

# International Investor

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## Inside International Investor

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## World Stockmarket Forecasts

Stockmarket	One-Year Forecast	Fundamental Indicators	Technical Indicators	Monetary Indicators	Economic Indicators	Historical Performance (in US\$)			Share Index
						3mths	6mths	12mths	
Australia _____	75%	Bullish	Bullish	Bullish	Neutral	+13.1%	+12.4%	+13.1%	3,022.80
Austria _____	69%	Bearish	Bullish	Bullish	Neutral	+16.2%	+23.3%	+24.1%	1,326.47
Belgium _____	71%	Bullish	Bullish	Bullish	Bullish	+14.3%	+6.5%	-3.7%	1,975.95
Canada _____	66%	Neutral	Bullish	Neutral	Neutral	+15.9%	+16.6%	+15.4%	7,077.56
Denmark _____	73%	Bearish	Bullish	Bullish	Bullish	+12.5%	+10.1%	+2.8%	212.46
Finland _____	76%	Bullish	Bullish	Bullish	Neutral	+20.5%	+6.2%	+14.9%	5,917.19
France _____	76%	Bullish	Bullish	Bullish	Bullish	+17.3%	+7.4%	+2.1%	2,120.07
Germany _____	73%	Neutral	Bullish	Bullish	Bullish	+27.9%	+17.1%	-8.2%	3,326.51
Ireland _____	85%	Bullish	Bullish	Bullish	Bullish	+13.9%	+11.7%	+12.8%	4,383.64
Italy _____	81%	Bullish	Bullish	Bullish	Bullish	+13.2%	+9.7%	+9.6%	18,549.00
Japan _____	54%	Neutral	Bullish	Bullish	Bearish	+26.1%	+15.2%	-9.9%	9,635.35
Netherlands _____	74%	Bullish	Neutral	Bullish	Bullish	+13.4%	-1.6%	-10.9%	438.90
New Zealand _____	62%	Neutral	Bullish	Bullish	Bearish	+17.6%	+10.1%	+14.5%	1,810.27
Norway _____	74%	Bullish	Bullish	Bullish	Bullish	+19.2%	+4.9%	-8.0%	505.86
Spain _____	78%	Bearish	Bullish	Bullish	Bullish	+15.3%	+16.9%	+18.6%	731.75
Sweden _____	70%	Bearish	Bullish	Bullish	Bullish	+19.4%	+13.5%	+8.4%	164.38
Switzerland _____	81%	Bearish	Bullish	Bullish	Bullish	+12.1%	+1.8%	-5.3%	4,914.00
Un. Kingdom _____	65%	Bullish	Bullish	Bullish	Neutral	+10.7%	+3.6%	+0.9%	4,058.10
USA _____	76%	Bearish	Bullish	Bullish	Bullish	+15.0%	+7.6%	+8.3%	998.14
Argentina _____	66%	Bearish	Bullish	Bullish	Bearish	+11.0%	+21.0%	+45.4%	1,674.40
Brazil _____	62%	Neutral	Bullish	Bearish	Neutral	+25.6%	+23.6%	+17.5%	13,320.58
Czech Rep. _____	62%	Bearish	Bullish	Neutral	Bullish	+13.5%	+26.5%	+36.4%	550.30
Chile _____	68%	Bearish	Bullish	Bullish	Bearish	+22.6%	+21.2%	+23.9%	6,063.58
China _____	46%	Bullish	Bearish	Bullish	Bearish	-9.0%	-4.7%	-27.0%	113.32
Greece _____	77%	Neutral	Bullish	Bullish	Neutral	+29.6%	+24.1%	+5.5%	1,977.66
Egypt _____	42%	Neutral	Bullish	Bearish	Bullish	+7.2%	-12.1%	-10.1%	730.64
Hong Kong _____	70%	Bullish	Bullish	Bullish	Neutral	+14.6%	+2.0%	-6.9%	9,911.50
Hungary _____	61%	Neutral	Bullish	Neutral	Bullish	-0.6%	-1.2%	+16.0%	8,032.64
India _____	57%	Neutral	Bullish	Bearish	Neutral	+20.3%	+13.9%	+17.6%	3,676.26
Indonesia _____	70%	Neutral	Bullish	Bullish	Bearish	+29.4%	+42.5%	+20.9%	524.69
Israel _____	59%	Bearish	Bullish	Neutral	Neutral	+26.1%	+46.6%	+34.8%	442.02
Korea _____	67%	Neutral	Bullish	Bullish	Neutral	+26.0%	+12.1%	-10.9%	704.15
Malaysia _____	48%	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral	Bearish	+15.1%	+13.8%	-2.1%	723.90
Mexico _____	78%	Neutral	Bullish	Bullish	Bullish	+17.2%	+12.8%	+3.4%	7,083.82
Philippines _____	57%	Bearish	Bullish	Neutral	Neutral	+11.2%	+20.5%	+3.5%	1,270.77
Poland _____	58%	Bearish	Bullish	Neutral	Bullish	+19.4%	+12.1%	+32.0%	17,108.80
Portugal _____	87%	Bullish	Bullish	Bullish	Bullish	+12.8%	+6.6%	+5.6%	1,656.32
Russia _____	62%	Bearish	Bullish	Bullish	Bearish	+27.8%	+35.9%	+21.6%	5,648.64
Singapore _____	72%	Neutral	Bullish	Bullish	Bullish	+20.5%	+13.6%	-4.9%	1,544.84
Sth Africa _____	68%	Bullish	Bullish	Bullish	Neutral	+13.6%	+4.2%	+11.6%	8,644.78
Taiwan _____	55%	Bearish	Bullish	Neutral	Neutral	+17.2%	+8.2%	-6.3%	5,239.96
Thailand _____	69%	Neutral	Bullish	Bullish	Bearish	+30.5%	+38.2%	+19.3%	484.39
Turkey _____	36%	Bearish	Neutral	Bearish	Bearish	+16.5%	+31.4%	+35.3%	10,590.69
Venezuela _____	91%	Bullish	Bullish	Bullish	Bullish	+73.7%	+71.2%	+66.1%	14,699.24

**One Year Forecasts** predict the probability that a stock-market will rise over the next year. Investors should seek to invest in markets with forecasts of 60-100%, while avoiding markets with forecasts of 0-40%. Bullish = Favourable. Bearish = Unfavourable.

# Stockmarket Outlook

We believe that most world stockmarkets are now in the early stages of a new long term Bull Market uptrend. We expect slow economic growth, but that also suggests a longer than normal cyclical economic recovery and growth. Slow growth, plus easy monetary conditions, also offers the potential for a liquidity bubble which will inflate financial asset values (i.e. share prices).

In fact, a liquidity bubble appears to have formed in several Asian countries which have lowered interest rates and expanded money supply to offset the impact of the lower US dollar.

## **Weak US dollar leads to Asian Stockmarket Boom**

The difficult (and interesting) thing about stockmarket forecasting is that *cause and effect* relationships are seldom fixed. The unknown variable is the action or reaction of governments, businesses or investors which can completely change the expected outcome. The lower US dollar should be *unfavourable* for Asian economies and stockmarkets. So why have Asian stockmarkets risen strongly?

China, Hong Kong and Malaysia fix their currencies to the US dollar, so these currencies have also effectively devalued over the last year. Other Asian currencies are allowed to float, so could be expected to effectively appreciate against the US dollar, and against the currencies of China, Hong Kong and Malaysia. This is an extremely unfavourable situation which would not only lower the profitability of the manufacturing export sector (where exports are usually priced in US dollars), but also undermine the competitive position of Taiwan, Korea, Singapore and Thailand. One could logically expect, therefore, that a weak US dollar would hurt these four economies and depress their stockmarkets.

That unfavourable outcome has not happened as Asian governments have reacted to this exchange rate threat and lowered interest rates and expanded money supply - allowing their own currencies to weaken along with the US dollar. This easy money situation has also created a liquidity bubble that has inflated share prices.

This newsletter has frequently pointed out that conditions were right for a liquidity bubble that could lead to a stockmarket boom. With slow growth in the real economy (i.e. little need for new investment in expanding manufacturing capacity), liquidity is likely to find its way to financial markets and increase asset values. A liquidity bubble was the major factor behind both the 1985-87 *Investment & Property* boom and the 1999 *Technology* boom.

## **The Future of the Asian Liquidity Boom**

What happens next in the Asian liquidity boom depends partly on how governments, businesses, consumers and investors continue to react in the future. Many economists and investors still look to the US consumer to start over-spending to boost global demand and fuel economic growth. But under-savings and over-spending

in the US is a "*global imbalance*" - which correctly implies over-savings and under-spending in other countries (i.e. South East Asia and Japan). Rather than expect US consumers to again over-spend, the only lasting solution is to correct this imbalance: Asians need to save less and consume more.

Excessive saving and over-investment in export industries is one of the factors that has resulted in depressed investment returns from Asian companies. There also exists a huge capacity to increase consumption within Asia - especially in areas such as housing. Increasing the size and quality of housing would lead to a couple of decades of strong domestic growth - especially of building material companies, construction firms and financial services (i.e. the development and growth in home mortgages).

The current liquidity bubble is an ideal situation to start a domestic consumption boom that could finally release the huge potential for economic growth in domestic industries. This would result in long term economic growth that would be favourable for Asian stockmarkets for a very long period of time.

Also, while conditions could change to reverse the current liquidity bubble, experience suggests that a liquidity bubble will last for one or several years - so the current extremely favourable monetary conditions will probably continue to support appreciating Asian stockmarkets.

A global economic recovery and global stockmarket recovery should also be particularly favourable for Asian markets. With large export economies, Asia is very sensitive to changes in global economic growth rates. So a global economic recovery will have the most impact on Asian economies. Asian stockmarkets also offer good value, especially compared with the US stockmarket where valuations are still high. As investor sentiment improves, it will take only a small shift in favour of better value Asian shares to result in an inflow of money to Asian stockmarkets.

## **Summary and Recommendation**

Stockmarkets will always be volatile, so there may be a few dips along the way, but world stockmarkets are now in the early stages of an uptrend. US stockmarket valuations are still high, while Asian shares offer the best value. We should therefore seek to remain over-weighted in Asian equities, hold some European and UK shares and remain under-weighted in US shares.

Conditions for a *liquidity bubble* have existed for some time - and now appear to have been triggered in Asia where several countries have further eased interest rates to allow their currencies to depreciate along with the weak US dollar. The boom in share prices, caused by this liquidity bubble, could continue for at least another 6-12 months - or much longer if it also leads to higher consumption and growth in the domestic sectors of these economies.

# Recommended International Investment Funds

Our European and UK funds eased back about 5% (in NZ dollar terms) over the last month, but the Asian funds continued to appreciate 3-12%.

The strongest gain was **JPM Fleming Asia** fund which rose 12.6% - boosting the warrant price 65%. That was closely followed by **Fidelity Asian Values** and **Schroder Asia Pacific** both up 11.4% - but with their warrants up 80% and 31% respectively! If the liquidity bubble drives Asian stockmarkets higher (see Page 2), these warrants will continue to rapidly recover in value.

## Fund News

**Private Equity Investor plc** holds investments in 18 venture capital partnerships which collectively own shares in 378 private companies and 24 public listed companies. 111 new investments were made during the year to March 2003 and further equity investments were made in 219 companies. Two companies listed on

the stockmarket over the year, while shares were sold in five listed companies. 33 investments were written up in value, compared with only 14 write-ups the previous year. 155 investments (up from 149) were written down in value and 55 (up from 52) were completely written off. Overall the net asset value of Private Equity Investor declined from £91.4 million to £71.8 million.

The trust has commitments to contribute a further US\$84.7 million to its 18 venture capital partnerships in the future. This will be financed from its US\$42.8 million in cash and bonds, plus distributions from the partnerships as they sell investments, either in trade sales or after companies list on the stockmarket.

Private Equity Investor will pay a 0.7 pence (plus Tax Credit) dividend on September 30 (ex-entitlement July 18) to distribute its net income for the year.

Current Advice	Investment Fund	EPIC Code	Initial Recommendation		Prem/Disc to Net Assets	Recent Price		Gain or Loss %	
			--- Date ---	Offer Price		Bid-Offer or Last Sale	NZ Cents		
<b>Europe</b>									
BUY	Fidelity European Values plc	FEV	13/05/03	463.5p	1291.1	-12%	483.5p	1341.8	+4
HOLD	JFM Fleming Euro Fledgeling IT plc	JFF	15/01/02	226.5p	765.8	-23%	181.0p	502.3	-34
<b>United Kingdom</b>									
BUY	Aberforth Smaller Cos Trt plc	ASL	15-07-03	375.5p	1042.0	-3%	375.5p	1042.0	
BUY	Eaglet Investment Trust plc	EIN	13/11/01	334.0p	1160.7	-23%	234.0p	649.4	-44
<b>Asian Regional</b>									
HOLD	Fidelity Asian Values WARRANTS	FASW	10/03/98	17.5p	49.7		7.5p	20.8	-58
BUY	Gartmore Pacific Growth Fund	*	29/10/85	41.4p	105.4		153.77p	426.7	+305
HOLD	HSBC Asian Fund	*	10/11/98	34.4p	106.3		35.11p	97.4	-8
HOLD	HSBC Hong Kong Growth Fund	*	07/04/98	159.4p	481.6		131.4p	364.7	-24
BUY	Henderson Pacific Capital	*	08/08/00	342.2p	1122.6		232.1p	644.1	-43
HOLD	JPM Fleming Asia WARRANTS	JPFW	07/03/00	43.8p	141.7		5.5p	15.3	-89
BUY	Schroder Asia Pacific WARRANTS	SDPW	13/07/99	25.5p	75.8		6.75p	18.7	-75
<b>Japan</b>									
HOLD	Baillie Gifford Shin Nippon plc	BGS	11/01/94	156.0p	440.3	-13%	98.5p	273.4	-38
HOLD	Invesco Japan Discovery Trust	IJD	13/07/99	95.5p	284.0	-18%	49.5p	137.4	-52
<b>Korea</b>									
HOLD	Baring Korea Trust	*	12/04/94	81.1p	209.4		86.01-91.31p	246.0	+18
<b>International</b>									
HOLD	Aberdeen Prolific Emerging Markets	*	13/08/91	39.0p	116.1		63.08-66.66p	180.0	+55
BUY	Private Equity Investor plc	PEQ	11/12/01	122.5p	420.2	-30%	97.5p	270.6	-36
HOLD	Templeton E/Markets WARRANTS	TEMA	13/07/99	40.3p	119.7		8.5p	23.6	-80

\* United Kingdom based Unit Trust

## Other Shares and Warrants

Alternative investments in the UK listed investment trust shares and warrants recommended above include **Fidelity Asian Values** shares at 56¼ pence (-9%, i.e. 9% below net asset value), **JPM Fleming Asia** shares at 77½ pence (-10%), **Schroder Asia Pacific** shares at 68½ pence (-8%), **Templeton Emerging Markets** shares at 121½ pence (-14%), **Baillie Gifford Shin Nippon** warrants at 9½ pence and **Invesco Japan Discovery** warrants which trade at 2¾ pence.

# Fund Recommendation: Buy Aberforth Smaller Companies Trust plc

## BUY Aberforth Smaller Companies Trust plc (code ASL).

We are investing our remaining cash and moving to being fully invested with the recommendation to buy shares in UK listed investment trust **Aberforth Smaller Companies Trust plc**. We reviewed this trust in April 2003 in a *Best Managed Funds* article.

Aberforth Smaller Companies Trust has a £329 million portfolio which is invested in "small UK quoted companies". The portfolio is unleveraged (i.e. there is no bank debt) and well diversified. The ten largest holdings making up only 23.4% of the portfolio.

The issued capital consists of 83,855,423 ordinary shares. At 375½ pence, the shares trade at just a 3% discount to net asset value. The trust has authority to re-purchase up to 14.99% of its shares. This, plus the trust's excellent performance, should help ensure that the shares continue to trade near their net asset backing. The company has not re-purchased its own shares recently, but did repurchase and cancel 691,500 warrants prior to their March 2003 exercise date.

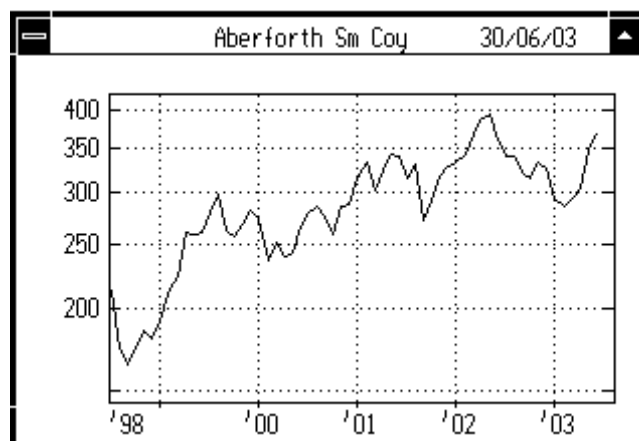
The shares are actively traded, with a bid-offer spread of less than 0.3% (i.e. bid by the marketmaker at 375 pence and offered at 376 pence). The annual management fee is a low 0.8% and the shares offer a Dividend Yield of 2.6%. Most of the expected investment returns, however, will come from capital appreciation.

Aberforth Smaller Companies Trust rates extremely well in our quarterly *Investment Fund Survey*. It is, in fact, one of the very few funds to record a *gain* over the last three years - a period over which most UK funds have declined 30-60% in value. Aberforth Smaller Companies Trust earns a *Low Risk* rating and a very

high +19% *Superiority Rating*. Although a little volatile during 2001 and 2002, the trust approximately maintained its value despite a 40% decline by the UK smaller companies index. UK Smaller company share prices have recovered strongly over the last four months and Aberforth Smaller Companies Trust has participated fully in that recovery.

### Summary and Recommendation

We recommend the purchase of shares in Aberforth Smaller Companies Trust. This is a low risk trust that has significantly outperformed its sector over the long term. The smaller companies sector is also attractive as (1) smaller companies are better able to adapt in a period of slow economic growth, (2) smaller companies have better long term growth potential than larger companies (i.e. small companies can grow by expanding market share in a static market) and (3) smaller company shares tend to be more volatile (i.e. fall more in a market decline, but appreciate very strongly during a recovery).



## F & C Income Growth Warrants

We informally recommended **F & C Income Growth** warrants as a speculative investment in March 2002 and they expire at the end of this month. See Last month's *Listed Investment Trust Warrant Analysis* for full details.

The UK stockmarket has weakened a little over the last month, reducing the share price to 122¾ pence and the warrants to around 20 pence. As the shares are above the exercise price of 100 pence, investors have the choice of (1) exercising the warrants by paying 100 pence to buy the shares or (2) selling the warrants on-market.

As we bought these as a speculative investment, we shall sell the warrants on-market. Although we are unable to confirm it, we believe that warrant trading

will discontinue one or two weeks *before* the end of the this months. Investors therefore need to sell immediately if still holding the warrants.

The warrants are quoted at 18-22 pence. That means that we can sell to the marketmaker at 18 pence (but would have to pay 22 pence to buy the warrants). That is a fairly wide spread, but reflects the high volatility and limited marketability of the warrants.

We should therefore sell our warrants at 18 pence - realising a 47% loss on our purchase at 34 pence.

As discussed last month, our other speculative warrants have six months to 3½ years until expiry. So if world stockmarkets continue to recover we may eventually realise a profits on these positions.







