



ROBERT F. LEWIS

PARTNER

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Robert F. “Rob” Lewis is a Partner in the Miami office of Shutts & Bowen LLP, where he is the Co-Chair of the Alcohol & Regulated Industries Practice Group.

Robert F. (Rob) Lewis focuses his practice on the laws governing alcohol industry members at all three tiers, as well as tobacco and other regulated products. Rob has accumulated over 30 years of experience in the alcohol industry, including previously serving in law enforcement and as a special agent with the State of Florida Division of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco. His practice includes diverse and multi-discipline areas of legal needs common to hospitality, alcohol, and tobacco industry clients.

Rob's experience includes working with foreign and domestic manufacturers, importers, wholesalers, and retail industry clients on a wide variety of issues including alcohol licensing and structuring of alcohol service operations, alcohol trade practice analysis and guidance, including the negotiation of purchase agreements, management agreements, and required alcohol use provisions, license transfers and licensing due diligence, alcohol product advertising and review of marketing agreements, importation and distribution agreements, new product development, formula and label approvals, regulatory compliance guidance, and defending regulatory enforcement actions as well as state and federal investigations of alcohol industry members, administrative litigation, alcohol licensing zoning due diligence, land use and zoning analysis and approval processes, and state and local government lobbying efforts, including drafting new legislation and legislative amendments relating to the alcohol and hospitality industries. As a former law enforcement officer and special agent with the State of Florida Division of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco, Rob has experience with the processes and methods by which government regulators investigate and apprehend alcohol and tobacco law violators. Rob has also served as an expert witness on matters relating to alcohol beverage law and administrative code provisions in Florida.

Additional experience includes assisting clients with business permitting and transfers of business licenses as a result of new business ventures, expansion, and as special regulatory counsel to mergers and acquisitions between hospitality and alcohol industry clients, including contractual

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negotiations and related issues, regulatory compliance guidance, alcohol and food licensing, obtaining business tax receipts and business permits, building permitting, certificates of use and occupancy, and other related operational permits.

Rob's clients include domestic and foreign alcohol and tobacco suppliers, importers, wholesalers, real estate developers, and a broad range of alcohol retailers, including large box retailers, national restaurant chains, national pharmacies, nightclubs, private clubs, national retail chains, bars, national hotel chains and national hotel management companies, restaurateurs, sports arenas, including MLB and NBA sport franchises, national movie theater companies, entertainment complexes and establishments, and other members of the hospitality and alcohol industry.

Rob has been recognized by The Best Lawyers in America, in Florida for Food and Beverage Law, as one of only three attorneys selected in the State in 2015, and he has been ranked by Chambers USA in the Nationwide category for Food & Beverages: Alcohol. Additionally, he received an AV Preeminent ranking (the highest ranking possible) by his peers from Martindale Hubbell. According to Chambers, clients "praise his in-depth comprehension of the many nuances of the various state alcohol licensing permit processes. He is very good at explaining the process and having all of the work done in a professional and efficient manner." Chambers further states that market insiders praise him as "sensitive to the client's needs and the nuances of a complicated transaction. He is an excellent strategist."

Practice Areas

Alcohol & Regulated Industries

Corporate

Government Law

Hospitality

Land Use & Zoning

Accolades

- Food & Beverages: Alcohol, *Chambers & Partners, USA*, 2014-2024
- Food & Beverage Law, *Best Lawyers in America*, 2015-2025
- Rated AV Preeminent, Martindale-Hubbell, 2019-2023
- Top Lawyer, *South Florida Legal Guide*, 2012-2023
- Outstanding Performance and Contribution to the South Florida Legal Community, *South Florida Legal Guide*, 2020

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- Florida Trailblazer, *Daily Business Review*, 2019
- Most Effective Lawyers: Government Relations/Regulatory, *Daily Business Review*, 2018
- Top Up and Comer, *South Florida Legal Guide*, 2007-2010, 2012

Education

- University of Miami School of Law, J.D., *magna cum laude*, May 1997

Bar Admissions

Florida

Languages

Spanish

Professional and Civic

- National Alcohol Beverage Control Association (NABCA), Member
- National Association of Alcoholic Beverage Licensing Attorneys (NAABLA), Member
- National Association of Licensing & Compliance Professionals (NALCP), Member
- National Conference of State Liquor Administrators (NCSLA), Member
- The Florida Bar, Administrative Law Section, Member
- The Florida Bar, City, County, and Local Government, Member
- Adjunct Professor, St. Thomas University School of Law, 2006-2008