

Sterling Capital Small Cap Value SMA Commentary

1st Quarter 2024

Investment Objective

The Sterling Capital Small Cap Value SMA seeks long-term capital appreciation. The portfolio employs a value investment approach to invest primarily in common stock of small-capitalization companies (those with market capitalizations that are below the market capitalization of the largest company in the Russell 2000® Index). We believe that undervalued companies with good earnings prospects have superior appreciation potential with reasonable levels of risk. Quantitatively, we focus on a stock's fundamental valuation relative to its peers. Qualitatively, we seek to identify business catalysts which will serve to drive future earnings growth, increase investor interest, and expand valuation.

Performance	QTR	YTD	1Y	3Y	5Y	10Y	Since Inception ¹
Sterling (Gross)	8.14%	8.14%	25.00%	7.79%	11.25%	8.63%	11.03%
Sterling (Net)	7.36%	7.36%	21.42%	4.66%	8.02%	5.47%	7.81%
Index	2.90%	2.90 %	18.75%	2.22%	8.17%	6.87%	8.26%

Key Quarterly Performance Notes

- The SMA posted a total net return of 7.36% for the three-month period ending March 31, 2024.
- Holdings within the Industrials, Consumer Staples, Health Care, Energy, and Utilities sectors performed best on an absolute basis within the portfolio.
- Holdings within the Communication Services, Information Technology, and Financials sectors posted the weakest absolute performance within the portfolio.
- The portfolio outperformed the Russell 2000® Value Index by 446 basis points (bps) during the quarter.
- Relative performance: Main drivers of relative performance during the first quarter included positive stock selection within the Industrials, Financials, and Consumer Staples sectors. This was offset by negative allocation effects produced by underexposure to the Energy, Health Care, and Materials sectors, as well as negative stock selection within the Materials sector.

¹The composite inception date is 12.31.2001. Data is as of 03.31.2024. Performance results prior to 08.01.2015 are considered "predecessor performance" and were achieved by the Relative Value team when they were part of the Stratton Management Company. The benchmark is the Russell 2000® Value Index. Performance is preliminary and is annualized for periods longer than one year. Net of fees performance returns are preliminary and are presented net of the investment management fees and trading expenses. Gross of fees performance returns reflect the deduction of trading costs: a client's return will be reduced by the management fees and other expenses it may incur. Investment management fees are described in Sterling's Form ADV 2A. Performance reflects the reinvestment of interest income and dividends and realized capital gains. The performance presented represents past performance and is no guarantee of future results. Performance is compared to an index: however, the volatility of an index varies greatly and investments cannot be made directly in an index. Market conditions vary from year to year and can result in a decline in market value due to material market or economic conditions. Please refer to the attached GIPS Composite Report for additional disclosures. Net returns are calculated by deducting the highest applicable wrap fee of 3.00% annually from the gross composite return. Sources: Russell Investments; eVestment Alliance; Sterling Capital Management Analytics.

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Market Commentary

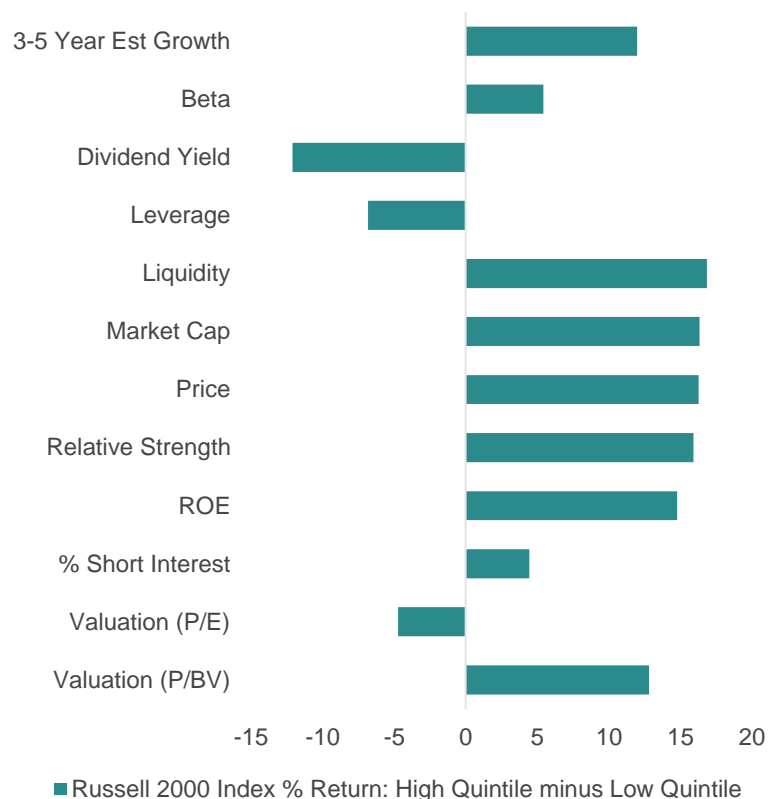
Small Cap Market Review

- Stronger-than-expected macro data prompted investors to temper their enthusiasm over the timing and number of Fed cuts in 2024. Nonetheless, domestic equities carried the momentum of 2023 into the first quarter of the year, with many indices registering all time highs.
- While overall market sentiment remained positive, leadership in the first quarter is still best characterized as “risk off” with larger, growthier equities outperforming smaller, cheaper equities, much as they did for most of 2023.
- The Energy, Health Care, and Industrials sectors performed best within the broad small-cap benchmark during the period, while the Communication Services, Financials, and Consumer Staples sectors posted the weakest aggregate returns.
- From a factor perspective, equities within the Russell 2000 Index with higher growth estimates, liquidity, market cap, relative strength, and return on equity outperformed during the quarter.
- The Russell 2000 Value Index trailed its Growth counterpart by 468 bps during the period.

Outlook

- The easing of interest rate and inflationary pressures removes two significant headwinds faced by domestic equities over the last 18-to-24-month period.
- The recent five-month rally has produced significant multiple expansion across the market cap spectrum. Earnings multiples for both large and small caps sit near their respective two-year peaks.
- With a lower likelihood of further multiple expansion, earnings growth will have to fill the role as catalyst for 2024 equity performance.
- We continue to seek investments in higher quality, value equities with above peer-average earnings prospects, as we believe these characteristics will be favored in what is likely to be a turbulent start to the new year.
- We continue to find favorable combinations of attractive valuation and earnings growth within Technology, Industrial, and Consumer Staples, while remaining relatively underexposed to Health Care (Biotech) and Consumer Discretionary.

Factor Performance: Small Cap Equity Market



The above chart depicts the performance of the constituents of the Russell 2000 Index based on relative composite fundamental characteristics. The benchmark for this composite is the Russell 2000 Value Index. For illustrative purposes only, characteristics are also shown for the Russell 2000 Index in order to provide additional information on the broader small-cap equity market. For each characteristic, the constituents of the index are sorted and grouped into quintiles. The bar adjacent to each characteristic listed shows the performance of the stocks in the highest quintile relative to the performance of the those in the lowest quintile. Terms and definitions can be found on page 4. Source: Bloomberg L.P.



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Performance Attribution Analysis

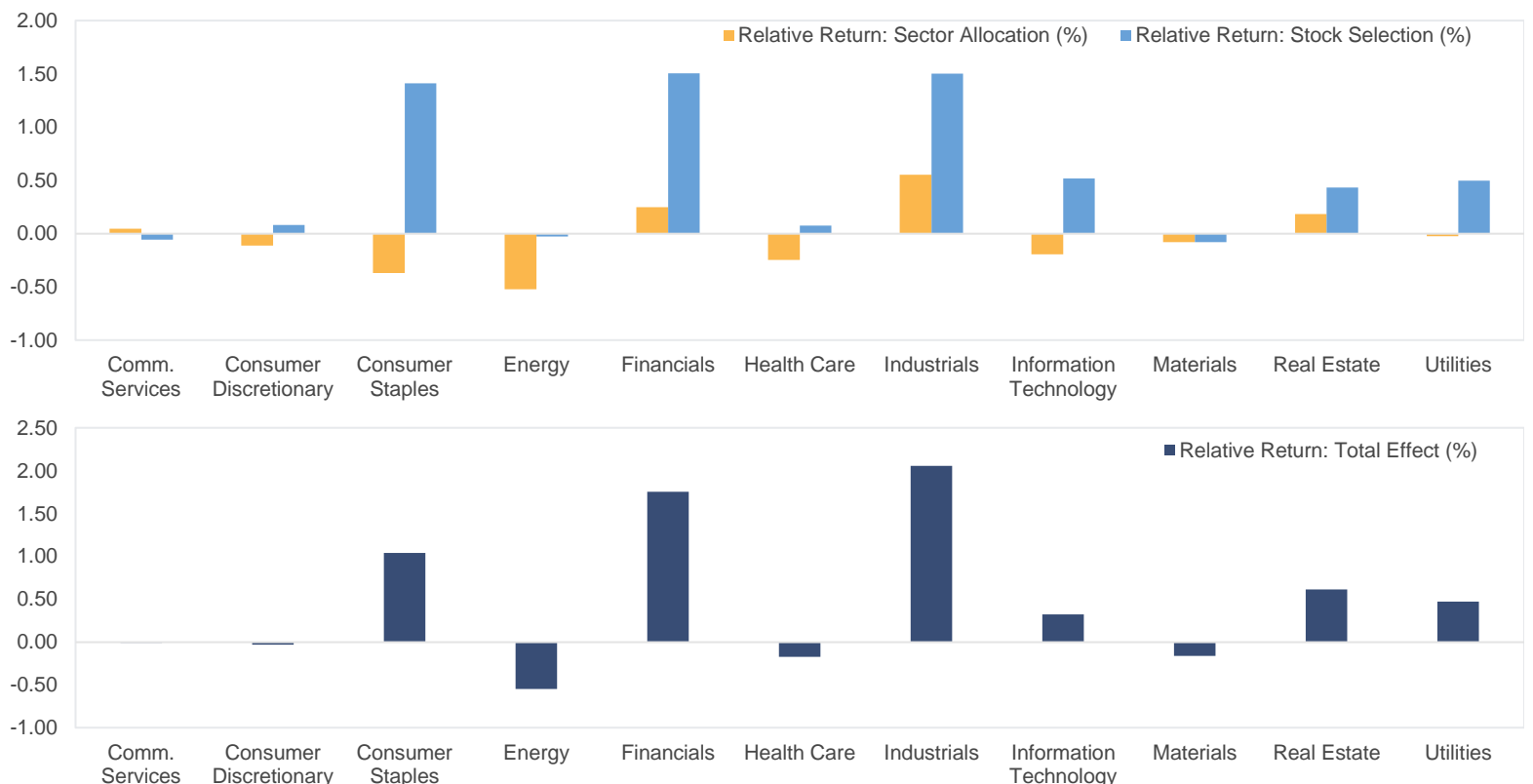
Top Contributors		Bottom Contributors	
▪ United Rentals	▪ Casey's General Stores	▪ ON Semiconductor	▪ Community Bank Systems
▪ CACI International	▪ MasTec	▪ Columbia Banking System	▪ Take-Two Interactive
▪ Belden		▪ EnerSys	

Relative Contributors

- Positive stock selection within Industrials, as portfolio holdings United Rentals, CACI International, MasTec, Crane and Belden outperformed peers during the period.
- Positive stock selection within Financials, as portfolio holdings Wintrust Financial, Hanover Insurance and Selective Insurance outperformed during the period.
- Positive stock selection within Consumer Staples, as portfolio holdings Casey's General Stores and BJ's Wholesale Club outperformed the sector during the period.

Relative Detractors

- Negative allocation effect in Energy produced by the portfolio's underexposure to the sector.
- Negative allocation effect in Health Care due to the portfolio's underweight position within the sector.
- Negative stock selection within Materials as portfolio holding Avient underperformed peers, as well as negative allocation effect produced by the portfolio's underexposure to the sector.



Data is as of 03.31.2024. Sources: FactSet; Sterling Capital Management Analytics. Attribution source: FactSet. Attribution results are presented as gross of fees for illustrative purposes only.



Important Information & Disclosures

Past performance is not indicative of future results. Any type of investing involves risk and there are no guarantees that these methods will be successful. Economic charts are provided for illustrative purposes only. The information provided herein is subject to market conditions and is therefore expected to fluctuate.

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Performance is preliminary and is annualized for periods longer than one year. Net of fees performance returns are preliminary and are presented net of the investment management fees and trading expenses. Net returns are calculated by deducting the highest applicable wrap fee of 3.00% annually from the gross composite return. Gross of fees performance returns reflect the deduction of trading costs: a client's return will be reduced by the management fees and other expenses it may incur. Investment management fees are described in Sterling's Form ADV 2A. Performance reflects the reinvestment of interest income and dividends and realized capital gains. The performance presented represents past performance and is no guarantee of future results. Performance is compared to an index: however, the volatility of an index varies greatly and investments cannot be made directly in an index. Market conditions vary from year to year and can result in a decline in market value due to material market or economic conditions. Please refer to the attached GIPS Composite Report for additional disclosures.

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Technical Terms: the below technical terms are sourced from Corporate Finance Institute.

Price-to-earnings ratio (P/E ratio) is the ratio for valuing a company that measures its current share price relative to its per-share earnings.

Price-to-book (P/B) ratio is the ratio to the market value of a company's shares (share price) over its book value of equity.

Return on equity (ROE) is the measure of a company's net income divided by its shareholders' equity.

The volatility of an index varies greatly. All indices are unmanaged and investments cannot be made directly in an index.

The Russell 2000® Index measures the performance of the small-cap segment of the U.S. equity universe. The Russell 2000® Index is a subset of the Russell 3000® Index representing approximately 10% of the total market capitalization of that index. It includes approximately 2,000 of the smallest securities based on a combination of their market cap and current index membership. The Russell 2000® is constructed to provide a comprehensive and unbiased small-cap barometer and is completely reconstituted annually to ensure larger stocks do not distort the performance and characteristics of the true small-cap opportunity set.

The Russell 2000® Value Index measures the performance of small-cap value segment of the U.S. equity universe. It includes those Russell 2000® companies with lower price-to-book ratios and lower forecasted growth values. The index is constructed to provide a comprehensive and unbiased barometer for the small-cap value segment. The index is completely reconstituted annually to ensure larger stocks do not distort the performance and characteristics of the true small-cap opportunity set and that the represented companies continue to reflect value characteristics.

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Sterling Capital Small Cap Value SMA

	Total Gross Return	Total Net Return	Benchmark Return	3Y Composite Std. Dev. (Gross)	3Y Benchmark Std. Dev.	Composite Dispersion	Number of Portfolios	Composite Assets (MM)	Total Firm Assets (MM)
2023	18.89%	15.46%	14.65%	20.39%	21.75%	Not Calculable	1	\$261	\$66,746
2022	-13.59%	-16.15%	-14.48%	25.44%	27.27%	Not Calculable	1	\$317	\$62,842
2021	33.29%	29.49%	28.27%	23.05%	25.00%	Not Calculable	1	\$523	\$75,309
2020	2.22%	-0.78%	4.63%	24.31%	26.12%	Not Calculable	1	\$490	\$70,108
2019	25.79%	22.18%	22.39%	14.98%	15.68%	Not Calculable	1	\$975	\$58,191
2018	-13.59%	-16.14%	-12.86%	14.99%	15.76%	Not Calculable	1	\$961	\$56,889
2017	14.37%	11.07%	7.84%	13.00%	13.97%	Not Calculable	1	\$1,184	\$55,908
2016	26.51%	22.88%	31.74%	14.08%	15.50%	Not Calculable	1	\$1,277	\$51,603
2015	-3.03%	-5.87%	-7.47%	12.58%	13.46%	Not Calculable	2	\$1,163	\$51,155
2014	4.24%	1.20%	4.22%	11.26%	12.79%	Not Calculable	2	\$1,419	\$2,984

Benchmark: Russell 2000® Value Index

Composite Creation Date: 09.26.2023

Inception Date: 01.01.2002

- Consists of all discretionary separately managed small capitalization equity portfolios managed in the Stratton relative value style. SCM's small capitalization equity accounts invest primarily in companies similar to the market capitalization of the Russell 2000® Index.
- Sterling Capital Management LLC claims compliance with the Global Investment Performance Standards (GIPS®) and has prepared and presented this report in compliance with the GIPS standards. Sterling Capital Management LLC has been independently verified for the periods 01/01/2001 to 12/31/2022. The verification report(s) is/are available upon request. A firm that claims compliance with the GIPS standards must establish policies and procedures for complying with all the applicable requirements of the GIPS standards. Verification provides assurance on whether the firm's policies and procedures related to composite and pooled fund maintenance, as well as the calculation, presentation, and distribution of performance, have been designed in compliance with the GIPS standards and have been implemented on a firm-wide basis. Verification does not provide assurance on the accuracy of any specific performance report. Benchmark returns are not covered by the report of the independent verifiers. GIPS® is a registered trademark of the CFA Institute. CFA Institute does not endorse or promote this organization, nor does it warrant the accuracy or quality of the content contained herein.
- Sterling Capital Management LLC (SCM) is a registered investment advisor with the SEC. Registration does not imply a certain level of skill or training. Sterling manages a variety of equity, fixed income and balanced assets. Prior to January 2001, Sterling was a wholly owned subsidiary of United Asset Management (UAM). In January 2001, Sterling Capital Management LLC purchased all the assets and business of Sterling Capital Management Company from UAM to become an employee owned firm. In April 2005, BB&T Corporation purchased a majority equity ownership stake in Sterling Capital Management LLC. In October 2010, the management group of Sterling Capital entered into an agreement with BB&T Corporation that reduced and restructured management's interest in Sterling Capital Management. Additionally, BB&T Asset Management merged into Sterling Capital Management. In January 2013, CHOICE Asset Management merged into Sterling Capital Management. In August 2015, eight new employees joined Sterling Capital Management via Stratton Management Company following the close of BB&T's purchase of Susquehanna Bancshares. In December 2019, BB&T Corporation and SunTrust Banks, Inc. Holding Company merged as equals to form Truist Financial Corporation. Sterling Capital Management LLC is a wholly owned subsidiary of Truist Financial Corporation. In August 2020, new employees joined Sterling Capital Management via the Investment Advisory Group of SunTrust Advisory Services. This reorganization aligns all of the discretionary fixed income asset management activities within Truist under Sterling.
- The performance presented represents past performance and is no guarantee of future results. Market and economic conditions vary from year to year and can result in a decline in market value due to material market or economic conditions. Please refer to the slide titled "Performance" for the one-, five-, and ten-year returns of the composite.
- A complete list of all of SCM's composites and SCM's broad distribution pooled funds and their descriptions is available upon request. Policies for valuing investments, calculating performance, and preparing GIPS Composite Reports are available upon request.
- Performance reflects reinvested interest income and dividends and realized and unrealized capital gains and losses. Valuations and performance are reported in U.S. dollars. Periodic time weighted returns are geometrically linked. Returns are not calculated net of non-reclaimable withholding taxes due to immaterial dollar amounts. Effective 1/1/22, composite returns are calculated by weighting the individual portfolio returns using beginning of period market values. From 8/1/15 to 1/1/22, composite returns were asset weighted using the average capital base method that reflects both beginning market value and cash flows and uses the aggregate method. Prior to 8/1/15 composite returns were calculated by weighting the individual portfolio returns using beginning of period market values. Performance results prior to August 1, 2015 are considered "predecessor performance" and were achieved by the Relative Value Team when they were part of the Stratton Management Company.
- Gross of fees returns are presented before management fees but after all trading costs. Net returns are calculated by deducting the highest applicable wrap fee of 3.00% annually from the gross composite return. Since 2016, the composite contains only the pooled vehicle account.
- The appropriate benchmark is the Russell 2000® Value Index which consists of stocks from the Russell 2000® Index with a less than average growth orientation and lower price-to-book ratios. It represents the universe of stocks from which value managers typically select. The index is reconstituted annually. Total return includes price appreciation/depreciation and income as a percent of original investment.
- The annual composite dispersion presented is measured by an asset-weighted standard deviation calculation method of all portfolios in the composite for the entire year, and is calculated using gross of fee returns. It is not meaningful when there have been less than six portfolios in composite for entire calendar year. The three year annualized standard deviation measures the variability of the composite and benchmark returns over the preceding 36-month period. The composite 3-year standard deviation is calculated using gross of fee returns. It is not required to be presented when a full three years of composite performance is not yet available.