Darden Restaurants Reports June Same-Restaurant Sales Results

ORLANDO, Fla., July 5-- Darden Restaurants, Inc. (NYSE: DRI) today reported same-restaurant sales for the five-week June fiscal month ended July 1, 2001. This period is the first month of Darden's fiscal 2002 first quarter.

Same-restaurant sales at Olive Garden were up 4% to 5% for the month. The sales growth reflected a 3% to 4% increase in guest counts, a 1% to 2% increase in pricing and a slight increase in check average due to menu-mix changes. Olive Garden featured "Chicken and Shrimp Limone," which began June 4 and continues to July 15. In fiscal June of last year, Olive Garden had a 9% to 10% same-restaurant sales increase driven by a 6% increase in guest counts, a 2% to 3% increase in pricing and a 1% to 2% increase in check average from menu-mix changes.

Same-restaurant sales at Red Lobster were up 4% to 5% for the June fiscal month driven by a 2% to 3% increase in pricing, a 3% increase in check average due to menu mix changes and a 1% decline in guest counts. Red Lobster's June advertising featured a "Lobster, Scallops and Shrimp" entree as part of an overall brand strengthening campaign. In fiscal June of last year, Red Lobster had a 4% to 5% same-restaurant sales increase, which reflected a 1% to 2% increase in pricing, a 3% increase in check average because of menu-mix changes and unchanged guest counts.


Forward-looking statements in this news release, if any, are made under the Safe Harbor provisions of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Certain important factors could cause results to differ materially from those anticipated by the forward-looking statements, including the impact of changing economic or business conditions, the impact of competition, the availability of favorable credit and trade terms, the impact of changes in the cost or availability of food and real estate, government regulation, construction costs, weather conditions and other factors discussed from time to time in reports filed by the company with the Securities and Exchange Commission.