



The top 100 picks for 2015



TIM BLUE



Tossed by rollicking markets, investors need follow only one guide in 2015 — Uncle Sam, the epitome of the US government, to lead markets to sanity and success in the year ahead. Fuelled by plentiful oil and gas, and a bagful of dollars, Uncle Sam's citizens will buy the cars, build the houses and run the computers to reinvigorate the world's economies. The US market might have run up strongly already on such thoughts, and the world still faces OPEC oil floods, an anxious Europe and a dozy Japan, but America still looks like the place to be.

At home, look for the jewels in consumer-focused stocks that will pick up on lower petrol prices, low interest rates, solid home building and an improving job market. Bold voices such as CommSec have suggested the ASX 200 index will nudge 6000 by the year's end, while UBS suggests 5700.

The Weekend Australian has canvassed its staff and contributors in the quest for enlightenment on where to tread on the slippery paths of 2015. Please select according to taste and risk tolerance.

PUNTING POTENTIAL

Performers possibly

13. Capilano Honey (CZZ)

Has doubled in price in the past year but still has potential. Dry weather means local honey supplies have been constrained, but while Capilano is exclusively Australian, its other brands of Allowrie and Smiths have been able to import Argentinian and Chinese honey, to maintain and win market share. Rated a buy by Criterion.

14. Emerchants (EML)

A non-bank issuer and processor of prepaid plastic cards, for example when used to pay corporate expenses. Its well regarded ability to combat fraud is liked by the corporate world, when dealing with electronic expenses, reward programs and retailer gift cards, but curiously of little interest to banks. Expanding into Britain, and appears on the cusp of profitability.

15. Skilled Group (SKE)

Providers of staff to healthcare, manufacturing and resources industries have been heavily marked down on the busting of the mineral boom. But since only a quarter of Skilled Group's revenue comes from mining, it could be worth a look in these tougher times. So too might be Programmed Group (PRG). Liked by Criterion and Morningstar.