



iterated his stance most recently in May, when Bunge bought out the remaining minority stake in its Brazilian operations. The stock closed at 38.07 in mid-September.

Gaming & Lodging

MICHAEL RIETBROCK

Smith Barney Citigroup

SECOND TEAM **Marc Falcone**

Deutsche Bank Securities

THIRD TEAM **David Anders** Merrill Lynch

RUNNER-UP **Harry Curtis**

J.P. Morgan Securities

The gaming industry is part of **Michael Rietbrock's** coverage, but he's not one to toss the dice when it comes to investment research. The 35-

year-old Smith Barney Citi analyst, voted No. 1 for a third consecutive year, wins buy-siders' confidence by "pointing out the risks as well as the attractions of a company, even if he's not recommending it," one investor explains. Another applauds the "thoroughness" of his reports and models. Rietbrock scored by going positive early on the lodging subsector, which rose 25.5 percent in the 12 months through mid-September. (That performance handily beat the broader market but trailed the gaming subsector's 34.2 percent gain.) However, he wasn't quite so successful in the gambling arena, where he upgraded casino operator Harrah's Entertainment in mid-October 2003 at 42.40 on valuation. The shares had advanced to 52.14 by mid-September, though that was well below the group's gains. One investor cites Rietbrock's

quarterly survey of *Fortune* 500 corporate travel managers, which gauges future travel spending, as especially useful. Solid industry contacts and quick callbacks help catapult Deutsche Bank's **Marc Falcone** into second place from runner-up. "He's constantly out in Las Vegas talking about trends in room rates, business and traffic," says one investor. His downgrade of slot-machine maker Alliance Gaming Corp. in early May at 24.38 on more-heated competition saved customers a bundle: The shares had tumbled by 62.97 percent through mid-September. Although **David Anders** slips from second place to third, the Merrill analyst is appreciated for solid stock picking. Among his choices was Caesars Entertainment, previously known as Park Place. Anders upgraded the casino operator in early December 2003 at 10.35, contending that the on-

going renovation of its flagship casino would pay off with more customers. The stock hit 15.05 in mid-July, when Harrah's announced its \$9.4 billion (then valued at \$16.96 per share) acquisition of Caesars.

Homebuilders & Building Products

IVY ZELMAN

CSFB

SECOND TEAM **Margaret Whelan** UBS

THIRD TEAM **Stephen Kim**

Smith Barney Citigroup

"Ivy always seems to make the right call at the right time," says one investor about **Ivy Zelman** of CSFB, who's No. 1 for a sixth consecutive year. Despite general nervousness about rising mortgage rates over the past year, rates remained near historical lows, helping drive homebuilding-related stocks sharply higher. Zelman kept a market weighting on the sector and therefore didn't capture all of the upside in the building-products makers' 43 percent gain or the homebuilders' 37 percent surge in the 12 months through mid-September. But the 38-year-old analyst was very helpful, clients say, in flagging potential problems. In early March she downgraded furniture stocks, contending that investors were too optimistic in light of companies' slipping sales; through mid-September the group had declined by 21 percent. Zelman also downgraded home-products maker Fortune Brands in early April on valuation; the shares had dropped 4 percent by mid-September. "She provides excellent advice," says another pleased customer. Advancing from third, UBS second-teamer **Margaret Whelan** earns clients' thanks for her unwavering bullishness throughout 2003. She upgraded Michigan-based builder Pulte Homes in September 2003 at 34.07 because it was trading at a discount to its peers; the shares hit 62.71 in mid-September 2004. And she upgraded toolmaker Black & Decker Corp. in April 2003 at 36.36 for its successful cost-cutting; the shares had nearly doubled by mid-September 2004. Although he slips a notch to third, **Stephen Kim** of Smith Barney Citi still impresses buy-siders with his stock picking and high-quality written research. Kim upgraded 11 homebuilding stocks in January 2003; by mid-September 2004 the group had returned a whopping 122 percent. Readers especially cite his February report, "Hurry Up and Slow Down!," which discussed the possibility that cash-rich homebuilders might hike dividends or inflate significant share buybacks. Also applauded: Kim's New York conference in February, which focused on industry initiatives to improve construction efficiency.