

Heartland Select Value HRSVX

Morningstar's Take | 11-12-09 | by Ryan Leggio

Heartland Select Value is one to consider.

This all-cap fund has been impressive on a number of fronts. Its long-term performance has been stellar compared with almost any benchmark. The fund has left the S&P 500 Index in its wake and its returns top its typical category rival's every trailing period. During down markets, like in 2008 when the index was down 37%, the fund held up comparatively well, losing 31%. And it has kept up in rising markets as well, outperforming in years when speculative fare did best, such as 2003 and so far in 2009.

Management's consistent success buying high-quality businesses at a discount has driven this impressive all-weather performance. Another, less obvious, reason for the fund's success is management's ability to invest across the market-cap spectrum. In 2002, the managers found the best values in small-cap stocks so they stashed 55% of assets there. Recently they've been finding more opportunities in large-cap stocks, which now account for 39% of assets, above their historic average. This flexibility gives the fund an edge. First, management has proven it can successfully make big moves across market-cap ranges when big differences in opportunities are available. And the moves have not only added to returns but have provided meaningful downside protection at times. In 2008's downdraft a big stake in large-cap stocks helped the fund as the biggest stocks held up better than small- or mid-cap stocks.

Despite the fund's strong run lately, the managers are still finding opportunity. They've been buyers in the financial sector after mostly avoiding the sector in 2008. But even with this increased stake in financial companies like PNC Financial PNC that often have a lot of debt, the fund's average weighted long-term debt to total capital is 26% compared with about 30% for the S&P 500. This flexible all-cap value fund has a lot to offer.

Morningstar Rating

★★★★

Kudos

- A disciplined strategy proven over time.
- Great long-term record.

Risks

- Its multicap strategy may hold it back when more narrowly focused funds soar.

Strategy

This fund's managers look across sectors for cheap stocks of all sizes, but they keep about half the fund's assets in mid-cap names. They use a 10-point matrix when evaluating stocks, considering metrics like price/earnings and price/book as well as more general factors such as management's experience, the company's financial soundness, and the stock's price momentum. Heartland trains brokers and sell-side analysts on its 10-point stock-selection criteria and welcomes stock tips from these outsiders. In the past, the fund made sizable sector bets, but the current managers have toned those down.

Management

David Fondrie, Hugh Denison, and Ted Baszler took over this fund in March 2004 when former manager Gerry Sandel left Heartland to start his own money-management firm and comanager Eric Miller stepped down to focus on Heartland Value HRTVX. Fondrie started as an analyst at Heartland in 1994 and has been director of equity research since 2001. Denison came out of retirement to help run this offering. Baszler has been an analyst and separate-accounts manager at Heartland since 2001. Will Nasgovitz was named a portfolio manager in 2006.

Role in Portfolio

Supporting Player

Heartland Select Value HRSVX

Year	Total Return (%)	+/-Category
2009	38.63	3.22
2008	-31.24	5.53
2007	4.02	3.19
2006	16.69	0.82

Data through 12-31-09

An investor should consider the Funds' investment objectives, risks, and charges and expenses carefully before investing or sending money. This and other important information can be found in the Funds' prospectus. To obtain a prospectus, please call 1-800-432-7856 or visit www.heartlandfunds.com. Please read the prospectus carefully before investing.

The Select Value Fund was rated against 356, 250, 84 and 356 mid-cap value funds over the 3-, 5-, 10-year and overall periods, respectively. For each of the 3-, 5-, 10-year and overall periods, the Select Value Fund has received Morningstar's 4-star rating. Morningstar proprietary ratings reflect historical risk-adjusted performance as of December 31, 2009. The Overall Morningstar Rating™ for a fund is derived from a weighted average of the performance figures associated with its 3-, 5- and 10-year Morningstar Rating™ metrics.

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As of December 31, 2009, the average annual total returns for the 1-, 5-, 10-years and since inception (10/11/96) periods of the Select Value Fund Investor Class were 38.63%, 5.60%, 10.57%, and 10.30% respectively. As of December 31, 2009, the average annual total returns for the 1-, 5-, 10-years and since inception (10/11/96) periods of the Russell 3000 Value Index were 19.76%, -0.24%, 2.88% and 6.78%, respectively. As of December 31, 2009, the average annual total returns for the 1-, 5-, 10-years and since inception (10/11/96) periods of the S&P 500 Index were 26.46%, 0.42%, -0.95% and 5.54%, respectively.

As of May 1, 2009, the gross expense ratio for the Select Value Fund Investor Class is 1.33%.

Past performance does not guarantee future results. Performance represents past performance; current returns may be lower or higher. The investment return and principal value will fluctuate so that an investor's shares, when redeemed may be worth more or less than the original cost. All returns reflect reinvested dividends and capital gains distributions, but do not reflect the deduction of taxes that an investor would pay on distributions or redemptions. To obtain performance through the most recent month end, call 800-432-7856, or visit www.heartlandfunds.com. Subject to certain exceptions, shares of a Fund redeemed or exchanged within 10 days of purchase are subject to a 2% redemption fee. Performance does not reflect this fee, which if deducted would reduce an individual's return.

In addition to stocks of large companies, the Select Value Fund invests in small and mid-sized companies that are generally less liquid than large companies. The Fund also invests in a smaller number of stocks (generally 40 to 60) than the average mutual fund. The performance of these holdings generally will increase the volatility of the Fund's returns. Value-based investments are subject to the risk that the broad market may not recognize their intrinsic values.

Russell 3000 Value Index measures the performance of those Russell 3000 Index companies with lower price-to-book ratios and lower forecasted growth values. The stocks in this index are also members of either the Russell 1000 Value or the Russell 2000 Value indexes. S&P 500 Index is an index of 500 U.S. stocks chosen for market size, liquidity and industry group representation and is a widely used U.S. equity benchmark. All indices are unmanaged. It is not possible to invest directly in an index.

Price/Earnings Ratio of a stock is calculated by dividing the current price of the stock by its trailing 12 months' earnings per share. Price/Book Ratio of a company is calculated by dividing the market price of its stock by the company's per-share book value.

Heartland Advisors considers large-cap companies to be larger than \$10 billion in market cap, mid-cap companies to be between \$2 billion and \$10 billion, small-cap companies to be between \$300 million and \$2 billion, and micro-cap companies to be less than \$300 million. The above breakdown does not include short-term investments. As of September 30, 2009, PNC Financial Services Group, Inc. represented 2.4% of the Fund's total net assets. Portfolio holdings are subject to change without notice.

The statements and opinions expressed in the articles are those of the author. Any discussion of investments and investment strategies represents the Funds' investments and portfolio managers' views as of the date of the articles, and are subject to change without notice.

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