Darden Restaurants Reports April Same-Restaurant Sales Results

ORLANDO, Fla., May 4, 2006 /PRNewswire-FirstCall via COMTEX News Network/ -- Darden Restaurants, Inc., (NYSE: DRI) today reported U.S. same-restaurant sales results for the four-week April fiscal month ended April 30, 2006. This period is the second month of Darden’s fiscal 2006 fourth quarter.

Same-restaurant sales at Red Lobster increased 9% to 10% for fiscal April, which reflected an approximate 4% increase in guest counts and a 5% to 6% increase in check average. The check average increase was a result of an approximate 2% increase in pricing and a 3% to 4% increase from menu mix changes. Last year, Red Lobster had a 1% to 2% increase in same-restaurant sales.

Same-restaurant sales at Olive Garden increased approximately 1% for fiscal April, which reflected a 0% to 1% decrease in guest counts and a 1% to 2% increase in check average. The check average increase was mostly due to pricing. Last year, Olive Garden had an 8% to 9% increase in same-restaurant sales.

Darden Restaurants, Inc., headquartered in Orlando, FL, owns and operates over 1,400 Red Lobster, Olive Garden, Bahama Breeze, Smokey Bones, and Seasons 52 restaurants with annual sales of $5.3 billion.

Forward-looking statements in this news release 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 intense competition, changing economic or business conditions, the price and availability of food, ingredients and utilities, labor and insurance costs, increased advertising and marketing costs, higher-than-anticipated costs to open or close restaurants, litigation, unfavorable publicity, a lack of suitable locations, government regulations, a failure to achieve growth objectives, weather 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.prnewswire.com

Copyright (C) 2006 PR Newswire. All rights reserved.

News Provided by COMTEX