

# Ex-Demarest and Trench Rossi partner opens finance boutique

[Lily Squires](#)

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Helen Naves

Helen Naves, a former partner of Demarest Advogados and Trench Rossi Watanabe, has launched a corporate finance boutique in São Paulo.

HNaves Advogados opened its doors on 27 August. Naves is joined by non-equity partner Sidney Moinhos Filho, who was previously an independent practitioner, and junior associate Larissa Herrera.

The new firm focuses on banking and finance and capital markets matters, including consulting, due diligence and compliance. It will also advise clients on matters such as investments in Brazil and abroad and debt restructurings.

Moinhos Filho brings experience in several areas to the new firm, including civil litigation, IP, labour law and due diligence. He will assist Naves in the management of the firm. Naves is looking to hire interns from Brazilian law schools in the coming months.

Naves has over 20 years of experience in some of Brazil's most prestigious firms. She departed from Demarest in July after over a year in the firm's partnership. Naves also [held](#) that position at Trench Rossi for five years. Prior to that, she was an associate at Vieira Rezende Advogados and Mattos Filho, Veiga Filho, Marrey Jr e Quiroga Advogados and has also worked as an international associate in Shearman & Sterling LLP's finance group in New York. Naves is licensed to practise law in Brazil and New York.

She also has in-house experience from financial institutions, having worked at Safra and Santander in Brazil for the first 10 years of her legal career. There, she started to build up her specialisation in banking and finance law.

Naves is looking forward to having her own independence as a boutique firm. “My name has always been attached to a bank or a firm, but clients know me for my work and trust my commitment,” she says. Naves comments that her firm “is to be a regular support for the legal departments of financial institutions, whether for day-to-day issues or for major strategic matters.”

She was further motivated to open her own practice by the prospect of offering clients a more affordable alternative to large law firms. The idea is to “maintain the quality of a full-service firm – but with a differentiated efficiency, given the service provided directly by the partner in a lean structure,” Naves says

Naves is confident that she can forge a better relationship with clients in a small firm. “In the past 10 years, I have developed relationships with clients, and I have discovered that lawyers are measured by the relationships they build.” She goes on to say that “for clients, knowing and trusting a lawyer is just as important as the knowledge and experience of the firm.”

HNaves will remain a boutique firm, working alongside other small and medium-sized outfits that do not provide services in the banking and financial area, and with foreign firms needing assistance in the financial area in Brazil.

Paulo Coelho da Rocha, managing partner at Demarest, wished Naves “continued success in her new practice.” A team of lawyers has assumed Naves’ duties at Demarest. The firm is also seeking out new talent in the market to add further strength to parts of its organisation. Demarest – part of [Latin Lawyer Elite](#) – now counts a total of 66 partners.

Demarest has a strong offering across several practice groups and is noted for its M&A, capital markets and arbitration areas, among others.

The firm bolstered its tax practice recently, ahead of Brazil’s tax reform that is currently debated in congress. Maurício Barros [joined](#) the firm’s tax group from Gaia Silva Gaede Advogados earlier in September, while Gisele Bossa [moved](#) there in July, having previously served as a judge at Brazil’s Administrative Council of Tax Appeals. The firm has also added to other departments. An energy lawyer [bolstered](#) the firm’s energy area in May, while it [promoted](#) four lawyers to partner in January, strengthening its M&A, litigation and tax practices.

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