

# Large Cap Quarterly Commentary

## 2022: Third Quarter

Argent

### Performance Summary

For the third quarter of 2022, the Argent Large Cap strategy outperformed its benchmark, returning -3.5% net of fees, compared to a return of -4.9% for the S&P 500® Index.

| Performance Summary as of September 30, 2022 |         |             |              |              |             |              |              |              |             |                  |
|--|---------|-------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|------------------|
|  | %       | 3Q22        | YTD          | 1 Year       | 3 Year*     | 5 Year*      | 10 Year*     | 15 Year*     | 20 Year*    | Since Inception* |
| Argent Large Cap                             | Net (%) | -3.48       | -24.11       | -17.16       | 8.83        | 8.43         | 11.49        | 8.00         | 10.06       | 8.35             |
| S&P 500                                      |         | -4.88       | -23.87       | -15.47       | 8.16        | 9.24         | 11.70        | 8.03         | 9.84        | 7.38             |
| <b>Excess Return</b>                         |         | <b>1.40</b> | <b>-0.24</b> | <b>-1.69</b> | <b>0.67</b> | <b>-0.81</b> | <b>-0.21</b> | <b>-0.03</b> | <b>0.22</b> | <b>0.97</b>      |

\* Annualized

For comparison purposes, the strategy is measured against the S&P 500® Index. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Data is as of 09/30/22 and is supplied as supplemental information to the composite disclosures presented later in this document. Russell Investment Group is the source and owner of the Russell Index data contained or reflected in this material and all trademarks and copyrights related thereto. This presentation was prepared by Argent Capital Management and may contain confidential information. Unauthorized use, disclosure, copying, dissemination or redistribution of this presentation is strictly prohibited.

Performance was driven by stock selection – the focus of the Large Cap team – while allocation contributed slightly. Sector performance was led by Industrials, with Financials the next largest contributor. The Consumer Discretionary and Energy sectors detracted from performance in the quarter.

Within Industrials, as was the case for the strategy as a whole, performance was led by stock selection, with allocation a very slight contributor. United Rentals, Inc. led performance. The company continues to gain share within the heavy equipment rental market in the United States. It has successfully mixed organic growth with acquisitions to increase its product offerings and expand into new geographies.

Performance for Financials was also driven by stock selection. Leading performance in the sector was LPL Financial Holdings, Inc. LPL is a prime beneficiary of higher interest rates as the company earns a higher rate of return on its clients' cash balances.

The largest detractor to performance on a sector basis was Consumer Discretionary. Although stock selection contributed to quarterly returns, allocation negated that performance. The Large Cap strategy is underweight in the Consumer Discretionary sector as the economy continues to slow and inventories, especially in retail, remain problematic.

Energy was the second detractor to performance on a sector basis. The slight negative performance for the quarter was primarily driven by allocation. During the year, the Large Cap strategy purchased and then added to, Pioneer Natural Resources Company. The company has become a good steward of capital, giving shareholders 85%+ of its free cash flow. This positive change made Pioneer a compelling option for the Large Cap strategy.

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### Quarterly Attribution Analysis, September 30, 2022 Argent Large Cap Strategy vs. S&P 500® Index\*

|                     | Argent Large Cap |              |                        | S&P 500        |              |                        | Variation      |              |                        | Attribution Analysis |                         |              |
|---------------------|------------------|--------------|------------------------|----------------|--------------|------------------------|----------------|--------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
|                     | Average Weight   | Total Return | Contribution to Return | Average Weight | Total Return | Contribution to Return | Average Weight | Total Return | Contribution to Return | Allocation Effect    | Selection + Interaction | Total Effect |
| Comm. Services      | 6.73             | -13.21       | -0.80                  | 8.50           | -12.70       | -0.99                  | -1.77          | -0.51        | 0.19                   | 0.14                 | -0.02                   | 0.11         |
| Cons. Discretionary | 8.75             | 4.71         | 0.22                   | 11.40          | 4.42         | 0.33                   | -2.65          | 0.29         | -0.10                  | -0.25                | 0.02                    | -0.23        |
| Consumer Staples    | 5.84             | -7.90        | -0.45                  | 6.75           | -6.63        | -0.46                  | -0.91          | -1.26        | 0.01                   | 0.01                 | -0.07                   | -0.06        |
| Energy              | 2.80             | 0.50         | -0.05                  | 4.37           | 2.41         | 0.01                   | -1.57          | -1.90        | -0.06                  | -0.11                | -0.04                   | -0.16        |
| Financials          | 12.51            | 0.70         | -0.10                  | 10.80          | -3.11        | -0.38                  | 1.71           | 3.80         | 0.28                   | 0.03                 | 0.39                    | 0.42         |
| Health Care         | 17.56            | -4.41        | -0.75                  | 14.46          | -5.18        | -0.69                  | 3.10           | 0.77         | -0.06                  | -0.01                | 0.14                    | 0.14         |
| Industrials         | 14.06            | 2.95         | 0.31                   | 7.81           | -4.78        | -0.40                  | 6.25           | 7.73         | 0.70                   | 0.01                 | 1.05                    | 1.06         |
| Technology          | 26.96            | -5.66        | -1.32                  | 27.38          | -6.21        | -1.58                  | -0.42          | 0.55         | 0.26                   | 0.02                 | 0.14                    | 0.16         |
| Materials           | --               | --           | --                     | 2.52           | -7.13        | -0.18                  | -2.52          | 7.13         | 0.18                   | 0.06                 | --                      | 0.06         |
| Real Estate         | 2.85             | -13.39       | -0.36                  | 2.85           | -11.06       | -0.29                  | 0.00           | -2.33        | -0.07                  | -0.00                | -0.07                   | -0.07        |
| Utilities           | --               | --           | --                     | 3.08           | -5.99        | -0.22                  | -3.08          | 5.99         | 0.22                   | 0.03                 | --                      | 0.03         |
| Cash                | 1.93             | 0.63         | 0.01                   | 0.09           | 0.65         | 0.00                   | 1.84           | -0.02        | 0.01                   | 0.09                 | -0.00                   | 0.09         |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>100.00</b>    | <b>-3.29</b> | <b>-3.29</b>           | <b>100.00</b>  | <b>-4.85</b> | <b>-4.85</b>           | <b>--</b>      | <b>1.56</b>  | <b>1.56</b>            | <b>0.02</b>          | <b>1.54</b>             | <b>1.56</b>  |

\* This is based on the holdings history of a representative portfolio of the Argent Large Cap Strategy. The information provided in this report should not be considered a recommendation to purchase or sell any particular security. You should not assume that investments in any securities within these sectors were or will be profitable. A list of stocks recommended by Argent in the past year is available upon request. Past performance is no guarantee of future results.

## Market Commentary

The third quarter of 2022 was another ‘risk off’ quarter, with the caveat that interest rate-sensitive stocks were negatively impacted by the actions of the Federal Reserve. REITs, a bond surrogate, fell over 11% in the quarter, making Real Estate the second worst-performing sector in the index. Somewhat surprisingly, the Consumer Discretionary sector posted strong performance for the quarter, rising over 4.4%. That return may reflect a bounce from second quarter results, especially in the case of Netflix which rose nearly 35% in the quarter. In contrast, many retailers suffered from slower sales, higher wage expenses and bloated inventories, as uncertainty prompted consumers to pull back on spending.

As near-zero interest rates for the last several years made bond yields unappealing, the acronym TINA became popular in the investment industry. TINA stands for “**T**here **I**s **N**o **A**lternative (to stocks).” The Federal Reserve’s decision to raise interest rates by 0.75% for an unprecedented three consecutive meetings gave investors pause, with higher interest rates putting pressure on stock valuations and bond yields becoming more attractive.

The Fed indicated it is committed to bringing inflation under control, something that has historically eluded monetary authorities both within the United States and abroad. However, shorter-maturity government bonds soared during the quarter resulting in an inverted yield curve. An inverted yield curve does not cause recessions but it has historically been a good predictor of them, and the Fed seems hopeful of engineering a “growth recession.”

### Top Contributors

**LPL Financial Holdings, Inc.** benefits from higher rates as it realizes returns on its clients' cash. Consensus estimates for LPL's earnings are up over 47% this year and 54% next year. Over and above the windfall LPL is expected to realize from higher rates, the company continues to take share as a back-office service provider for Registered Investment Advisors (RIAs).

**United Rentals, Inc.** continues to take share in the heavy equipment rental market in the United States. While component shortages are affecting United Rentals' ability to purchase new equipment, it has boosted the value of its used equipment. To date, commercial construction is holding up better than residential, a positive for the company.

**Danaher Corporation** continues with its time-tested operating process, finding companies to plug into its existing businesses and applying DBS – Danaher Business Systems – to drive growth and increase profitability. Danaher recently announced it was going to spin off more of its non-health care related businesses, as it did when it spun out Fortive. The remaining health care focused company should show better and more consistent organic growth.

**Ameriprise Financial, Inc.** like LPL, is a beneficiary of higher interest rates as it can deploy its clients' cash in higher return investments. Ameriprise continues to enrich its mix of businesses, with more exposure to asset and investment management, businesses with higher organic growth potential that are low in capital expenditure.

**Booz Allen Hamilton Holding Corporation** is a defense consulting firm specializing in areas such as cyber security. With the increase in hostilities across the globe, the value that Booz Allen brings to clients has increased.

### Top Detractors

**The Carlyle Group, Inc.** was weak in the quarter as its CEO elected to depart the firm over disagreements in compensation. In addition, investors worry higher interest rates will lead to higher borrowing costs for alternative investment managers like Carlyle. Finally, higher rates may depress valuations as it seeks to monetize its assets. Carlyle's shift to fee-related earnings (FRE) is a positive and its valuation relative to other alternative asset managers make the stock an attractive investment.

**BellRing Brands, Inc.** is capacity constrained, as demand for its protein shakes is outstripping the company's ability to produce the product. The Large Cap team believes this is more of a timing issue that will resolve itself. In the meantime, BellRing's organic growth rate remains well above that of the Consumer Staples sector.

**Crown Castle International Corp.** is a REIT. With higher interest rates, the REIT sector underperformed. The Large Cap team remains confident that it will be a beneficiary of the rollout of 5G telephony, requiring antennae and fiber from Crown Castle and its peers.

**Alphabet, Inc.** declined partly from the 'risk off' tone of the third quarter. Investors are also watching results from YouTube as social media growth has shifted and slowed.

**Mastercard, Inc.,** like Alphabet, is a stock that underperformed in the 'risk off' environment of the third quarter. Mastercard was also affected by the potential of legislation that would mandate new entrants into the credit card processing industry.

### Buys

**Charles River Laboratories International, Inc.** is a leading contract research and manufacturing organization serving pharma and biopharma customers. It has the biggest pre-clinical and safety assessment businesses in the country. The company's executives have an enviable business management and capital allocation track record. Additionally, the industry has a positive long-term outlook owing to more significant biopharma funding and a new appreciation for life science research post-coronavirus.

**The Carlyle Group Inc.** is an American multinational private equity, alternative asset management and financial services corporation. It specializes in private equity, real assets and private credit. The company has a long track record of investment performance above that of its peers. The company executed a successful turnaround in its first few years and is now focused on reinvesting its profits into new and existing businesses while paying a sizeable dividend.

### Sells

**Truist Financial Corporation** is a bank holding company headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina. The company was formed by the merger of BB&T and SunTrust Bank, both regional banks based in the south. Truist released loan reserves last year, boosting earnings for 2021. As the economy normalizes, it expects to build its loan reserves. Additionally, there is concern that deposit costs for Truist will rise as consumers demand better interest rates on their deposits.

**NortonLifeLock, Inc.** is an American cybersecurity software and services company. Our original thesis for purchasing NortonLifeLock focused on the company's growth in the consumer security market. While we still believe in the importance of I.T. security for consumers, this segment faces pressure from the competition as consumers face a more challenging spending backdrop. These pressures were reflected in NortonLifeLock's recent earnings results where sales performance missed expectations.

Argent Large Cap Strategy Top Contributors and Detractors for Quarter Ending September 30, 2022\*

| Top Contributors            | Avg. Weight | Total Effect | Top Detractors          | Avg. Weight | Total Effect |
|-----------------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| LPL Financial Holdings Inc. | 4.13        | 0.76         | Mastercard Incorporated | 4.66        | -0.19        |
| United Rentals, Inc.        | 3.39        | 0.47         | Alphabet Inc. Class A   | 4.92        | -0.22        |
| Danaher Corporation         | 5.88        | 0.36         | Crown Castle Inc.       | 2.85        | -0.23        |
| Ameriprise Financial, Inc.  | 2.55        | 0.27         | BellRing Brands, Inc.   | 1.87        | -0.25        |
| Booz Allen Hamilton         | 2.81        | 0.21         | Carlyle Group Inc       | 1.14        | -0.40        |

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### Portfolio Positioning

The Large Cap strategy continues straddling the line between an economic slowdown and recovery. Because of the uncertainty in the markets, the gains posted in July, were more than erased in August. Uncertainties with regard to inflation and potential actions by the Fed prompt the Large Cap team to continue to look for differentiated companies with organic growth, where a positive catalyst for change has not been fully reflected in the stock's

valuation. As the pullback continues, the Large Cap team will revisit great growth companies that may have had their valuations come into a range that the team finds attractive.

Sincerely,

**Argent Large Cap Team**

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### Argent Capital Management, LLC ARGENT LARGE CAP GROWTH EQUITY COMPOSITE October 1, 1998 through September 30, 2022

| For the period ending December 31,                  | Composite Return % Gross-of-Fees | Composite Return % Net-of-Fees | Russell 1000 Growth Return % | S&P 500 Return % | Composite 3-Yr St. Dev (%) | Russell 1000 Growth 3-Yr St. Dev (%) | S&P 500 3-Yr St. Dev % | Number of Composite Accounts | Composite Assets (\$ millions) | Principal Business Assets (\$ millions) | Internal Dispersion (%) |
|---|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 2021  | 29.16                            | 28.70                          | 27.60                        | 28.71            | 18.60                      | 18.17                                | 17.17                  | 588                          | 2,231                          | 3,517                                   | 0.60                    |
| 2020  | 19.39                            | 18.94                          | 38.49                        | 18.40            | 20.42                      | 19.64                                | 18.53                  | 575                          | 1,860                          | 2,874                                   | 0.60                    |
| 2019  | 35.97                            | 35.44                          | 36.39                        | 31.49            | 13.50                      | 13.07                                | 11.93                  | 586                          | 1,912                          | 3,019                                   | 1.30                    |
| 2018  | -7.76                            | -8.15                          | -1.51                        | -4.38            | 12.67                      | 12.12                                | 10.80                  | 617                          | 1,624                          | 2,542                                   | 0.50                    |
| 2017  | 22.93                            | 22.40                          | 30.21                        | 21.83            | 11.37                      | 10.54                                | 9.92                   | 618                          | 1,860                          | 2,898                                   | 0.50                    |
| 2016  | 6.99                             | 6.51                           | 7.08                         | 11.96            | 12.52                      | 11.15                                | 10.59                  | 621                          | 1,665                          | 2,604                                   | 0.50                    |
| 2015  | 5.80                             | 5.33                           | 5.67                         | 1.38             | 11.87                      | 10.70                                | 10.48                  | 594                          | 1,527                          | 2,357                                   | 0.50                    |
| 2014  | 13.13                            | 12.60                          | 13.05                        | 13.69            | 12.02                      | 9.59                                 | 8.98                   | 546                          | 1,414                          | 2,817                                   | 0.70                    |
| 2013  | 32.07                            | 31.45                          | 33.48                        | 32.39            | 14.75                      | 12.18                                | 11.94                  | 515                          | 1,261                          | 2,478                                   | 0.60                    |
| 2012  | 21.33                            | 20.71                          | 15.26                        | 16.00            | 18.90                      | 15.66                                | 15.09                  | 475                          | 911                            | 1,782                                   | 0.60                    |
| Three-Year Annualized                               | 27.99                            | 27.51                          | 34.08                        | 26.07            |                            |                                      |                        |                              |                                |   |                         |
| Five-Year Annualized                                | 18.91                            | 18.44                          | 25.32                        | 18.47            |                            |                                      |                        |                              |                                |   |                         |
| Ten-Year Annualized                                 | 17.17                            | 16.67                          | 19.79                        | 16.55            |                            |                                      |                        |                              |                                |   |                         |
| Fifteen-Year Annualized                             | 11.20                            | 10.66                          | 13.72                        | 10.66            |                            |                                      |                        |                              |                                |   |                         |
| Twenty-Year Annualized                              | 10.21                            | 9.64                           | 10.86                        | 9.53             |                            |                                      |                        |                              |                                |   |                         |
| <b>Information for period(s) September 30, 2022</b> |                                  |                                |                              |                  |                            |                                      |                        |                              |                                |   |                         |
| 3rd Quarter 2022                                    | -3.39                            | -3.48                          | -3.60                        | -4.88            | 21.19                      | 22.81                                | 20.02                  | 586                          | 1,634                          | 2,624                                   |                         |
| Rolling 1 - Year                                    | -16.86                           | -17.16                         | -22.59                       | -15.47           |                            |                                      |                        |                              |                                |   |                         |
| Rolling 3 - Year                                    | 9.23                             | 8.83                           | 10.67                        | 8.16             |                            |                                      |                        |                              |                                |   |                         |
| Rolling 5 - Year                                    | 8.84                             | 8.43                           | 12.17                        | 9.24             |                            |                                      |                        |                              |                                |   |                         |
| Rolling 10 - Year                                   | 11.96                            | 11.49                          | 13.70                        | 11.70            |                            |                                      |                        |                              |                                |   |                         |
| Rolling 15 - Year                                   | 8.51                             | 8.00                           | 10.10                        | 8.03             |                            |                                      |                        |                              |                                |   |                         |
| Rolling 20 - Year                                   | 10.63                            | 10.06                          | 11.02                        | 9.84             |                            |                                      |                        |                              |                                |   |                         |
| Since Inception Annualized                          | 8.92                             | 8.35                           | 7.50                         | 7.38             |                            |                                      |                        |                              |                                |   |                         |

#### Disclosures:

- Argent Capital Management, LLC ("Argent") is an independent investment management firm comprised of two distinct business entities: the Non-Wrap Fee/SMA Business of Argent Capital Management, LLC ("Principal Business"), which does not include wrap fee/SMA clients; and the Wrap Fee/SMA Business of Argent Capital Management, LLC ("Wrap Business"), which includes only wrap fee/SMA clients. The Principal Business claims compliance with the Global Investment Performance Standards (GIPS®) and has prepared and presented this report in compliance with the GIPS standards. The Principal Business has been independently verified for the periods January 1, 2003 through December 31, 2021. 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. The Argent Large Cap Growth Equity Composite has had a performance examination for the periods January 1, 2003 through December 31, 2021. The verification and performance examination reports are available upon request. GIPS® is a registered trademark of CFA Institute. CFA Institute does not endorse or promote this organization, nor does it warrant the accuracy or quality of the content contained herein.
- This composite represents investment performance for portfolios in U.S. equities with strong earnings and growth characteristics and large capitalization, for which Argent has sole investment discretion. Portfolios typically include 30-40 equity holdings; with fixed investments initially less than 5% of total portfolio value, never exceeding 10% and cash targeted to be less than 10% of total portfolio value. This composite inception date is October 1998 and was created in January 2003. A list of composite descriptions and broad distribution pooled funds are available upon request.
- The composite is compared to the Russell 1000 Growth® Index and the S&P 500® Index, two benchmarks that may be generally relevant to the Large Cap Growth strategy's large cap growth investment style. The Russell 1000 Growth Index which measures the performance of the large-cap growth segment of the U.S. equity universe. It includes those Russell 1000 companies with higher price-to-book ratios and higher forecasted growth values. The S&P 500® Index measures the performance of 500 large companies listed on stock exchanges in the United States. It is one of the most commonly followed equity indices.
- Valuations are computed and performance reported in U.S. currency. Performance results are total return, (i.e. include the reinvestment of all income, including but not limited to dividends received). Policies for valuing investments, calculating performance, and preparing GIPS Reports are available upon request. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. There is no guarantee that strategies, systems, indicators, or signals will result in profits or that they will not result in a full loss or losses. All investors are advised to fully understand all risks associated with any kind of investing they choose to do.
- Gross performance is presented before management and certain custodial fees, but after all trading expenses except where commissions have been waived or for bundled fee accounts. Net of fee performance is calculated by reducing gross performance by actual management fees incurred and bundled fees for applicable portfolios. The composite includes bundled fee portfolios that pay a fee based on a percentage of assets under management. Bundled fees may include trading costs, portfolio monitoring, consulting services, and custodial services. The composite included bundled fee accounts which represented less than 1% of composite assets during the periods of 2011 - 2019. The composite included portfolios where commissions were waived representing approx. 32% (2019), 34% (2020), and 40% (2021) of composite assets.
- Argent's annual advisory fees are calculated as a percentage of assets under management according to the following schedule; 1% on the first \$1M, .80% on the next \$2M, .65% on the balance thereafter, although fees may be negotiated or waived in certain circumstances. The composite includes non-fee paying accounts which represented less than 1% of composite assets during the periods of 2010 - 2021.
- Internal dispersion is calculated using the asset-weighted standard deviation of all portfolios that were included in the composite for an entire year, net of fees. The three-year annualized standard deviation measures the variability of the composite and the benchmark returns over the preceding 36-month period. The external deviation is based on the 36-month gross-of-fees returns of the composite and the benchmark.