisco, the firm said Monday, as it looks to continue investing in the practice despite some recent departures.

Jon Stott from Dechert came aboard on Monday morning and Michael Hanna from Kirkland has been at the firm for a few days, the partners said in a joint interview. The firm now has about 20 partners in California who focus on private equity.

Hanna was a corporate partner at Kirkland for 10 years before making the move. Stott was at Dechert for 15 years and most recently lead its West Coast private equity team while also serving as managing partner of the firm's San Francisco office.

Courtesy photos

Weil partners Michael Hanna (left) and Jon Stott (right).

Weil has been growing in California, particularly in the Silicon Valley area, as private equity demand in the tech space continues to grow. The firm launched its offices in Los Angeles and San Francisco in 2024 and both are in active growth mode, the firm said.

Kyle Krpata, co-head of Weil's private equity practice, said in an interview that Weil has been leaning in on private equity in California more, as the boom in artificial intelligence tools has led to increased investor and dealmaker interest in the Golden State.

"Our LA office is off to an incredible start, not only with private equity, but with entertainment, sports and media, litigation and everything that touches private equity," Krpata said. "We plan to do the same thing in San Francisco. The growth is focused on private equity first, but then we want to build around that with every practice that touches private equity, including stand-alone practices. The firm sees a massive growth opportunity across California, and we will continue to execute on that."

The two new hires come shortly after some prominent departures from Weil's private equity team to firms like Simpson Thacher and Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison. One of those departures was Christopher Machera, who was one of Weil's co-heads of private equity.

Krpata said there are no California private equity partners involved in any upcoming departures and also that firm-wide, Weil is interested in adding more attorneys to the team soon. He said there are conversations occurring with many potential laterals and that the firm will likely add more partners in private equity markets across the country by the end of the year.

The private equity market is particularly active thanks to artificial intelligence interest, Stott and Hanna said, but the technology has also led to some difficulties for clients in predicting how any given deal may go.

"If we were having this conversation four years ago, we would have been talking about how one of the variables that clients are trying to model and struggle with were interest rates," Stott said. "Now, you add AI into that mix...It's evolving so rapidly. Right now, a lot of the discussions we have with clients on the early stages of looking at assets focus on AI as well as interest rates and other things."

"It's on everybody's mind, all the time," Hanna said. "Whether it's an AI-specific company or a company that needs to integrate AI, it's on everybody's mind."

A Kirkland spokesperson said the firm wishes Hanna well in his new role, while a Dechert spokesperson thanked Stott for his contributions to the firm and wished him well in his new role.