Darden Restaurants Reports October Same-Restaurant Sales Results

ORLANDO, Fla., Nov. 4, 2004 /PRNewswire-FirstCall via COMTEX/ -- Darden Restaurants, Inc. (NYSE: DRI) today reported same-restaurant sales results for the four-week October fiscal month ended October 31, 2004. This period is the second month of Darden's fiscal 2005 second quarter.

Same-restaurant sales at Red Lobster were up 9% to 10% for fiscal October, which reflected a 6% to 7% increase in guest counts and an approximate 3% increase in check average that resulted primarily from menu mix changes. Same-restaurant sales decreased 4% to 5% in fiscal October last year.

Same-restaurant sales at Olive Garden were up 6% to 7% for fiscal October, which reflected a 4% to 5% increase in guest counts and an approximate 2% increase in check average that resulted primarily from pricing. Last year, Olive Garden had an increase of 2% to 3% in same-restaurant sales in fiscal October.

Darden Restaurants, Inc., headquartered in Orlando, FL, owns and operates over 1,300 Red Lobster, Olive Garden, Bahama Breeze, Smokey Bones, and Seasons 52 restaurants with annual sales of $5.0 billion.

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.

SOURCE Darden Restaurants, Inc.

Analysts, Matthew Stroud, +1-407-245-6458, or Media, Jim DeSimone, +1-407-245-4567, both of Darden Restaurants, Inc.

http://www.darden.com

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