



## **Darden Restaurants Announces 2011 "William B. Darden Distinguished Supplier Award" Winners**

### **Two Partners Also Receive Newly Created "Joe R. Lee Legendary Leadership Award"**

ORLANDO, Fla., May 9, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- Darden Restaurants, Inc. today announced the recipients of its annual "William B. Darden Distinguished Supplier Awards." Named for the company's late founder, the awards recognize a select group from more than 1,500 global suppliers who "go above and beyond" to contribute to the success of the company. Selected by Darden's culinary, purchasing, total quality and marketing teams, recipients were honored at a dinner in Orlando on May 5.

(Logo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20050203/FLTH026LOGO> )

This year, 11 companies were recognized with this award:

- **Colavita USA**
- **Custom Prepared Foods**
- **Majestic Fine Wines**
- **Maines Paper & Food Service, Inc.**
- **Nestle Professional**
- **O.K. Foods, Inc.**
- **Pacific Supreme Company**
- **The Neil Jones Food Co.**
- **Tropical Aquaculture Products Inc.**
- **Tyson Prepared Foods**
- **Zonin U.S.A. Inc.**

In addition, Darden also announced two recipients of a newly created award recognizing a superior level of supplier excellence, the "Joe R. Lee Legendary Leadership Award." This award is named for the first chairman and chief executive officer of Darden and honors companies that have previously received five or more "William B. Darden Supplier Awards." Lotito Foods and T. Marzetti Company were honored with this new distinction in 2011. Both companies have received the "William B. Darden Supplier Award" five times.

"Serving 400 million meals a year in more than 1,800 restaurants throughout North America requires an enormous amount of teamwork and collaboration," said Barry Moullet, Darden's Senior Vice President of Supply Chain. "Each of these companies has surpassed expectations and been true business partners by finding ways to contribute to Darden's success through innovative products and results-driven initiatives."

### **About Darden Restaurants**

Darden Restaurants, Inc., (NYSE: DRI), the world's largest full-service restaurant company, owns and operates more than 1,800 restaurants that generate more than \$7 billion in annual sales. Headquartered in Orlando, and employing approximately 180,000 people, Darden is recognized for a culture that rewards caring for and responding to people. In 2011, Darden became the first full-service restaurant company ever to be named to the FORTUNE "100 Best Companies to Work For" list. Our restaurant brands — Red Lobster, Olive Garden, LongHorn Steakhouse, The Capital Grille, Bahama Breeze and Seasons 52 — reflect the rich diversity of those who dine with us. Our brands are built on deep insights into what our guests want. For more information, please visit [www.darden.com](http://www.darden.com).

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