



# Williams-Sonoma Inc. (WSM)

Updated May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023, by Aristofanis Papadatos

## Key Metrics

<b>Current Price:</b>	\$112	<b>5 Year CAGR Estimate:</b>	16.2%	<b>Market Cap:</b>	\$7.4 B
<b>Fair Value Price:</b>	\$186	<b>5 Year Growth Estimate:</b>	3.0%	<b>Ex-Dividend Date:</b>	4/20/23
<b>% Fair Value:</b>	60%	<b>5 Year Valuation Multiple Estimate:</b>	10.7%	<b>Dividend Payment Date:</b>	5/26/23
<b>Dividend Yield:</b>	3.2%	<b>5 Year Price Target</b>	\$216	<b>Years Of Dividend Growth:</b>	17
<b>Dividend Risk Score:</b>	A	<b>Retirement Suitability Score:</b>	B	<b>Rating:</b>	Buy

## Overview & Current Events

Williams-Sonoma is a specialty retailer that operates home furnishing and houseware brands, such as Williams-Sonoma, Pottery Barn, West Elm, Rejuvenation, Mark and Graham and others. Williams-Sonoma operates traditional brick-and-mortar retail locations but also sells its goods through e-commerce and direct-mail catalogs. Williams-Sonoma was founded in 1956, is headquartered in San Francisco, and currently trades with a market capitalization of \$7.4 billion.

In late May, Williams-Sonoma reported (5/23/23) financial results for the first quarter of fiscal 2023. Comparable brand revenue declined -6.0% over the prior year's quarter due to a -0.4% decline in Pottery Barn, a -15.8% decline in West Elm and a -4.4% decline in Williams-Sonoma. Earnings-per-share dipped -25% due to tough comparisons vs. blowout results in last year's quarter. The company has exceeded analysts' estimates in 22 of the last 23 quarters.

Management provided long-term guidance for mid-to-high single digit annual revenue growth and an operating margin above 15%. It also expects approximately flat revenue and an operating margin of 14%-15% this year. Due to business deceleration amid a slowing economy, we have lowered our forecast for annual earnings-per-share from \$14.00 to \$13.70.

## Growth on a Per-Share Basis

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2028
<b>EPS</b>	\$2.82	\$3.24	\$3.37	\$3.41	\$3.52	\$4.05	\$4.49	\$8.61	\$14.85	\$16.54	<b>\$13.70</b>	<b>\$15.88</b>
<b>DPS</b>	\$1.24	\$1.32	\$1.40	\$1.48	\$1.56	\$1.72	\$1.92	\$1.97	\$2.42	\$3.05	<b>\$3.60</b>	<b>\$4.82</b>
<b>Shares<sup>1</sup></b>	94	92	90	87	84	79	79	79	75	67	<b>64</b>	<b>60</b>

Williams-Sonoma has a solid growth history. Between 2007 and 2019, the company grew its earnings-per-share by an average compound rate of over 8% per year. Furthermore, 2020 proved to be a standout year amidst a difficult operating environment for many companies.

Unlike many other retailers, Williams-Sonoma has been able to grow its profits during the last three years. Thanks to its robust Omni-channel sales strategy, Williams-Sonoma has established a strong e-commerce business. As online sales continue to outpace company-wide revenue growth, Williams-Sonoma will become even more of an online retail company in the upcoming years. This strategy is showing promise amid the pandemic, as the e-commerce portion of the business has posted blowout results in the last three years and has led the company to post record earnings.

On the other hand, due to the high comparison base formed this year and the cautious guidance of management, we prefer to be on the safe side and thus we expect 3.0% average annual growth of earnings-per-share over the next five years.

## Valuation Analysis

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2028
<b>Avg. P/E</b>	19.4	20.8	22.2	15.5	14.1	14.0	14.3	9.7	11.1	8.1	<b>8.2</b>	<b>13.6</b>
<b>Avg. Yld.</b>	2.3%	2.0%	1.9%	2.8%	3.1%	3.0%	3.0%	2.4%	1.5%	2.3%	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>

<sup>1</sup> In millions.

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Williams-Sonoma has an interesting valuation history, with a typical multiple in the mid-teens coupled with occasional bouts of a 20+ earnings multiple. We assume a fair price-to-earnings ratio of 13.6, which is the 8-year average of the stock. The stock is currently trading at a nearly 10-year low price-to-earnings ratio of 8.2, which is much lower than our assumed fair valuation level. The depressed valuation has resulted from nearly record earnings, the effect of inflation on valuation and fears that inflation will hurt margins in the future. We view all these headwinds as temporary. If the stock reverts to its average valuation level over the next five years, it will enjoy a 10.7% annualized gain in its returns.

## Safety, Quality, Competitive Advantage, & Recession Resiliency

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2028
<b>Payout</b>	44%	41%	42%	43%	44%	42%	43%	23%	16%	18%	<b>26%</b>	<b>30%</b>

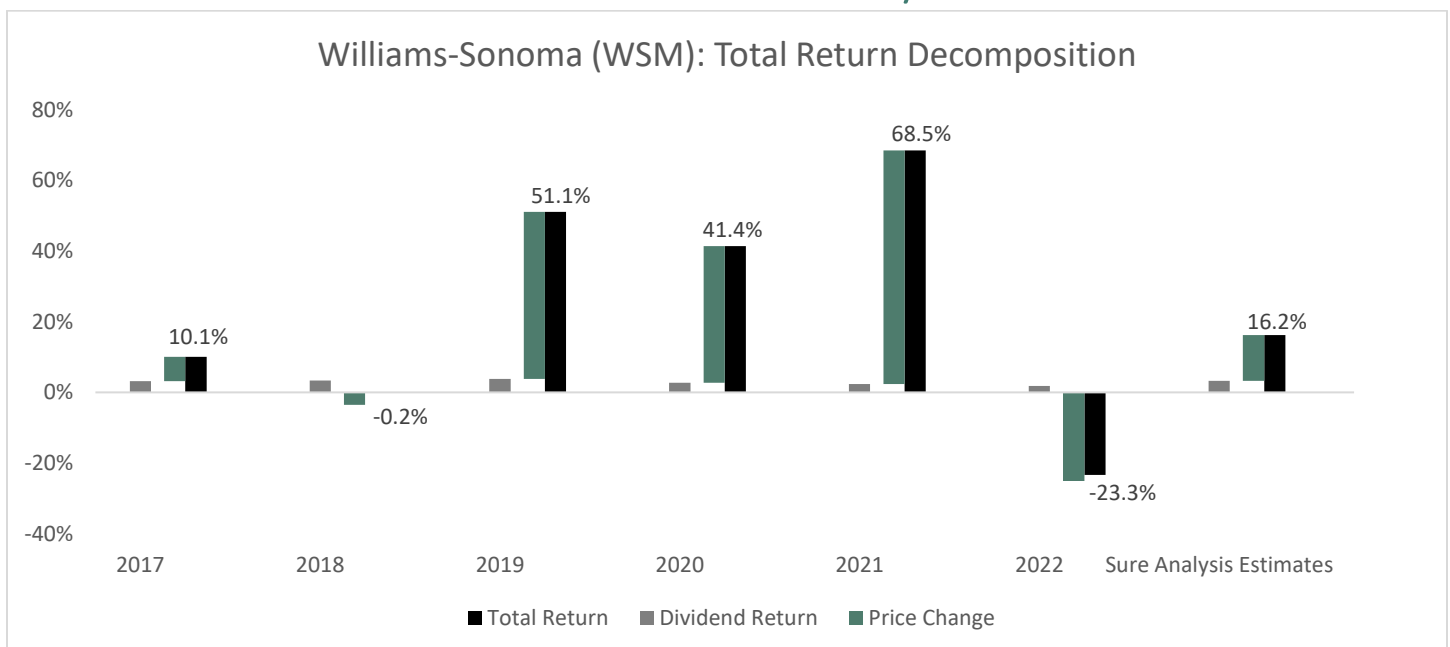
Williams-Sonoma's competitive advantage lies in its unique product portfolio and successful move to the online space. Notably, the company competes against formidable foes, including traditional brick-and-mortar home improvement retailers, such as Home Depot and Lowe's, and e-commerce players such as Amazon. Results have been solid in the last decade, but we caution that the company's business model can be cyclical. During the Great Recession, Williams-Sonoma posted earnings-per-share of \$1.76, \$0.28, \$0.72 and \$1.83 during the 2007 through 2010 stretch while the dividend was held steady and ultimately increased. In 2020-2022, the company posted exceptional results.

Williams-Sonoma operates a relatively asset-light business model relative to other retailers, thanks to a high portion of online sales. It also has a rock-solid balance sheet, with net debt of \$2.6 billion, which is only 35% of the market cap of the stock and only three times the annual earnings of the company.

## Final Thoughts & Recommendation

Williams-Sonoma has transformed itself into an omni-channel retailer with a large e-commerce presence, which has proved resilient during the coronavirus crisis. The stock has shed -37% off its peak last summer due to business deceleration amid an economic slowdown. It could thus offer a 16.2% average annual total return thanks to 3.0% growth, a 3.2% dividend yield and a 10.7% annualized valuation tailwind. We consider the stock highly attractive from a long-term point of view and rate it as a buy, though we note its significant downside risk in the event of a recession.

## Total Return Breakdown by Year



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## Income Statement Metrics

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Revenue</b>	4,388	4,699	4,976	5,084	5,292	5,672	5,898	6,783	8,246	8,674
<b>Gross Profit</b>	1,704	1,801	1,844	1,883	1,932	2,101	2,139	2,636	3,632	3,678
<b>Gross Margin</b>	38.8%	38.3%	37.1%	37.0%	36.5%	37.0%	36.3%	38.9%	44.0%	42.4%
<b>SG&amp;A Exp.</b>	1,252	1,298	1,356	1,411	1,478	1,665	1,673	1,726	2,179	2,179
<b>D&amp;A Exp.</b>	150	162	168	173	183	189	188	189	196	214
<b>Operating Profit</b>	452	502	489	473	454	436	466	911	1,453	1,498
<b>Operating Margin</b>	10.3%	10.7%	9.8%	9.3%	8.6%	7.7%	7.9%	13.4%	17.6%	17.3%
<b>Net Profit</b>	279	309	310	305	260	334	356	681	1,126	1,128
<b>Net Margin</b>	6.4%	6.6%	6.2%	6.0%	4.9%	5.9%	6.0%	10.0%	13.7%	13.0%
<b>Free Cash Flow</b>	260	257	341	327	310	396	421	1,105	1,145	699
<b>Income Tax</b>	174	193	178	167	193	96	101	214	325	373

## Balance Sheet Metrics

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Total Assets</b>	2337	2330	2417	2477	2786	2813	4054	4661	4,626	4,663
<b>Cash &amp; Equivalents</b>	330	223	194	214	390	339	432	1200	850	367
<b>Accounts Receivable</b>	60	67	79	89	90	107	112	144	132	116
<b>Inventories</b>	813	888	978	978	1062	1125	1101	1006	1,246	1,456
<b>Goodwill &amp; Int. Ass.</b>	---	---	---	---	---	85	85	85	85	77
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	1081	1106	1219	1229	1582	1657	2818	3010	2,961	2,962
<b>Accounts Payable</b>	405	397	447	454	459	527	521	543	613	508
<b>Long-Term Debt</b>	4	2	0	0	299	300	300	299	---	---
<b>Shareholder's Equity</b>	1256	1225	1198	1248	1204	1156	1236	1651	1,664	1,701
<b>D/E Ratio</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.26	0.24	018	---	---

## Profitability & Per Share Metrics

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Return on Assets</b>	12.3%	13.2%	13.1%	12.5%	9.9%	11.9%	10.4%	15.6%	24.3%	24.3%
<b>Return on Equity</b>	21.7%	24.9%	25.6%	25.0%	21.2%	28.3%	29.8%	47.2%	67.9%	67.0%
<b>ROIC</b>	21.7%	24.8%	25.6%	25.0%	18.9%	22.6%	23.8%	39.1%	62.3%	67.0%
<b>Shares Out.</b>	94	92	90	87	84	82	79	79	75	69
<b>Revenue/Share</b>	44.43	49.36	54.03	56.83	61.48	68.88	74.45	85.80	108.00	125.53
<b>FCF/Share</b>	2.63	2.70	3.70	3.66	3.60	4.81	5.31	13.98	14.99	10.11

Note: All figures in millions of U.S. Dollars unless per share or indicated otherwise.

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