

## October Review

The Fund's F Acc share class units returned 3.78% compared to the S&P 500 Index ETF return of 2.78% in sterling terms.

The reason we do not own any of the FANMAG (Facebook, Apple, Netflix, Microsoft, Amazon, Google) stocks really came to the fore this month, as they had to report the reality that business is slowing. Meta Platforms, formerly Facebook, was the worst of them, falling 24% on its very weak quarter. Investors took fright at not only the slowing growth and earnings but also the huge spending plans put forward by CEO Zuckerberg. He is intending to invest \$100bn in his quest to dominate the metaverse, a concept that many investors now view as highly risky, particularly as the core business is slowing and needs management attention. Microsoft and Alphabet, formerly Google, reported on the same day and they were down 7% and 9% respectively, both underwhelming investors. Amazon came next, falling 7% on a weaker outlook for its cloud business and offering the bewildering operating income guidance of \$0-\$4bn.

As for Apple and Netflix, they both reported better than expected numbers, but Netflix had already collapsed before the quarter. It is currently -52% year to date inclusive of its bounce. Apple didn't report a great quarter, but it did bounce 7%. This looks like a relief rally to me, rather than the start of a new bull run in the stock. We continue to believe that these stocks have had their time in the sun and remain zero weight to this group of stocks and to large cap growth stocks in general.

The best contributors to the fund were again to be found in our Healthcare portfolio, with our Big Pharma and Managed Care stocks performing well; Merck +17.5% and Elevance +20% in the month. Within our Consumer Discretionary portfolio, McDonald's and AutoZone were top performers, both +18%. We are cautious on consumer spending, but both these companies perform well historically in recessions and have very defensive business models which have stood the test of time.

## Market Outlook

We continue to be cautiously positioned as corporates still battle with an earnings recession and a Fed that is tightening. We do not put any store in the continual market chatter that the Fed is about 'to pivot' and change its hawkish stance. They have not said anything like that and there is no message from the market that says it's imminent. They will of course pivot at some point, but it is very unlikely to be in 2022. The bear market is in growth stocks however, not the whole market, and this means there are still plenty of investment opportunities to be had, outside of sectors like Tech and Discretionary that have been such winners in recent years.



**Felix Wintle Fund Manager, VT Tyndall North American Fund, 31 October 2022**

**Data sources:** Bloomberg

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