

Press Release

Akerman Represents South Motors/Vista Motors in its Record-Setting Sale to Morgan Auto Group

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Akerman LLP is proud to share the firm recently served as legal counsel in the sale of one of the top performing automotive dealership groups in the United States. Our lawyers represented Florida-based South Motors and Vista Motors in the selling of its nine dealerships and two collision centers to Morgan Automotive Group. The transaction ranks among the most valuable dealership groups ever purchased, with the values paid for its BMW and Honda stores believed to exceed any previous values paid for those franchise brands. The Akerman team was led by Corporate Practice Group Co-Chair [Jonathan Awner](#), and included Corporate Partner [Hunter Carpenter](#), Real Estate Partners [Brenda Goerks](#) and [Jennifer Kramer](#), and Labor and Employment Partner [Arlene Kline](#).

South Motors and Vista Motors operated some of the highest-volume and most profitable dealerships in the nation. The dealerships retailed approximately 19,000 new and used units in 2023, employed approximately 1,100 people, and generated over \$1 billion in revenue. Its locations included South Motors BMW/MINI, South Motors Honda, South Motors Infiniti and South Motors Volkswagen in Miami, Vista BMW and Vista Volkswagen of Pompano Beach, and Vista BMW/MINI of Coconut Creek.

Related People

Jonathan L. Awner
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The Tampa-based purchaser, Morgan Automotive Group, ranked eighth on the *Automotive News*' Top 150 Dealership Groups of 2022.

“Our attorney, Jonathan Awner at Akerman LLP, negotiated numerous and complex legal agreements and helped to close a large transaction with many moving pieces,” said Jonathan Chariff, South Motors and Vista Motors President/CEO and shareholder.

Alan Haig, President of Haig Partners LLC, the leading buy-sell advisory firm to auto dealers in the U.S., represented the sellers in the transaction as M&A advisor. Haig commented, “Awner has an amazing ability to process many legal, business and personal issues, while always maintaining control and a positive demeanor.”

Awner and Carpenter represented Lehman Auto Group in its sale of nine dealerships in 2022 to Lithia Motors, Inc., and Awner represented Prime Automotive Group in its sale of 30 dealerships and three collision centers in 2021 to Group 1 Automotive, Inc. Awner has represented AutoNation Inc. since its inception. For over 25 years, the automotive retail team at Akerman has represented sell-side and buy-side dealers in hundreds of transactions involving the sale and purchase of auto, truck, and motorsports dealerships, including many for Top 150 dealership groups.

About Akerman

Akerman LLP is a top 100 U.S. law firm recognized among the most forward-thinking firms in the industry by *Financial Times*. Its more than 700 lawyers and business professionals collaborate with the world's most successful enterprises and entrepreneurs to navigate change, seize opportunities, and help drive innovation and growth.