



December 2021 Monthly Comment

as of 10 AM Chicago time December 31

We estimate our [reference investor](#) is up 1% in December, giving us a 5% net gain for Q4 and a 34% net gain for 2021. This is our best annual performance since 2010 and our third best ever. Despite these strong gains, we finish 2021 with our cheapest portfolio PE of the year at 6.3 times trailing reported EPS. This is due to a 49% EPS gain, measured in US dollars, through the first nine months of 2021. This more than offsets the 10% USD EPS drop we had in 2020 due to the pandemic disruption.

Through December 30, the 2021 total returns in the indices we track are: MSCI Frontier Markets (FM) Small Cap Index +42%, MSCI FM Index +19%, MSCI Emerging Markets (EM) Index -3%, MSCI EAFE Index +11%, and the S&P 500 +29%. Our all-cap orientation typically tilts toward small caps, but Kaspi's \$23 billion market cap now makes this somewhat less the case. Our average market cap is \$3.3 billion, up from \$0.8 billion in September 2020 before Kaspi's IPO and subsequent appreciation. Our median market cap rose from \$0.3 billion to \$1.5 billion during these 15 months. Our portfolio is also becoming more concentrated in terms of positions. The 33 positions we own are the fewest we've had in over 10 years while our 21-country presence was lower in only one month in the past decade—March 2020, reflecting COVID-related sales that month before we began to scoop up COVID bargains the following month.

Pandemic-induced inflation and interest rate increases to address this have been an important theme for most of 2021 and we expect this to continue in 2022. As we have noted in numerous comments and letters, central banks in the developing world have been the most active in hiking rates. For example, Brazil and Russia (not in our universe), each raised their policy rates seven times in 2021 and we expect them to hike further in 2022. Among the countries we own, Chile, Colombia, Georgia, and

Ghana all raised rates at their last meeting. For Chile, this was its fourth increase since July, with its policy rate up from 0.50% to 4.00%. The US Federal Reserve, meanwhile, continues to buy billions of dollars of mortgages monthly (despite housing prices up 19% year-over-year), thinks it might do a couple of token rate increases next year, and intends positive real interest rates to return only after 2024. At -7% (rounded), the US is vying with Turkey, Serbia, and Bulgaria for the second most negative real rates in world, admittedly better than Angola at -10%. In contrast, in our 16 countries with a currency independent of the dollar or euro, half have positive real interest rates.

Most of our recent portfolio changes have been primarily for macro reasons, reducing or eliminating exposure to countries most vulnerable to macroeconomic shocks. The countries we have culled may have high current account or budget deficits, low or falling international reserves, high debt levels, or currency liquidity issues. We wrote about our Sri Lanka exit in our [August](#) comment and our Turkey exit in our [November](#) comment. We left Pakistan this month. Pakistan is a structurally vulnerable country—its trade imbalance in favor of imports results in low international reserves for its size and a currency with a bias toward weakening. From 2019 on, we think Pakistan has had its best economic and central bank leadership in Frontaura's history. These leaders have chartered a more proactive response to economic challenges than past policymakers did (e.g., a flexible exchange rate, IMF-backed reforms, initiatives to address the current account, and recent policy rate increases). Nevertheless, structural issues can overwhelm strong leadership. Thus, while there is a chance the authorities manage successfully through the current account crisis that began in Q3, we will watch this unfold as a spectator rather than a participant, especially since recent policy moves will likely hurt what we owned.

Frontaura Global Frontier Fund

Fund Objective & Investment Strategy

Bloomberg Tickers: FRGLFRO US, FRGLFRC KY

Investing exclusively in publicly traded companies in frontier markets, provide investors with a net return series that over multiple years exceeds that of the major global developed and emerging equity indices.

We seek to exploit pricing inefficiencies in frontier equity markets. Our investment approach uses both top-down country factors and bottom-up company factors. At the country level, we examine sovereign risk and calculate country scores that measure currency vulnerability. At the company level, we model each company's discounted cash flow using our proprietary valuation tool that accounts for expected exchange rate changes and fading rates of return on invested capital and profit growth as time passes. Ultimately, we aim to own solid businesses at attractive prices in stable or improving countries.

Performance through December 2021^{1, 2}

Period	Frontaura	MSCI Frontier Small Cap	MSCI Frontier	MSCI Emerging	MSCI EAFE	S&P 500
2016 Q1	- 1%	-1%	- 1%	6%	- 3%	1%
2016 Q2	4%	5%	0%	1%	- 1%	2%
2016 Q3	2%	4%	3%	9%	6%	4%
2016 Q4	1%	6%	0%	- 4%	- 1%	4%
2017 Q1	4%	12%	9%	11%	7%	6%
2017 Q2	7%	3%	6%	6%	6%	3%
2017 Q3	3%	3%	8%	8%	5%	4%
2017 Q4	3%	3%	6%	7%	4%	7%
2018 Q1	2%	-1%	5%	1%	- 2%	- 1%
2018 Q2	- 7%	-9%	- 15%	- 8%	- 1%	3%
2018 Q3	- 5%	-4%	- 2%	- 1%	1%	8%
2018 Q4	- 3%	-5%	- 4%	- 7%	- 13%	- 14%
2019 Q1	2%	-1%	7%	10%	10%	14%
2019 Q2	3%	0%	5%	1%	4%	4%
2019 Q3	- 5%	-3%	-1%	- 4%	- 1%	2%
2019 Q4	-1%	2%	7%	12%	8%	9%
2020 Q1	-22%	-24%	-27%	-24%	-23%	-20%
2020 Q2	6%	12%	15%	18%	15%	21%
2020 Q3	4%	8%	8%	10%	5%	9%
2020 Q4	20%	14%	11%	20%	16%	12%
2021 Q1	2%	5%	1%	2%	3%	6%
2021 Q2	20%	14%	14%	5%	5%	9%
2021 Q3	4%	8%	3%	-8%	0%	1%
2021 Q4	5%	10%	0%	-2%	3%	11%
2008	- 28%		- 54%	- 53%	- 43%	- 37%
2009	46%		12%	79%	32%	26%
2010	37%		24%	19%	8%	15%
2011	- 15%	-29%	- 19%	- 18%	- 12%	2%
2012	18%	6%	9%	18%	17%	16%
2013	26%	32%	26%	- 3%	23%	32%
2014	- 3%	6%	7%	- 2%	- 5%	14%
2015	- 5%	-8%	- 14%	- 15%	- 1%	1%
2016	7%	15%	3%	11%	1%	12%
2017	17%	23%	32%	37%	25%	22%
2018	- 13%	-17%	- 16%	- 15%	- 14%	- 4%
2019	-1%	-2%	18%	18%	22%	31%
2020	3%	5%	1%	18%	8%	18%
2021	34%	42%	19%	-3%	11%	29%
ITD	155%		8%	28%	44%	313%

Holdings Summary²

Country	Holding	Region	Holding
Philippines	17%	Sub-Saharan Africa	35%
		Southeast Asia	27%
Kazakhstan	11%	Eurasia	15%
		Middle East / North Africa	13%
Egypt	7%	Latin America & Caribbean	6%
		South Asia	3%
Vietnam	7%	USA (cash & accruals)	2%
Côte d'Ivoire	6%		
United Arab Emirates	6%	Sector	Holding
		Financials	47%
Rwanda	6%	Consumer Staples	23%
		Real Estate	7%
Kenya	5%	Communication Services	6%
		Industrials	6%
Senegal	5%	Cash & accruals (all countries)	5%
		Energy	3%
Nigeria	4%	Health Care	3%
Georgia	4%	Portfolio Statistics	
		Portfolio Price to LTM Earnings	6.3
Papua New Guinea	3%	Portfolio Price to Book	1.18
		Portfolio LTM Dividend Yield	4.8%
Bangladesh	3%	Weighted Average ROEE	27.8%
		Weighted Median ROEE	21.3%
Chile	3%	Positions	33
		Countries	21
Botswana	3%	Weighted Average Market Cap	\$3,338m
		Weighted Median Market Cap	\$1,531m
Ghana	2%	Portfolio Turnover (12 Months)	30%
		Portfolio Turnover (ITD)	30%
Uganda	2%	Standard Deviation (36 Months)	18%
		Standard Deviation (ITD)	14%
Colombia	2%	Beta to S&P 500 (36 Months)	0.59
		Beta to S&P 500 (ITD)	0.49
USA (cash & accruals)	2%	Assets Under Management	\$144m
Tanzania	1%		
Niger	1%		
Ecuador	1%		

Terms

Subscriptions	Monthly. New investor minimum \$250,000. Additional subscriptions may be any amount.
Redemptions	Quarterly with three-month notice. No initial lock-up. Exit restrictions apply. ²
New Investor Terms ²	Series A: 2% mgt fee, 10% incentive, 4-qtr exit. Series B: 2% mgt fee, 0% incentive, 8-qtr exit. Relative Performance Series: 1.75% mgt fee, 20% incentive vs. FM ETF hurdle, 8-qtr exit. Absolute Performance Series: 1.50% mgt fee or 30% incentive vs. 5% hurdle, 8-qtr exit. For all series above, mgt fee cut 25bp at \$200m real fee-paying AUM and another 25bp at \$400m.

Service Providers

Attorney	Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP
Auditor	RSM US LLP
Fund Administrator	Michael J. Liccar & Co.
Global Custodian	Bank of New York Mellon

1 Frontaura returns are net of all fees for a hypothetical investor joining the fund at inception, making no further contributions, making no withdrawals, and converting to Series B in 2021 Q2. Investors joining on other dates, making additional contributions, making withdrawals, or not converting to Series B in 2021 Q2 may have different results. Our auditor has audited results through 2020. Frontaura returns use a subject-to-change estimate for the current month, as of intraday Friday 31 December 2021. Index returns are total returns, net of any withholding tax for a US investor, through 30 December 2021. Final investor and index returns for all periods that include the current month may differ from the numbers on this page. We discuss our returns and different series [here](#).

2 Click [here](#) for disclosures regarding performance, terms, series conversions, redemptions, index descriptions, holdings and portfolio statistics calculations, and performance attribution.

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