



# Modern Alchemy

WITH A MIDAS TOUCH, CHRISTOPHER TSAI TAKES THE FINANCIAL WORLD BY STORM. | BY: GINA SAMAROTTO

**It's been said that in the financial world the best minds in the business are born, not made.**

While the talent that exists may be honed, it seems to be a trait among the sharpest and brightest financial minds that it is as intrinsic as it is learned. Christopher Tsai, President and Chief Investment Officer of Tsai Capital Corporation, is an apropos case in point.

Born into one of the financial world's most illustrious families, Christopher is the son of the late Gerald Tsai, Jr.; a man noted for being America's first 'celebrity' fund manager and the first Chinese-American CEO of a Dow Jones Industrial company. Rising to financial fame during the 1960s, it was reporting by Newsweek that Gerald Tsai Jr. "Radiates total cool" - heady words usually reserved to describe traditional rock stars as opposed to financial ones. With such a notable pedigree it can be argued that, at least for Christopher Tsai, lucrative investing is in the blood. A privileged childhood fueled by his father's bullish achievements undoubtedly afforded Christopher access to a singularly sensational financial education - yet the younger Tsai's approach to investing is all his own.

"My father was hugely successful. He was a gunslinger. He built his success on momentum whereas I am

focused on the fundamentals. His style of investing was completely different than mine - but there was one thing we had in common - neither of us like to lose money," Tsai explains.

Growing up in the well-heeled Connecticut enclave of Greenwich, Tsai cut his teeth in a world of quiet privilege. While other kids were focused on trading baseball cards Tsai was more interested in trading stocks.

"I was still in high school when I worked with what was essentially my first client" says Tsai, recalling the early experience. "There was a restaurant in town that I loved and I would spend a good amount of time there talking to the owner. We had a lot of conversations about money, about stocks and about investing. Eventually, this man asked me to invest for him. I was sixteen and he gave me access to about \$400,000.00 in liquid assets - basically his entire life savings. Thankfully, the transaction was successful. Very successful. That was the start of my career investing for others and I haven't stopped since."

Following that initial foray into the sometimes-volatile waters of professional investment, Tsai went to work for two well-known financial gurus until eventually landing at Bear Stearns. Growing

his portfolio as he honed his skills Tsai parlayed his successes until 1997 when, at the tender age of twenty-two, he launched Tsai Capital Corporation and an entirely new generation of financial superstardom was born.

Today he sits at the helm of his own ship, Tsai Capital Corporation where he works with a client base of ultra high net worth individuals. Following the sagely timeless advice of Charlie Munger, Vice-Chairman of the Warren Buffett chaired Berkshire Hathaway Corporation, who suggested that, "Financial professionals choose their clients as they would friends." Tsai continues to build his empire with investors that are willing to place their trust in his philosophies; those who embrace his style and those who are attuned with his firmly grounded business sensibilities. Specializing in the management of global equity portfolios Tsai is in it for the long haul, eschewing short-term opportunities during a strong bull market and effectively managing core holdings. The practice has proven to be, as Tsai says, "Very effective and tax efficient - which is very popular with my clients and their accountants." It's a philosophy and indisputably successful practice that underscores Tsai's belief that, "Investing in stocks is essentially buying pieces of companies and not pieces of paper."



*ABOVE:*  
*At Home with Christopher Tsai,*  
*President and Chief Investment*  
*Officer of Tsai Capital Corporation*  
[www.tsaicapital.com](http://www.tsaicapital.com)

“Stocks represent an underlying slice of a business. How the business is performing and how it is growing is a better indicator of value than stock prices alone. We work with clients that share our long-term sensibilities and understand our investment philosophy.”

Tsai’s signature penchant for long-term investment and commitment carries over to his personal life, as well. Together since 1999, he and husband André Stockamp live on the Upper East Side of Manhattan in a home that also serves as gallery for their internationally recognized collection of fine art. High profile patrons, Tsai and Stockamp own an impressive collection of work by lauded Chinese contemporary artist Ai Weiwei. Weiwei’s body of work includes pieces in traditional mediums as well as stunning, architectural achievements including Beijing National Stadium and ‘The Birds Nest’ - theater of which coming to global attention during

the 2008 Summer Olympic Games. The couple’s vast collection of Weiwei is the largest and most important in the world and until recently included the only Weiwei-designed residence in the US – a masterful, minimalist creation commissioned by Tsai and Stockamp in New York’s Hudson Valley. Managed predominantly by Stockamp, pieces from what is known as the Stockamp Tsai collection have been exhibited in some of the world’s most prestigious museums including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Victoria & Albert Museum in London. Additionally, Tsai has been a benefactor and avid supporter of organizations including Asia Society, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Serpentine Gallery Pavilion, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and the World Monuments Fund, where he is a member of the President’s Circle.