Barrantagh Small Cap Canadian Equity Strategy



Barrantagh Investment Management Inc. is a bottom-up, value driven investment manager with 25 years history of offering investment services to both high net worth and institutional clients. Our investment philosophy is based on 3 key values that define quality:



Investment Growth (CDN \$) *



-Barrantagh Small Cap Portfolio

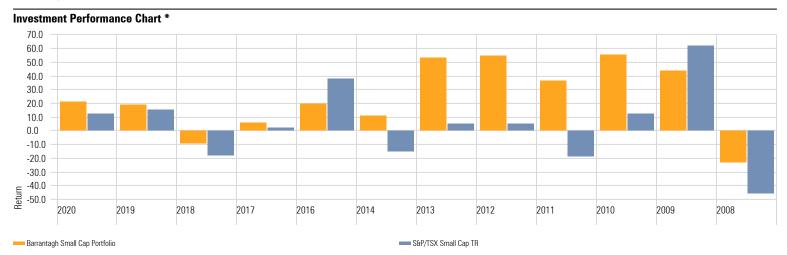
■S&P/TSX Small Cap TR

-S&P/TSX Composite TR

Portfolio Characteristics

Current number of holdings: 29
Current Yield: 2.2%
Average Market Capitalization: \$1.93 Billion
Diversification across 10 of 11 Sectors

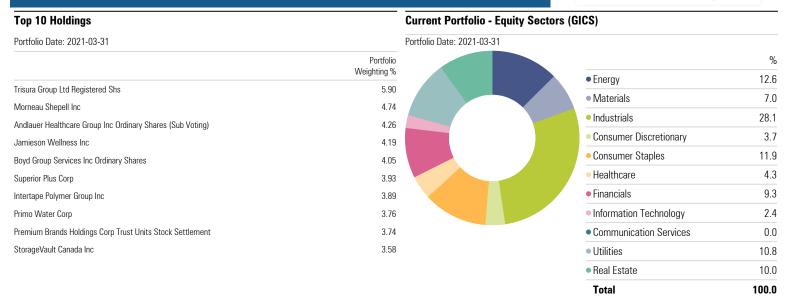




^{*} Investment returns shown are provided for informational purposes only and are calculated before management fees (gross of fees). Returns are annualized for periods greater than 1 year and calculated on a total return basis which includes income and capital gains (losses). Investment performance is calculated from a composite of identical client accounts. Past performance is no guarantee of future performance and future performance will fluctuate with future market outcomes.

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First Quarter Commentary

In the quarter, the Fund underperformed its benchmark, the S&P/TSX Small Cap Index.

The cyclical rotation that began in November with the U.S. presidential election and promising vaccine news accelerated into 2021 driving global equity markets higher. Energy and financials were among the strongest performing sectors while technology and other pandemic "winners" lagged or sold off. Fiscal stimulus remains largely in place to aid healing economies, and unprecedented government transfers through the crisis have left consumers in outstanding financial condition to act on pent-up demand. These dynamics are driving inflation expectations higher and central banks continue to be highly accommodative, signalling their willingness to let things "run hot" and avoid tapping the breaks too early. This environment has proved highly positive for risk assets, while inflicting deep pain to rates and the bond market.

As we have now passed the one-year anniversary of the initial COVID-19 market plunge, Q1/21 provides a great example of end-point sensitivity and the potential folly of focusing on short-term numbers. Trailing 12-month returns for Canadian Equity benchmarks range from +40% to +100%. In general, those names and sectors that got hurt the worst during fear-gripped March 2020 have rallied the strongest over the last year. In a euphoric rally like this, the Fund will almost certainly trail the commodity-heavy TSX-SC benchmark, but this only tells half of the story. Downside protection during severe market selloffs is a key lever to drive longer-term outperformance. Stepping back to encompass both the sell-off and rally, the Fund sits well above both the benchmark and broader S&P/TSX Composite.

The Fund was active during the first quarter. Several new positions were initiated to gain exposure to greater reopening earnings recovery. We saw attractively priced opportunities in names exposed to banking, commodities, manufacturing, trucking, and restaurants. To make room for these additions a few positions were sold or trimmed that had seen outsized benefit and share price performance during the lockdowns and looked less attractive from a valuation perspective going forward.

It was exactly one year ago where we highlighted (1) the best future investment returns materialize after large drawdowns; and (2) though small-cap stocks often lag in the sell-off, they rebound stronger in the recovery as risk appetite improves. This played out as predicted and with a speed and magnitude that would have surprised even the most unwavering optimist. The Fund performed admirably, weathering the depths of the sell-off and then rallying strongly. Our small-cap exposure combined with our Quality-Value ethos provided some level of downside protection with solid torque to the risk-on recovery. This has played out similarly in previous market inflections (2008-2009; 2015-2016 come to mind) and has been a good recipe for driving superior long-term risk-adjusted returns. The world now looks quite different today with expectations for a robust global economic recovery well understood but many equity markets making new all-time highs. We'll stay focused on what we can control – finding quality cash-generative businesses trading at reasonable valuations and set up to compound returns for equity holders.