

# Baron Asset Fund

Retail Shares (BARAX) | Institutional Shares (BARIX) | R6 Shares (BARUX)

As of December 31, 2017

## Missed Opportunity in Mid Cap?

### Midcaps have many benefits. They have:

- Matured beyond their riskier start up phase
- Become more financially stable than smaller-cap businesses
- Outperformed small and large caps most of the time on both an absolute and risk-adjusted basis\*

### Mid-Cap Performance vs. Small-Cap Performance

Rolling Returns	% of Time Mid Caps Outperform	% of Time Mid Caps Had Higher Sharpe Ratios
3-year	74%	83%
5-year	89%	96%

Source: Morningstar Direct.

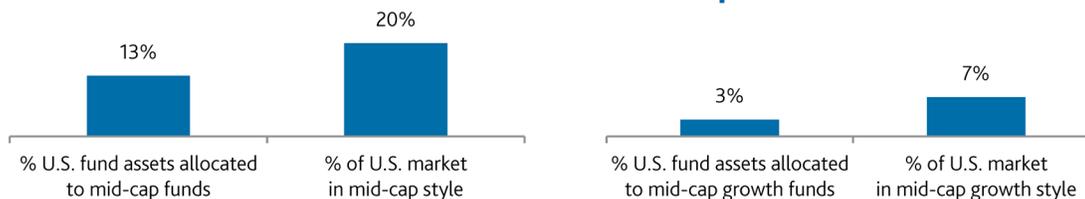
For this analysis, the Russell Midcap Index represents mid caps, the Russell 2000 Index represents small caps, and the Russell Top 200 Index represents large caps.

Calculations are based on monthly returns since 12/31/1978.

### Mid-Cap Performance vs. Large-Cap Performance

Rolling Returns	% of Time Mid Caps Outperform	% of Time Mid Caps Had Higher Sharpe Ratios
3-year	57%	51%
5-year	65%	55%

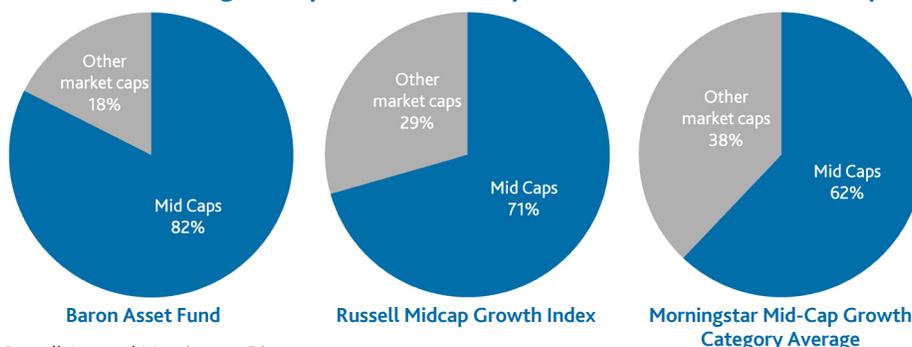
## Yet, investors still under allocate to mid caps<sup>1</sup>



Source: FactSet, BAMCO, Inc., and Morningstar Direct.

1 - As of 12/31/2017, the total market capitalization of U.S. publicly traded stocks was approximately \$30.8 trillion.

### Baron Asset Fund has higher exposure to mid caps than do our benchmark or peers



Sources: Russell, Inc. and Morningstar Direct.

### Andrew Peck, Portfolio Manager

- 22 years of investment experience
- Manages Baron Mid Cap Growth Strategy, (Baron Asset Fund is the representative account) and Baron All Cap Growth Strategy
- Sole manager since 2008
- Co-portfolio manager of Baron Asset Fund from 2003 to 2008
- Baron research analyst from 1998 to 2003

### Investment Philosophy

- Long-term investing creates an advantage
- Independent and exhaustive research is essential to understanding a business
- Successful growth businesses have open-ended opportunities and sustainable competitive advantages
- People are the key drivers of a successful business
- Purchase price matters
- Risk management is integral to portfolio management

### Why Baron

- Proven, consistent, repeatable research and investment process
- A long-term ownership mindset
- A culture that fosters collaboration, intellectual curiosity, creativity, professional development, and risk management
- Accumulated significant investment experience and expertise
  - Significant experience investing in U.S. and non-U.S. mid caps
- Employee interests aligned with those of our shareholders

\*Past Performance is no guarantee of future results. There is no assurance that this outperformance will continue.

There is more potential for capital appreciation in mid-sized companies, but there also may be more risk. Specific risks associated with investing in mid-sized companies include that the securities may be thinly traded and they may be more difficult to sell during market downturns.

The **Russell Midcap® Growth Index** is an unmanaged index that measures the performance of medium-sized U.S. companies that are classified as growth. **Russell Midcap® Index** measures the performance of medium-sized U.S. companies. The **Russell 2000® Index** is an unmanaged index which measures the performance of small-sized U.S. companies. The Indexes and Baron Asset Fund returns reflect the reinvestment of dividends and other earnings, which positively impact performance results. **Russell Top 200 Index** is a market capitalization weighted index of the largest 200 companies in the Russell 3000. The Russell Top 200 Index is a benchmark index for U.S.-based large-cap stocks; the average member has a market cap above \$100 billion. The index is reconstituted annually to account for new members and growing companies.



# Baron Asset Fund

## Our approach to mid-cap growth investing has generated alpha

### We favor companies with:

- High margins, ROIC, sales growth, and earnings growth
- Competitive advantages
- Recurring revenue

### We tend to avoid companies with:

- Low earnings visibility
- High dependence on government funding and regulation
- High leverage

## Our investment criteria drive stock selection

What We Like	Why We Like Them
Subscription-based business models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Proprietary data and analytics that we believe are extremely hard to replicate</li> <li>■ Data embedded in client workflows</li> <li>■ Highly visible, recurring revenue streams</li> <li>■ Pricing power</li> </ul>
Unique assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Zoning and/or licensing obstacles prevent new entrants</li> <li>■ Asset-intensive businesses with high fixed costs, low variable costs</li> </ul>
Platform internet businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Benefit from network effect (users beget more users, which leads to more listings and/or advertisers)</li> <li>■ Dominant websites in their vertical markets</li> <li>■ Large, global addressable markets</li> </ul>

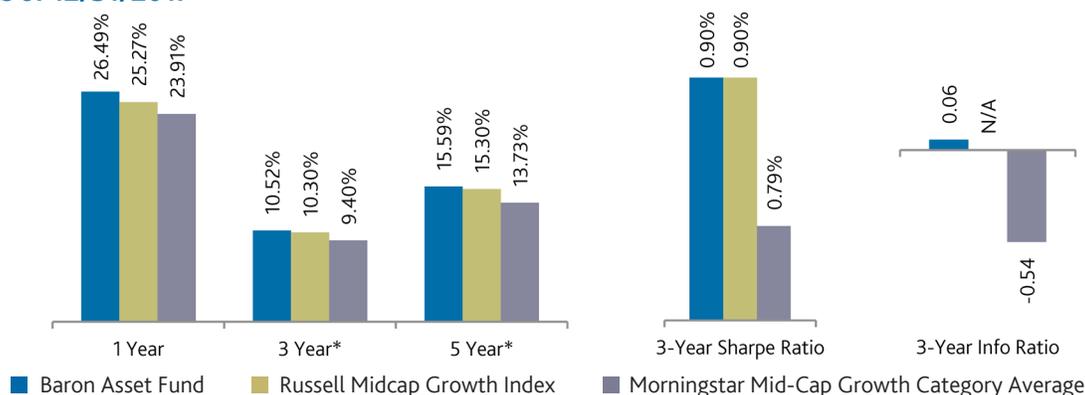
## Stock selection contributes to alpha

Trailing periods as of 12/31/2017	Cumulative Excess Return from Stock-Specific Effect	Annualized Excess Returns	Cumulative Excess Returns
1-year	0.09%	1.22%	1.22%
3-year	3.27%	0.22%	0.81%
5-year	7.50%	0.29%	2.52%

Source: FactSet PA, MSCI, Inc., and BAMCO, Inc.

## We have achieved attractive risk-adjusted performance

### Performance as of 12/31/2017



\*Annualized.

Sources: BAMCO, FactSet SPAR, Russell Inc., and Morningstar Direct.

Baron Asset Fund returns reflect the reinvestment of dividends and other earnings, which positively impact performance results.

As of fiscal year ended 9/30/2017, the expense ratio of the Fund's Institutional Shares was 1.04%.

*Performance data quoted represents past performance. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. The investment return and principal value of an investment will fluctuate; an investor's shares, when redeemed, may be worth more or less than their original cost. The Fund's transfer agency expenses may be reduced by the expense offsets from an unaffiliated transfer agent, without which performance would have been lower. Current performance may be lower or higher than the performance data quoted above.*

As of 8/31/2017, Morningstar calculates the **Morningstar Mid-Cap Growth Category Average** using its Fractional Weighting methodology. The Fund's Institutional Shares have been included in the Category since 5/29/2009 and the Fund's Retail Shares since 4/1/1999.

**Stock specific effects** are the result of the Funds' factorbased performance attributions versus its benchmark. **Factor-based performance attribution** is the process of attributing excess performance to different factors or groups of factors using a multi-factor model (in this case the MSCI Barra USE3-L model). It allows for the assessment of sources of returns based on several return components, including style return and industry return. The proportion of excess return that is not attributed to these components or common factors (industries and styles) is attributed to company-specific sources or events. This is referred to as "Excess Return From Stock Specific Effect". The calculations above are transaction-based and are produced from the underlying security-level data.

**Alpha** measures the difference between a fund's actual returns and its expected performance, given its level of risk as measured by beta.

**Sharpe Ratio** is a risk-adjusted performance statistic that measures reward per unit of risk. The higher the Sharpe ratio, the better a fund's risk adjusted performance.

**Information Ratio** (Info Ratio) is a ratio of portfolio returns above the returns of a benchmark – usually an index – to the volatility of those returns.

**Annualized Excess Return** is the return of a fund that exceeds a particular benchmark or index with a similar level of risk (in this case returns that exceeds the Russell Midcap Growth Index). The return is calculated on an annual basis over a given time period.

**Cumulative Excess Return** is the return of a fund that exceeds a particular benchmark or index with a similar level of risk (in this case returns that exceeds the Russell Midcap Growth Index). The return is calculated on an aggregate basis, representing the value the fund has gained or lost over time, independent of the period of time involved.

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*Investors should consider the investment objectives, risks, charges, and expenses of the Fund carefully before investing. The prospectus and summary prospectus contain this and other information about the Fund and can be obtained from the Fund's distributor, Baron Capital, Inc., by calling 1-800-99BARON or visiting [www.BaronFunds.com](http://www.BaronFunds.com). Please read them carefully before investing.*

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