

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER



January 2nd, 2024

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Investment Playbook

EQUITIES

Stock Ticker	Stock Information (as at December 29, 2023)	Comments
WISYNCO Wisynco Group Limited	P/E: 15.69x P/B: 3.56x Price: \$21.50 Div Yield 1.86%	OVERWEIGHT Throughout the pandemic, Wisynco has managed to improve its operational efficiency but given the effects of COVID-19 on industries such as tourism and education, the Company was unable to deliver significant revenue growth. Now, with tourism rebounding and schools operating at a greater level, Wisynco has married its improved operational efficiency with stronger revenue growth, allowing for significant net profit growth. As tourism is expected to continue growing towards its pre-pandemic level of output, we expect Wisynco to continue to perform well. Wisynco Equity Report
JMMBGL JMMB Group Limited	P/E: 4.15x P/B: 1.01x Price: \$25.92 Div Yield 0.96%	OVERWEIGHT Given its relatively low P/E ratio and considering the Group's consistently strong performance throughout the pandemic, the market has been underpricing JMMBGL significantly relative to its local counterparts. JMMBGL's price has declined by 5.8% YTD which provides investors with an opportunity to acquire JMMBGL shares at a more attractive price. The long-term outlook for the company and the stock remains favorable, buoyed by an expanding regional footprint. In July JMMBGL closed on its acquisition of a commercial bank in the Dominican Republic (DR) which now enables the company to offer a full range of financial services in the market. The DR operations currently contributes 17% of net operating revenue and we will be keen to watch the effect of the expansion to JMMBGL's performance over the next few quarters. JMMB Equity Report
MASSY Massy Holdings Limited	P/E: 10.12x P/B: 1.02x Price: \$90.00 Div Yield 3.89%	OVERWEIGHT Massy Holdings Limited. (MHL, Massy), through its portfolio companies, engages in trading, manufacturing, distribution, and service industry businesses throughout the Caribbean region. The company operates through three portfolios: Integrated Retail, Gas Products, Motors, and Machine and two business lines: Financial Services, and Strategic and Other Investments. In financial year 2020, Massy transitioned from a Conglomerate to an Investment Holding Company. By so doing, Massy's strategy has changed, with the Group focusing mainly on its core portfolios. These core areas of the business represent Massy's competitive advantages, are well-positioned to scale, and are therefore expected to drive strategic growth going forward. Massy Equity Report

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LASD Lasco Distributors	P/E: 8.66x P/B: 1.49x Price: \$3.77 Div Yield 2.39%	OVERWEIGHT Lasco Distributors has continued its growth trajectory, displaying resilience throughout the pandemic, and we expect this to continue post-pandemic supported by the improving economic backdrop of the global economy. As continued domestic demand for goods and services remain strong, the company is also looking to strengthen its exports as well as continue to launch new product lines. However, this isn't without challenges as global supply shocks has affected LASD's gross margins. In response, management has prudently managed operational costs such that higher imported inflationary costs has not completely eroded the bottom line, resulting in continued growth. Lasco Distributors Equity Report
SCIJMD/SCIUSD Sygnus Credit Investments	P/E: 10.61x / 12.36x P/B: 0.6x / 0.7x Price: \$10.89 / \$0.08 Div Yield: 3.68% / 3.21%	OVERWEIGHT Sygnus' business model is built on providing capital and direction to the underbanked, targeting the middle market. To accomplish this, the Company has executed several capital raises involving equity, preference shares and debt raise. Sygnus has demonstrated their commitment to growth and being the market leader in the regional private credit space with their acquisition of a Puerto Rico-based, private credit firm, Acrecent Financial in Q3 of their financial year. This acquisition has significantly added to the group's income and overall profitability. The stock trades at significant discount relative to peers both from a P/E perspective and a P/B perspective. At present, given Sygnus' strong current and expected future growth, the market is pricing Sygnus at a steep discount to its book value per share. Sygnus Credit Investments Equity Report
TROPICAL Tropical Battery Limited	P/E: 13.73x P/B: 2.38x Price: \$1.95 Div Yield 1.03%	OVERWEIGHT Tropical Battery has been aggressively pursuing revenue diversification strategies, to reduce its dependence on auto battery and accessory sales. This is evident by the company's recent launch of three new subsidiaries aimed at providing renewable energy solutions for commercial customers. In addition, the company recently implemented a new inventory management system that has yielded improved operational efficiencies in addition to targeted sales initiatives that have improved revenue growth. We believe that the Company will continue to grow as they build out new revenue lines, improve operational efficiencies and drive targeted sales initiatives. Tropical Battery Equity Report

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PROVENJMD/ PROVENUSD Proven Group Limited	P/E: N/A P/B: 0.83x / 0.79x Price: \$22.5 / \$0.15 Div Yield: 3.61% / 3.47%	OVERWEIGHT Proven has shown a decline in profitability throughout the current financial year, a performance driven by lower share of earnings of associates and higher operating expenses. The company continues to demonstrate its appetite for growth through acquisitions as evidenced by the recent 100% acquisition of Fidelity Bank (Cayman). The company has a history of acquiring companies with accretive value. We expect that profit margins will improve in the future as one-off spending related to recent acquisitions pass.
LUMBER Lumber Depot Limited	P/E: 11.45x P/B: 2.86x Price: \$2.52 Div Yield 2.06%	OVERWEIGHT Lumber represents an option to gain exposure to the construction sector which has been a relatively resilient and fast-growing sector. With this sector tailwind, lumber has shown strong revenue growth since its 2019 listing and the financial year 2022 revenue and net profit are 10.1% and 26.8% higher than financial year 2021 revenue and earnings, respectively. We are still monitoring how the company progresses given the loosening of restrictions and continued growth in the construction sector. We also note that despite the growth it has shown over the last 2 years, the stock still trades at an attractive PE compared to Junior market peers. Lumber Depot Equity Report
LAB The Limners and Bards Limited	P/E: 29x P/B: 2.75x Price: \$1.74 Div Yield 5.2%	OVERWEIGHT The LAB saw strong demand for its services throughout the pandemic, with revenue growth of 35% in FY2021. For the latest financial year revenue grew by approximately 10%, an indication of continued demand for the Company's services. However, net profit declined by 7% primarily due to higher administration costs, currency translation losses and losses on "SCOPE Caribbean". To date, SCOPE has not been profitable which has negatively impacted the Lab's net profit growth. This is not abnormal for a new business, and we expect this should turnaround as the business scales. The 2022 FY was the first full operational year for SCOPE, which saw take up of its services offered while it continues to explore additional revenue streams. With the LAB consistently positive operating cash flows and a current cash balance that is 1.64x larger than the Company's current liabilities, we believe the Lab is poised to invest its capital efficiently towards further growth. The LAB Equity Report

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JBG Jamaica Broilers Group Limited	P/E: 6.97x P/B: 1.49x Price: \$34.15 Div Yield 1.96%	OVERWEIGHT JBG's financial performance has rebounded nicely from the lows seen in FY2020, driven by the recovery in the Jamaican economy and tourist arrivals, coupled with JBG's growing presence in the US market and the increasing production of the Best Dressed Chicken line of products. The loss making Haiti operation has been discontinued which should contribute to improved margins in the coming quarters. Positive results from expansion into the United States and recovery in Jamaican operations, along with stringent cost control have contributed to the surge in profitability in the first half of the 2023 financial year. Jamaica Broilers Group Equity Report
SEP Seprod Limited	P/E: 21.95x P/B: 1.97x Price: \$79.69 Div Yield 1.88%	OVERWEIGHT Seprod saw its financial performance surge for the 2022 financial year, owing to the strategic acquisition of AS Bryden, with revenues and net profit growing by 82% and 93% respectively. Going into the 2023 financial year, we expect easing of supply chain pressures, stability in commodity prices, and further consolidation of profits from AS Bryden to further lift net profits. Along with new products, Seprod also plans to aggressively target growth in export markets and is currently in the process of making necessary investments to increase capacity of its margarine plant. Seprod Limited Equity Report
LASM Lasco Manufacturing	P/E: 7.83x P/B: 1.58x Price: \$4.49 Div Yield 2.23%	OVERWEIGHT We expect that the Company's growth trajectory will be sustained, however, in the short term, the financial results have seen an impact from the overall macroeconomic conditions since the pandemic. Margins across the board have been compressed despite record profitability in 2022. Despite continued record tourism arrivals and growth in key sectors such as entertainment, steps need to be taken to restore margin progression. Against this backdrop it is notable that inflationary pressures and supply issues that plagued the company from 2022 to the first quarter of this year will likely begin to ease in the spring of 2023, suggesting a rebound in net profit growth for the company moving forward beyond FY 2023. Plans to further expand its geographical footprint by driving the contribution of export to its revenue will be value-added to the long-term sustainability of the Company's operations Lasco Manufacturing Equity Report

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GK GraceKennedy Limited	P/E: 10.16x P/B: 1.02x Price: \$79.42 Div Yield 2.54%	MARKETWEIGHT For the year ended December 31, 2022, GK reported significant top-line growth, however, margin deterioration contributed to a decline in the bottom line. Revenues increased by 10.5% while profits saw a 15.1% decline of flat as operating expenses grew at a faster rate than revenues. The company cited challenges presented by high inflation globally, sustained supply chain issues, increasing interest rates, and foreign currency volatility as issues that have affected profit margins. GK continues to advance its merger & acquisition (M&A) strategy, after it increased its stake in Catherine's Peak Bottling Company Limited in the first quarter of 2023 to move its ownership stake from 35% to 70%, thus granting them a stronger position in the spring water market. The company continues to seek M&A transactions locally and internationally. These acquisitions stand to add more diversity and growth to the company's earnings. GraceKennedy Group Equity Report
MAILPAC Mailpac Group Limited	P/E: 19.91x P/B: 10.82x Price: \$2.19 Div Yield 7.76%	MARKETWEIGHT During the peak periods of the pandemic, MAILPAC benefited immensely as online shopping became a larger share of shoppers' wallets. In large part, this period of heavy demand driven by pandemic restrictions has passed and while we anticipate online shopping will remain integral for the everyday consumer, the outsized growth we witnessed in FY2020 and FY2021 will not be repeated. Admittedly, the Company has a robust balance sheet with more cash than total liabilities which we believe places MAILPAC in a position to make growth-inducing investments. However, the current slowdown in demand and consequently revenue and profit growth underscores our MARKETWEIGHT recommendation Mailpac Group Equity Report
SGJ Scotia Group Jamaica Limited	P/E: 6.92x P/B: 0.94x Price: \$38.35 Div Yield 3.65%	MARKETWEIGHT The greatest driver of profitability in FY2021 was the reduction of Expected Credit Losses (ECL) relative to the previous year as the economic backdrop improved. Scotia is not likely to have this benefit recur to the magnitude it did in FY2021. The group has made an accelerated effort to digitize its business in line with its digital strategy to drive efficiency and better service customer needs. SGJ is looking to further consolidate its operations and funnel investments in core operations through technology and talent, while also looking to enter new markets and launch new products. Scotia has two major positives. The first is that the current rising interest rate environment supports the Group's bank model, more so than other listed financial institutions. The second is that SGJ is a consistent source of relatively attractive dividends which makes the Company a good asset for investors with a clear preference for income. Scotia Group Equity Report

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FTNA Fontana Limited	P/E: 20.02x P/B: 5.00x Price: \$10.01 Div Yield 2.00%	MARKETWEIGHT Fontana has been growing and expanding since listing on the junior exchange in 2019. The Company has plans to expand, which include a new outlet to bring its footprint to a total of seven locations. In its most recent quarter, Net Profit saw a 32.7% increase over the same quarter in the prior financial year. Further, the cost of sales has been impacted given the current inflationary environment and is likely to continue being affected in the near to medium term. However, the company continues to grow organically and is financially positioned to do so. Due to the current environment and increased finance costs, profitability could dampen in the near term but in the long term, the addition of its new outlet could support growth. On balance, the Company has both significant risks and the potential for upside, which underscores our recommendation. Fontana Equity Report
SVL Supreme Ventures Limited	P/E: 23.16x P/B: 13.56x Price: \$27.1 Div Yield 3.43%	MARKETWEIGHT Supreme Ventures is the market leader in the lottery and gaming industry. The company has also in recent years embarked on an aggressive growth strategy through several acquisitions (Champion Gaming and Post To Post Betting). The company would have been impacted by the pandemic as the lockdown measures impacted its operations at Caymanas Park. With the easing of restrictions, the Company should benefit from an easing of lock down restrictions and a normalization of business. Despite this, in the medium term we note that the company now has competition in the lottery segment of the market which may negatively impact margins. The degree to which this might impede the pace of revenue growth will however depend on the take up of new games such as Scratchaz which, at present, seems popular amongst younger consumers as it is a new addition to the Company's product offerings. Supreme Ventures Equity Report
ECL Express Catering Limited	P/E: 14.61x P/B: 6.12x Price: \$4.00 Div Yield: N/A	MARKETWEIGHT ECL has seen improved performance as the tourism industry rebound, following the pandemic, has been robust. However, the Company is not currently operating at pre-covid efficiency levels, as price increases due to the current global supply chain challenges have driven higher costs across all product categories. While we do expect the tourism industry to continue to recover, driving ECL's revenues to grow and likely surpass pre-covid levels by FY2023/FY2024, the inflationary pressures can not be ignored. Longer-term we do expect the company to reap the benefits of their expanded footprint within the Sangsters International Airport as well as the return to trend growth in stopover arrivals. ECL Equity Report

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VMIL Victoria Mutual Investments Limited	P/E: 7.64x P/B: 1.55x Price: \$2.75 Div Yield: 0.00%	OVERWEIGHT Victoria Mutual has recently rebranded under the "VM Group". By association, there has been implications for VMIL. For example, the Company has been significantly more active in the capital markets through its investment banking arm. We expect continued growth in the investment banking space will add considerable value to the Company's bottom line which has already shown clear improvement throughout FY2021. VMIL Equity Report

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SOS Stationery & Office Supplies Limited	P/E: 13.19x P/B: 2.89x Price: \$1.73 Div Yield 1.16%	Stationery and Office Supplies presents investors with another option to benefit from the reopening of the domestic economy. A core segment of their business would have suffered from the lockdown measures and work from home, namely the sale of furniture and its SEEK line of books. However, during that period stationary sales have done well to fill that revenue gap. With the resumption of economic activity, the return to office and the expansion in the BPO sector, SOS might be a large beneficiary in 2022.
SJ Sagicor Group Jamaica Limited	P/E: 6.92x P/B: 2.09x Price: \$47.75 Div Yield 3.36%	Sagicor Group Jamaica Limited would have been adversely impacted by the pandemic even more so than the typical financial sector company due to their exposure to the tourism sector. This would have therefore led to sizeable impairment losses on their investment in associated companies (i.e., Playa Hotel and Resorts). For 2022 we therefore expect to see some amount of recovery as the group has disposed of their investments in Playa which will stem impairment losses while simultaneously still having direct exposure to travel through their US resort (The Hilton DoubleTree) while their banking services should benefit from a pickup in economic activity.

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Fixed Income

Bond & Issuer	Stock Information (as at December 29, 2023)	Comments
HLT 3.75% 2029 Hilton Domestic Operating	Price (Bid/Ask): 92.65 / \$93.13 Yield to Maturity (Bid/Ask): 5.35%/5.24% Maturity: May 1st, 2029 Modified Duration: 4.70 Credit Rating: BB+ (S&P)	The Hilton Hotels gives investors access to several global brands in the hospitality and travel sector. As of 2022, Hilton managed, franchised, or owned 7,165 hotels and resorts, totaling 1.1 million rooms in 123 countries. The industry also continues to represent a potential travel recovery play as the demand for business transient (short stay business travel) and group travel continues to gain momentum with trends through 2Q23 continuing to look strong.
SFCCN 5.3% 2028 Sagcor Financial Corporation	Price (Bid/Ask): \$97.00/\$97.00 Yield to Maturity (Bid/Ask): 6.09%/6.09% Maturity: May 13th, 2028 Modified Duration: 3.80 Credit Rating: BBB (S&P) / BBB- (Fitch)	OVERWEIGHT SFCCN 5.3% 2028 gives investors exposure a global life insurer with a growing footprint in the North American Market. While the credit has seen some spread compression, we believe that there might be more to come. This comes as it trades slightly cheap relative to peers with the major concern as it relates to macroeconomic exposure to Caribbean government debt is likely to be improved with the Iviri transaction. In this regard, the successful closure of the acquisition means that there is potential for more spread compression. In addition to this, approaching closer to the end of the Fed hiking cycle might also limit the potential downside tailwinds on price from even more restrictive monetary policy. SFCCN Fixed Income Report
BAC 7.25% 2025 Bank of America Corp	Price (Bid/Ask): \$102.62/\$103.17 Yield to Maturity (Bid/Ask): 5.68%/5.35% Maturity: October 15th, 2025 Modified Duration: 1.64 Credit Rating: BBB+ (S&P) / A (Fitch) / A3 (Moody's)	Bank of America is one of the largest financial institutions in the United States, with more than \$2.5 trillion in assets. The bank now has one of the most complete retail branch networks and overall retail franchises in the United States. BAC is also a Tier 1 investment bank, a top four U.S. credit card issuer, a top three U.S. acquirer, has a solid commercial banking franchise, and owns the Merrill Lynch franchise, which has become one of the leading U.S. brokerage and advisor firms.
MAT 3.75% 2029 Mattel Inc	Price (Bid/Ask): \$91.51/\$92.12 Yield to Maturity (Bid/Ask): 5.64%/5.50% Maturity: April 1st, 2029 Modified Duration: 4.61 Credit Rating: BBB- (S&P) / BB+ (Fitch) / Baa3 (Moody's)	Mattel markets toy products that are sold to its wholesale customers and direct to retail consumers. The Company offers products for children and families, including toys for infants and preschoolers, girls and boys. A rebound in dolls, especially Barbie and Frozen, is the key to Mattel outperforming projections for 2023.

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Unit Trust

Unit Trust Fund	27/12/2023	20/12/2023	Week/Week Return	Year-to-Date Return	1 Year Return	Yield
Capital Growth	76.55	74.03	3.40%	-20.10%	-15.83%	-
Money Market	16.2805	16.2435	0.23%	4.80%	4.85%	4.78%
Income Portfolio	100.00	100.00	-	-	-	4.99%
FX Bond Portfolio (US\$)	1.4247	1.4227	0.14%	6.24%	6.39%	5.05%
Real Estate Portfolio	12,603.50	12,641.97	-0.30%	58.80%	142.65%	-
FX Growth Portfolio	0.9228	0.9138	0.98%	9.13%	10.34%	-
FX Income Accumulator Portfolio (US\$)	1.0163	1.0146	0.17%	1.50%	-	2.75%

“Someone's sitting in the shade today
because someone planted a tree a
long time ago.”

Warren Buffett

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LOCAL EQUITY MARKET

For the week ending December 29, 2023, the local stock market, measured by the Combined Index, advanced by 2.85%. The Main Market Index advanced by 2.81%, the Junior Market Index advanced by 3.22%, and the JSE USD Equities Index advanced by 4.50%. During the week, Radio Jamaica Limited was the largest gainer, rising by approximately 49.23% to close at \$1.94. MFS Capital Partners Limited was the biggest decliner, which fell by 14.54% to close at \$1.94.

Large-cap stocks, reflecting those listed on the Main Market Index are underperforming on a YTD basis, declining by 8.48%, relative to its Junior Market counterpart which has declined by 3.46%.

For the week ending December 29, 2023, overall Market activity resulted from trading in 119 stocks of which 75 advanced, 29 declined and 15 traded firm. Market volume amounted to 305,369,765 units valued at over \$2,871,843,159.21. MailPac Group Limited was the volume leader with 50,764,955 units (16.60%), followed by Wigton Windfarm Limited with 40,360,221 units (13.19%), and by Jamaica Teas Limited with 34,585,537 units (11.31%).

Revisiting relevant news during the week:

Tropical Battery's expansion yields record-breaking revenue

Tropical Battery Company Limited's recent expansion into the Dominican Republic's market has yielded record-breaking results, with a gross operating revenue of \$782.8 million over the past nine months. This figure represents an 18.3 per cent increase from the same period last year, as highlighted in its third quarter (Q3) results.

Tropical Battery's expansion yields record-breaking revenue

AMG Packaging looks to further expansion projects

Box maker AMG Packaging and Paper Company is pursuing another round of expansion just a year into the commissioning of its new factory on Retirement Crescent in the Corporate Area.

AMG Packaging looks to further expansion projects

Hylton, Cohen now amongst NCBFG's biggest shareholders

Former NCB Financial Group executives Patrick Hylton and Dennis Cohen are now amongst the financial conglomerate's largest shareholders in the aftermath of their \$6-billion separation package from the company earlier this year. The data were revealed in a recent filing made by the NCB Financial Group on Jamaica Stock Exchange.

Hylton, Cohen now amongst NCBFG's biggest shareholders

JMMB Group gets green light to extend preference shares

JMMB Group Limited (JMMBGL) has received approval to amend the terms of issue on two classes of its preference shares at its general meeting held on Wednesday at the AC Hotel.

JMMB Group gets green light to extend preference shares

Sagicor appoints trustee amid default on bond payments by iCreate

The next 48 hours will be a crucial period for training institute iCreate Limited, following the appointment of a trustee by Sagicor Investments to force the company to make good on a \$24-million bond it executed in 2020.

Sagicor appoints trustee amid default on bond payments by iCreate

VMBS, JMMB to hike fees effective Feb 1

Clients of financial institutions JMMB and Victoria Mutual Building Society (VMBS) may find themselves paying more for some bank services, including cash withdrawals, come February 1, 2024.

VMBS, JMMB to hike fees effective Feb 1

Index	29/12/2023	22/12/2023	31/12/2022	Week/Week	Year-to-Date
JSE Main Market	325,699.79	316,798.45	355,896.64	2.81%	-8.48%
JSE Junior Market	3,848.33	3,728.14	3,986.44	3.22%	-3.46%
JSE Combined Market	339,158.12	329,757.41	368,591.98	2.85%	-7.99%
JSE USD Equities Market	231.05	221.10	233.97	4.50%	-1.25%
JSE Financial Index	70.65	68.78	85.88	2.72%	-17.73%
JSE M&D Idex	102.94	100.11	97.42	2.83%	5.67%

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INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

U.S.

Stocks end mixed to close out strong year

The major benchmarks were mixed for the holiday-shortened week. The S&P 500 Index marked its ninth straight weekly gain—its longest stretch since 2004—and briefly moved within 0.53% of its all-time intraday high. The week closed out a strong year for all the major indexes, led by the Nasdaq Composite, which recorded its sixth-biggest annual gain since the index was launched in 1971. As was widely expected, trading volumes and market moves were muted through most of the week, with trading closed Monday and many investors out of the office.

Hopes rise for AI devices even as possible hurdle arises

The week brought several notable developments on the artificial intelligence (AI) front. On Wednesday, Bloomberg reported that Sam Altman, the CEO of ChatGPT creator OpenAI, and former Apple design chief Jony Ive recruited another top Apple executive, Tang Tan, to develop an AI device. Both Ive and Tan played roles in the development of the iPhone.

News of a possible impediment to the business models of OpenAI and other AI firms also arrived Wednesday, however. Reports emerged that The New York Times had filed suit against generative AI companies for copyright infringement, given that the media giant's content was being used to train ChatGPT and other large language models developed by these firms.

Data suggest modest slowdown to end the year

The week's economic calendar was also relatively thin but arguably had a negative overall tone. An index of Mid-Atlantic manufacturing activity, reported Wednesday, fell sharply in December and indicated the fastest pace of contraction since February. On Friday, a barometer of overall business activity in the Chicago region also surprised significantly on the downside and moved back into contraction territory. Pending home sales were flat in November, defying expectations for a modest increase given the recent drop in mortgage interest rates. Finally, weekly jobless claims rose unexpectedly to their highest level (218,000) since the start of the month.

[T.RowePrice](#)

Europe

In local currency terms, the pan-European STOXX Europe 600 Index ticked 0.21% higher and stayed near its almost one-year high. Major Continental stock indexes were softer to little changed. France's CAC 40 Index lost 0.37%, Germany's DAX declined 0.27%, and Italy's FTSE MIB was down modestly. The UK's FTSE 100 Index gained 1.60%.

Nationwide says UK house prices fall; BoE's Bailey says policy will remain tight

The Nationwide Building Society's house price index was unchanged in December sequentially and down 1.8% over the year—the largest annual decline since 2008. A spokesperson said the UK housing market remained weak, with transaction levels 10% below pre-pandemic levels over the last six months. He noted that while mortgage rates had fallen recently, the company did not expect a “rapid rebound” in prices or activity for some time. Meanwhile, Bank of England (BoE) Governor Andrew Bailey told The Chronicle newspaper that inflation may be just under 4% by the end of the first quarter of next year, but to reach the 2%, target rates would have to remain at levels that would restrict price pressures.

Inflation slows unexpectedly in Spain; economists see rate cuts in first half

A preliminary estimate of consumer price growth in Spain—the first major eurozone economy to report December inflation—showed headline prices slowing in December to 3.1% year over year instead of accelerating to 3.3%, as expected by economists polled by FactSet. The national statistics agency attributed the decline to a drop in motor fuel prices. European Central Bank (ECB) policymaker Madis Muller said in a Bloomberg interview that the ECB is unlikely to raise rates again, given evidence of slowing inflation, while his Governing Council colleague Robert Holzmann said it is too early to talk about lowering borrowing costs and such a move in 2024 is anything but certain. However, most economists in a survey by the Financial Times newspaper expect the ECB to start cutting interest rates by the second quarter of 2024. Almost 60% of the 48 respondents predict inflation will reach the 2% target level next year, although only two of them expected a rate reduction before the end of March.

Japan

Japan's stock markets ended higher, with the Nikkei 225 Index up 0.89% and the broader TOPIX Index rising 1.28% in subdued trading ahead of the New Year's holiday. Shares were supported by expectations that the Bank of Japan (BoJ) would continue with its ultralow interest rate policy. The Nikkei and the TOPIX posted their biggest annual gains in 2023 since 2013, climbing 28% and 25%, respectively. The Nikkei was the best-performing index in Asia.

Index	29/12/2023	22/12/2023	31/12/2022	Week/Week	Year-to-Date
Dow Jones	37,689.54	37,385.97	33,147.25	0.81%	13.70%
S&P 500	4,769.83	4,754.63	3,839.50	0.32%	24.23%
NASDAQ 100	16,825.93	16,777.40	10,939.76	0.29%	53.81%
FTSE 100	7,733.24	7,697.51	7,451.74	0.46%	3.78%
Euro Stoxx 50	4,521.65	4,521.47	3,793.62	0.00%	19.19%

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ABOUT US

Barita Investments Limited, is a publicly-traded company on the JSE, 74.3% owned by Cornerstone Financial Holdings Limited (“Cornerstone”).

The Barita Group is made up of Barita Investments Limited and its subsidiary, Barita Unit Trusts Management Company Limited (BUTM). Founded by Rita Humphries-Lewin in 1977, Barita has the distinction of being one of the oldest stock brokerages in Jamaica. The Company is regulated by the Financial Services Commission (FSC), is a member of the JSE and is licensed as a Primary Dealer and Cambio Dealer by the Bank of Jamaica (BOJ or the Central Bank). In August 2018, Cornerstone Financial Holdings Limited (Cornerstone or CFHL) acquired majority shares in Barita and has supported the Company’s mission and vision to be a premier investment force in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean.

OUR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Stock Market investments on any of the three regional exchanges
- Fixed Income Trading
- Investment Banking Services
- Unit Trust Investments
- Currency Trading
- Structured Products
- Retirement Planning
- Wealth Planning
- Market Research

BUTM currently offers six (6) unit trust products spanning fixed income, equities and real estate and is recognised as a strong player in the middle market retail segment and a leader in unit trust performance.

Barita serves its clients island-wide through its Head Office in Kingston and branches in Mandeville and Montego Bay with a team of 163 members across its operations island-wide.

Contact us

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