

The Top 10



CARICATURE BY PHILIP BURKE. PHOTOGRAPHS (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT): NIVIERE / ABD RABBO / SIPA, WOLF P. PRANGE, DAVID ZALUBOWSKI

The empire: Owns 26% of retailer Pinault-Printemps-Redoute (\$15 billion sales). Plus Sefimeg S.A., France's biggest real estate company. Stake in Vail Resorts in the U.S.

The year: Combined love of art collecting and business by buying Christie's International in May in \$2.1 billion deal. His Artemis group lost a \$5 billion hostile bid for French financial group Worms et Cie.

For fun: Collects modern art. Backed a French film, *Bosnia*.

6. RUPERT MURDOCH

U.S. Age 67.

Net worth: \$5.3 billion

The man: Turned small stake in Australian newspaper into what may well be the world's leading media company.

The empire: Newspapers (New York Post, Times of London, the Australian), movies (Twentieth Century Fox), television (Fox Broadcasting), books (Harper-Collins), sports (Los Angeles Dodgers), cable and satellite TV.

The year: Purchased baseball's Los Angeles Dodgers, outflanked media rival Disney by establishing two regional sports channels, sold *TV Guide* for \$2 billion to United Video, a unit of TCI.

Good call: Jilted by satellite TV broadcaster EchoStar, invested in Primestar despite regulatory hurdles. Justice likely to approve deal by year-end, giving him a foothold in U.S. satellite TV market.

For fun: Sails.

7. ROBERT KUOK

Malaysia. Age 75.

Net worth: \$4.7 billion

The man: Exceedingly shrewd judge of business opportunity and growth markets.

The empire: Real estate, media, commodities and hotels in some 15 Asian countries. The Coca-Cola bottling franchise in China.

The year: Asia's economic tremors knocked \$2.3 billion off his net worth. But still active. Attempting to buy shares he doesn't own in Malaysia's Perlis Plantations Berhad, an edible oils conglomerate. Shangri-La Hotels and Bank of China launched a MasterCard targeting mainland Chinese.

In the works: Looking to list his \$1 billion (assets) Singapore property company, Allgreen Properties.

For fun: Polishes his business acumen by listening to people he says are smarter than he is.

8. LORENZO ZAMBRANO

Mexico. Age 54.

Net worth: \$2.9 billion

The man: Risk-taking, techno-savvy head of cement company Cemex.

The empire: Cemex has become the world's third-largest cement company—and the most profitable. He and extended family own estimated 35%.

The year: Extended Cemex operations to a fourth continent, acquiring 30% of a Philippine cement company.

Good call: Took on billions in debt to acquire operations in Spain, the U.S., Latin America in early 1990s. Geographic diversity helped Cemex survive Mexico's 1995 peso crisis.

For fun: Travels the world to collect sports cars, modern Mexican art.

9. MASAYOSHI SON

Japan. Age 40.

Net worth: \$2.2 billion

The man: Young gun entrepreneur in a land where few such exist. Built Softbank, Japan's top software distributor.

The empire: Ziff-Davis magazines, Comdex computer shows, Kingston Technology, all through Softbank.

The year: Stock fell 83% from its peak, hit bottom last November amid reports Softbank was on verge of collapse. Quashed rumors. Offered 26% of Ziff-Davis on New York Stock Exchange in April, reaped \$400 million. Stock quadrupled to recent \$47.

Good call: Paid \$86 million for 29% of Internet search engine Yahoo! in April 1996. Now worth \$1.6 billion.

For fun: Plays golf.

10. VLADIMIR POTANIN

Russia. Age 37.

Net worth: \$1.6 billion

The man: Golden boy of the Soviet diplomatic establishment. Now a top banker and industrialist.

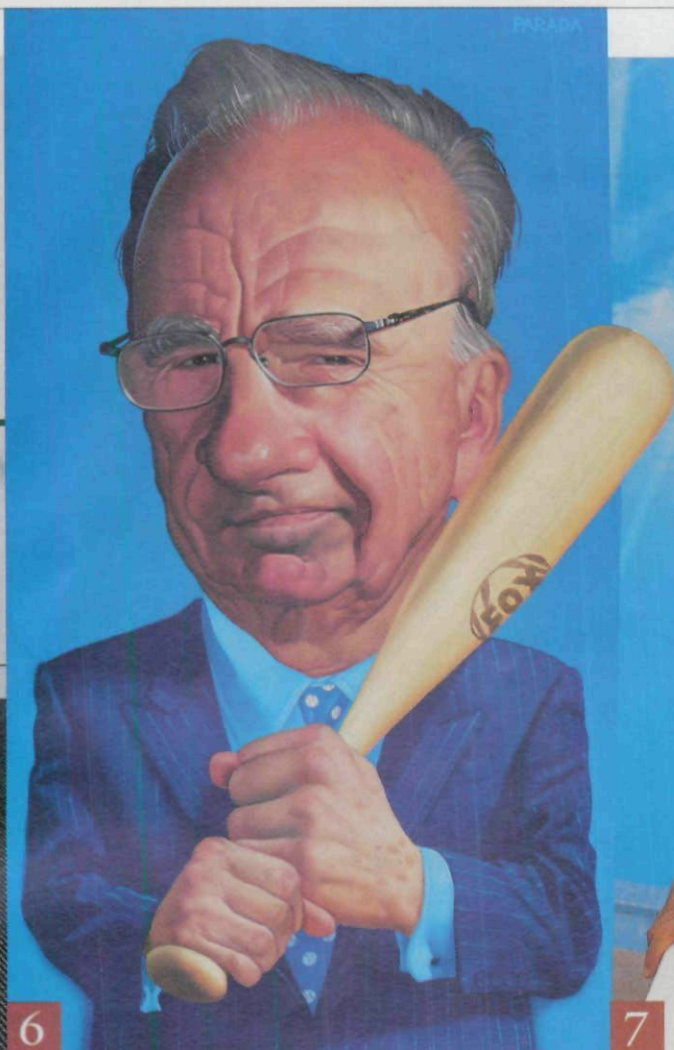
The empire: Significant stakes in MFK and Unexim banks and in Sidanco (oil), Gazprom (natural gas), Norilsk Nickel (metals) and Svyazinvest (telecom).

The year: Tapped George Soros and Morgan Stanley last July for the \$1.9 billion purchase of 25% of telecom monopoly Svyazinvest.

In the works: Merging MFK with Russian-American investment bank Renaissance Capital. With "reformers" in government, trying to undo Russia's crony capitalism, roll back the "oligarchs"—never mind that he's the biggest.

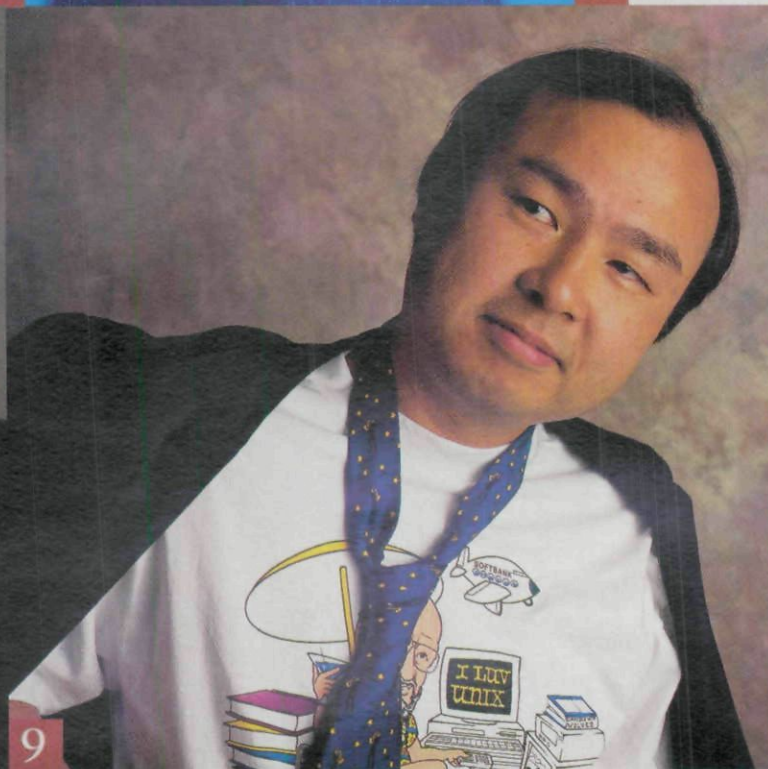
For fun: Soccer enthusiast.





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(CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT): RAYMOND REUTER / SYGMA, CARICATURE; ROBERTO PARADA, JOAN BOIVIN, AP / WIDE WORLD; MICHAEL ABRAMSON, KEITH DANNEMILLER / SABA



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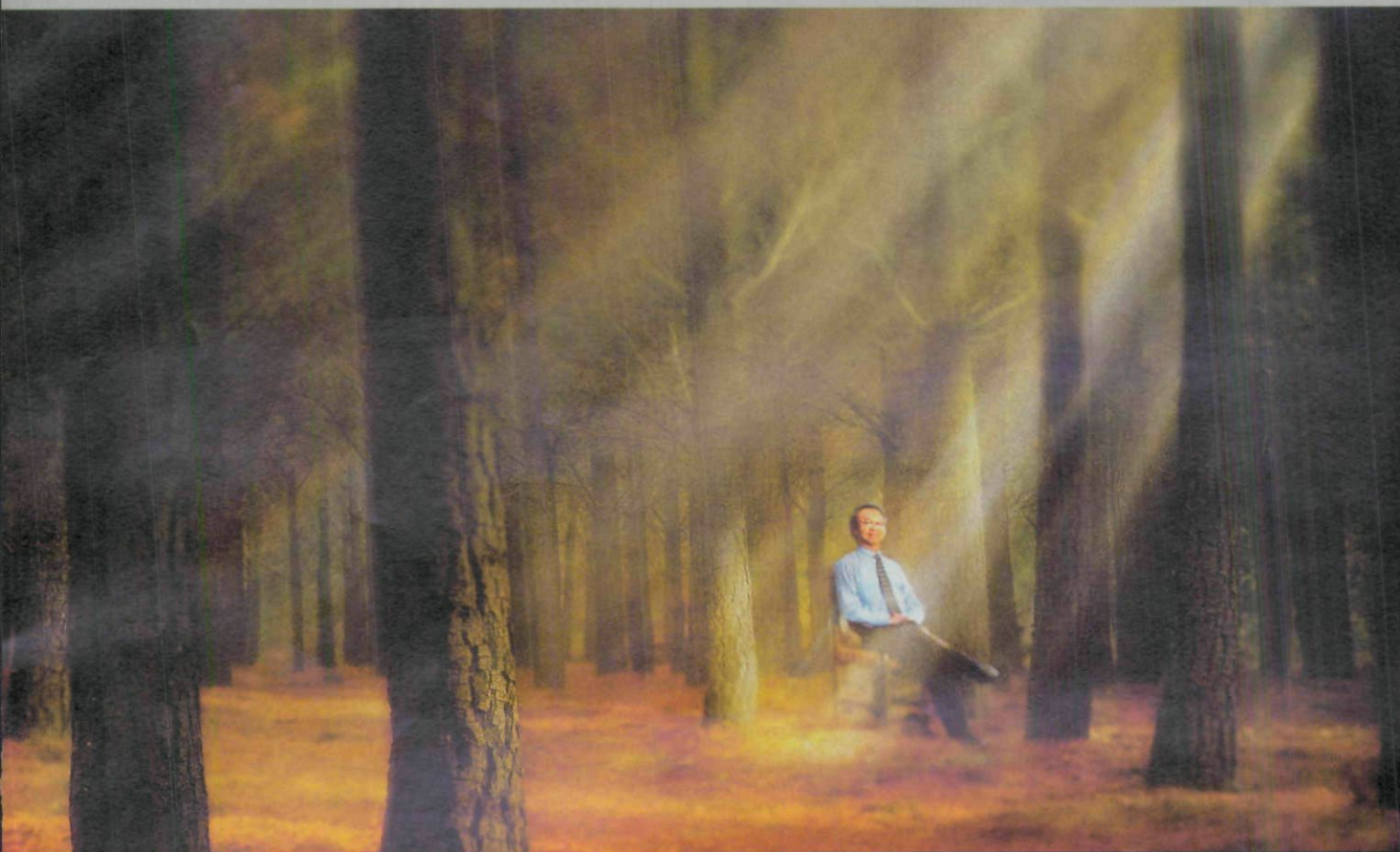
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