China / Hong Kong Company Update

Sun Art Retail Group

Bloomberg: 6808 HK Equity | Reuters: 6808.HK

Refer to important disclosures at the end of this report

DBS Group Research . Equity

25 May 2022

BUY (Upgrade from HOLD)

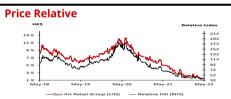
Last Traded Price (24 May 2022): HK\$2.25 (HSI: 20,112) Price Target 12-mth: HK\$2.94 (31% upside) (Prev HK\$3.23)

Analyst

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What's New

- FY22 net loss of RMB0.83bn in line with profit warning
- Expect 7%/6% revenue growth in FY23/FY24 with better offline sales recovery, while B2C business should continue to grow at double-digit rates
- Efficiency improvement also supports margin recovery
- In view of its undemanding valuation, we upgrade from HOLD to BUY with new TP of HK\$2.94



Forecasts and Valuation

FY Mar (RMBm) Turnover EBITDA Pre-tax Profit Net Profit Net Profit Gth (Pre-ex) (%) EPS (RMB) EPS (HK\$) EPS Gth (%) Diluted EPS (HK\$) DPS (HK\$) BV Per Share (HK\$) PE (X) P/Cash Flow (X) P/Free CF (X) EV/EBITDA (X)	93,086 7,708 3,063 2,183 (24,0) 0,23 0,27 (24,0) 0,27 0,13 3,24 8,3 2,3 3,2 0,0	2022A 88,134 3,880 (503) (739) N/A (0.08) (0.09) N/A (0.09) 0.04 2.96 nm 5.1 nm 0.0	94.303 5.841 1.246 835 N/A 0.09 0.10 N/A 0.10 0.05 2.99 21.8 4.3 39.1 0.1	2024F 99,490 6.511 1,701 1.140 36.5 0.12 0,14 36.5 0.14 0.07 3.04 16.0 7.5 0.1
Earnings Rev (%): Consensus EPS (RMB) Other Broker Recs:		B:7	(14) 0.177 S:1	(8) 0.151 H:8

Source of all data on this page: Company, DBS Bank (Hong Kong) Limited ("DBS HK"), Thomson Reuters

Better recovery ahead despite lingering competition

Investment Thesis

FY22 results in line. Sun Art recorded FY22 attributable loss of RMB0.74bn, vs. its attributable profit of RMB2.2bn in FY21. Core net profit was estimated at RMB0.58bn upon stripping away impairment provisions, above our expectations. Revenue contracted by 5.3% yo-y to RMB88bn in FY22 as a result of intense competition and COVID-19 disruptions. GP margin also dropped 1.5ppt to 24.4% amid the changes in product/channel mix.

Offline sales recovery on the way. Supported by the higher demand for food and groceries, Sun Art has attained 5.7% same-store sales growth (SSSG) in April 2022 despite the COVID-19 disruptions in Shanghai and Jilin. Although competition from community group buying (CGB) platforms may continue in the near term, we expect Sun Art to score 7%/6% sales growth for FY23/FY24, driven by its successful hypermarket remodelling, the easing COVID-19 impacts, and the consolidation of the CGB sector. We also believe that Sun Art's continuing expansion in multi-store format may also serve as growth driver in the medium and longer run.

Promising online business. We believe Sun Art should continue to grow its B2C online business by double-digit in FY23/FY24 and aim at c.40% revenue contribution in the long run. In the meantime, Sun Art continues to improve operating efficiency in both online and offline channels, and is targeting at net profit margin of 2-3% over the medium term.

Valuation:

We cut FY23/FY24 earnings by 14%/8% in view of the impacts of COVID-19 resurgence and near-term competition. Our TP of HK\$2.94 is pegged to a 26x rolling PE. (Previous TP: 26x FY23 PE).

Where we differ:

We are more prudent than the consensus for FY23/FY24, as the overall retail industry in China remains volatile in the near term amid geopolitical uncertainties, rising inflation, and significant impacts from COVID-19 resurgence. Nevertheless, Sun Art may still achieve a relatively faster recovery than its peers, along with sound B2C performance and further consolidation of the CGB segment.

Key Risks to Our View:

Food safety issues, catastrophic events, etc.

At A Glance

ALA Glarice	
Issued Capital (m shrs)	9,540
Mkt Cap (HKm/US\$m)	23,373 / 2,978
Major Shareholders (%)	
Alibaba Group Holding Ltd.	78.7
Free Float (%)	21.3
3m Avg. Daily Val. (US\$m)	4.45
GICS Industry: Consumer Staples / Food & Staples Retailing	ıσ







WHAT'S NEW

FY22 results highlights. In FY22 (i.e., 12 months ended Mar 2022), Sun Art recorded net loss/attributable loss of RMB0.83bn/RMB0.74bn vs. its net profit/attributable profit of RMB2.3bn/RMB2.2bn in FY21. Adding back the after-tax provision of c.RMB1.4bn from store impairment, special loss allowance, and litigation, core net profit should amount to RMB0.58bn, above our expectations. Revenue contracted by 5.3% y-o-y to RMB88bn in FY22, with SSSG of -6.7%, mainly due to the fierce competition in offline sales from other channels such as CGB along with impacts of the COVID-19 resurgence in 2H FY22. Gross profit declined by 11% to RMB21.4bn while the GP margin dropped 1.5ppt to 24.4%, mainly due to the higher contribution from fresh food products and online sales. Operating profit was down by 99.5% y-o-y to RMB18m, mainly due to the RMB1.9bn pre-tax provision, excluding which operating profit would amount to c.RMB1.9bn, with an OP margin of 2.1%. Sun Art also proposed a FY22 final DPS of HK\$0.045/RMB0.038, despite the net loss.

Offline sales recovery. Faced with the fierce competition from CGB players and the lingering sales pressure, Sun Art has further launched its hypermarket remodelling version 2.0 that focuses on larger shopping scenes, more fresh products, and an optimised tenant structure. In fact, the first remodeled store has seen a double-digit SSSG y-o-y in 2H FY22 vs. the decline in 1H FY22. Riding on the success of the pilot store, we believe Sun Art further should aim to remodel 50+ hypermarkets into "offline experience centers" under its new remodelling scheme in FY23. Despite the near-term COVID disruptions on store operations, Sun Art has attained sequential improvements since March 2022. Out of its 504 hypermarkets in China, Sun Art currently operates 10/26 hypermarkets in Jilin/Shanghai. Sun Art has recorded an overall positive SSSG in March this year, followed by a SSSG of 5.7% y-o-y in April (or 11.3% if excluding the COVID impacts in Shanghai and Jilin), supported by the recovery of consumer traffic driven by the increasing demand for food and groceries. Although the sales pressure posed by CGB players may continue in the near-term, we expect Sun Art to see a better recovery in offline sales and to attain 7%/6% revenue growth in FY23/FY24, with the easing COVID-19 impacts in the coming months and to retrieve customer traffic amid the normalising business environment.

Multi-store format a key focus. In addition to hypermarkets, Sun Art continues to expand its smaller store formats featuring its superstore (RT-Super) and mini store (RT-Mini), with currently 9 and 103 stores under operation, respectively. While RT-Super is already profitmaking, Sun Art has also narrowed the loss in RT-Mini with positive cash flows during FY22. We expect RT-Mini to also see a turnaround and achieve above breakeven in FY23. We believe Sun Art should continue to invest in these smaller stores in FY23/FY24. Looking ahead, RT-Mini could also potentially serve as the logistics centres to support Sun Art's online sales fulfillment.

Online channel to boost sales growth. During FY22, the average daily order per store (DOPS) of Sun Art's B2C business grew by a double-digit percentage to 1,250, while the average ticket size also increased by 6.5% y-o-y to RMB70 per order. In 2H FY22, B2C online sales contributed 30% to Sun Art's total revenue (vs. 25% in 1H FY22). While Sun Art has already scored positive results in its B2C business, we believe Sun Art should further aim at a 1% net profit margin in FY23/FY24. We also expect Sun Art to continue to expand its online segment and aim at a 40% revenue contribution from B2C platforms in the long run. Meanwhile, the cooperation with Alibaba Group's CGB business (i.e., Taocaicai [淘菜菜]) also saw strong expansion during FY22 and should continue to support Sun Art's revenue growth.

Ongoing efficiency improvement. To cope with near-term competition from e-grocery players, Sun Art should continue to improve its operating efficiency by leveraging on its fresh processing centres to achieve scale economy in the future. We believe Sun Art would see sequential GP margin improvements in its fresh product sales with room of 5-6ppt for GP margin expansion in the sector. In the meantime, Sun Art is also committed to reducing staff cost in its hypermarket format that is supported by Sun Art's ongoing remodelling in the medium to long run. With competition from other B2C players potentially easing (e.g., increasing delivery charges for customers), Sun Art's B2C business should also score a GP margin closer to that of the offline sales of hypermarkets going ahead.



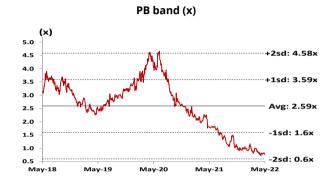
Company Background

Sun Art is a leading hypermarket operator in China. As of 31 Mar 2022, the company operated a total of 490 hypermarkets under "RT-Mart", nine supermarkets under "RT-Super", and 103 "RT-Mini" stores, with total GFA of 13.7m sqm. As of 31 Mar 2022, Taobao China directly or indirectly held 78.7% of the issued share capital in Sun Art,

and, therefore, is the ultimate controlling shareholder of the company.

Historical PE and PB band

Source: Thomson Reuters, DBS HK





Segmental Breakdown (RMB m)

FY Mar	2020A	2021A	2022A	2023F	2024F
Revenues (RMB m)					
Sales of goods	91,984	89,458	84,595	90,587	95,514
Rental income	3,502	3,628	3,539	3,716	3,976
Total	95,486	93,086	88,134	94,303	99,490

Source: Company, DBS HK

Income Statement (RMB m)

Revenue 95,486 93,086 88,134 Cost of Goods Sold (71,143) (68,960) (66,661) Gross Profit 24,343 24,126 21,473 Other Opng (Exp)/Inc (19,679) (20,522) (21,455) Operating Profit 4,664 3,604 18 Other Non Opg (Exp)/Inc 0 0 0 Associates & JV Inc (3) (4) (1) Net Interest (Exp)/Inc (547) (537) (520) Dividend Income 0 0 0 Exceptional Gain/(Loss) 0 0 0 Pre-tax Profit 4,114 3,063 (503) Tax (1,068) (769) (323) Minority Interest (174) (111) 87 Preference Dividend 0 0 0 Net Profit 2,872 2,183 (739) Net Profit before Except. 2,872 2,183 (739)	94,303 (70,256) 24,047 (22,291) 1,756 0 (1) (510)	99,490 (73,424) 26,066 (23,865) 2,201
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Tax (1,068) (769) (323) Minority Interest (174) (111) 87 Preference Dividend 0 0 0 Net Profit 2,872 2,183 (739)	0	0
Minority Interest (174) (111) 87 Preference Dividend 0 0 0 Net Profit 2,872 2,183 (739)	1,246	1,701
Preference Dividend 0 0 0 Net Profit 2,872 2,183 (739)	(349)	(476)
Net Profit 2,872 2,183 (739)	(62)	(85)
, , , ,	0	0
Net Profit before Except. 2,872 2,183 (739)	835	1,140
	835	1,140
EBITDA 8,768 7,708 3,880	5,841	6,511
Growth		
Revenue Gth (%) 0.1 (2.5) (5.3)	7.0	5.5
EBITDA Gth (%) (5.7) (12.1) (49.7)	50.5	11.5
Opg Profit Gth (%) (4.6) (22.7) (99.5)	9,656.1	25.3
Net Profit Gth (%) 1.3 (24.0) N/A	N/A	36.5
Margins & Ratio		
Gross Margins (%) 25.5 25.9 24.4	25.5	26.2
Opg Profit Margin (%) 4.9 3.9 0.0	1.9	2.2
Net Profit Margin (%) 3.0 2.3 (0.8)	0.9	1.1
ROAE (%) 11.6 8.4 (2.9)	3.5	4.7
ROA (%) 4.1 3.1 (1.1)	1.2	1.6
ROCE (%) 10.2 7.8 0.1	4.0	5.1
Div Payout Ratio (%) 0.0 48.1 N/A		50.0
Net Interest Cover (x) 8.5 6.7 0.0	50.0	50.0
Source: Company, DBS HK	50.0 3.4	4.4





Balance Sheet (RMB m)

Dalance Sheet (KWD III)					
FY Mar	2020A	2021A	2022A	2023F	2024F
Net Fixed Assets	33,054	33,388	30,331	30,629	30,570
Invts in Associates & JVs	0	0	0	0	0
Other LT Assets	1,309	1,297	1,678	1,829	1,994
Cash & ST Invts	18,501	21,285	19,912	18,518	18,907
Inventory	14,928	9,990	9,723	13,522	14,265
Debtors	2,835	3,267	4,102	4,269	4,504
Other Current Assets	0	0	0	0	0
Total Assets	70,627	69,227	65,746	68,766	70,241
CT D-b+	0	0	0	0	0
ST Debt	0	0	0	0	0
Creditors	23,819	20,644	20,211	23,253	24,532
Other Current Liab	12,534	13,472	13,882	14,154	14,432
LT Debt	0	0	0	0	0
Other LT Liabilities	7,116	7,257	6,587	5,971	5,417
Shareholder's Equity	25,487	26,223	23,958	24,217	24,604
Minority Interests	1,671	1,631	1,108	1,170	1,255
Total Cap. & Liab.	70,627	69,227	65,746	68,766	70,241
Non-Cash Wkg. Capital	(18,590)	(20,859)	(20,268)	(19,616)	(20,195)
Net Cash/(Debt)	18,501	21,285	19,912	18,518	18,907
Debtors Turn (avg days)	11.1	12.0	15.3	16.2	16.1
Creditors Turn (avg days)	135.2	125.1	118.7	119.9	126.2
Inventory Turn (avg days)	88.9	70.1	57.3	64.1	73.4
Asset Turnover (x)	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4
Current Ratio (x)	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Quick Ratio (x)	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.6
Net Debt/Equity (X)	CASH	CASH	CASH	CASH	CASH
Net Debt/Equity ex MI (X)	CASH	CASH	CASH	CASH	CASH
Capex to Debt (%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Z-Score (X)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Source: Company, DBS HK	14/1	11/7	14/7	11/7	14/7
Jource. Company, DBS TIN					

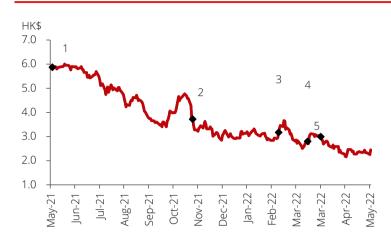
Cash Flow Statement (RMB m)

FY Mar	2020A	2021A	2022A	2023F	2024F
Pre-Tax Profit	4,114	3,063	(503)	1,246	1,701
Dep. & Amort.	4,104	4,104	3,862	4,085	4,310
Tax Paid	(1,131)	(1,103)	(323)	(349)	(476)
Assoc. & JV Inc/(loss)	0	0	0	0	0
(Pft)/ Loss on disposal of FAs	0	0	0	0	0
Chg in Wkg.Cap.	918	1,730	330	(924)	300
Other Operating CF	199	203	203	207	211
Net Operating CF	8,204	7,998	3,569	4,265	6,046
Capital Exp.(net)	(1,561)	(2,320)	(4,000)	(3,800)	(3,610)
Other Invts.(net)	(9,750)	(2,852)	7,131	0	0
Invts in Assoc. & JV	0	0	0	0	0
Div from Assoc & JV	0	0	0	0	0
Other Investing CF	368	329	(831)	336	336
Net Investing CF	(10,943)	(4,843)	2,300	(3,464)	(3,274)
Div Paid	(1,498)	(1,049)	(363)	(417)	(570)
Chg in Gross Debt	0	0	0	0	0
Capital Issues	0	0	0	0	0
Other Financing CF	(1,483)	(1,540)	(1,743)	(1,778)	(1,814)
Net Financing CF	(2,981)	(2,590)	(2,106)	(2,195)	(2,383)
Currency Adjustments	0	0	0	0	0
Chg in Cash	(5,720)	565	3,763	(1,394)	389
Opg CFPS (RMB)	0.76	0.66	0.34	0.54	0.60
Free CFPS (RMB)	0.70	0.60	(0.05)	0.05	0.26

Source: Company, DBS HK



Target Price & Ratings History



S.No	o. Date	Closing Price	12-mth Target Price	Rating
1:	27-May-21	HK\$5.84	HK\$8.42	Buy
2:	3-Nov-21	HK\$3.72	HK\$3.81	Hold
3:	9-Feb-22	HK\$2.91	HK\$3.06	Hold
4:	14-Mar-22	HK\$2.70	HK\$3.23	Buy
5:	29-Mar-22	HK\$3.06	HK\$3.23	Hold

Source: DBS HK

Analyst: Mavis Hui

Clement Xu



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STRONG BUY (>20% total return over the next 3 months, with identifiable share price catalysts within this time frame)

BUY (>15% total return over the next 12 months for small caps, >10% for large caps)

HOLD (-10% to +15% total return over the next 12 months for small caps, -10% to +10% for large caps)

FULLY VALUED (negative total return, i.e., > -10% over the next 12 months)

SELL (negative total return of > -20% over the next 3 months, with identifiable share price catalysts within this time frame)

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Sources for all charts and tables are DBS HK unless otherwise specified.

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