Darden Restaurants Reports June Same-Restaurant Sales Results

ORLANDO, Fla., July 9, 2007 /PRNewswire-FirstCall via COMTEX News Network/ -- Darden Restaurants, Inc., (NYSE: DRI) today reported U.S. same-restaurant sales results for the five-week June fiscal month ended July 1, 2007. This period is the first month of Darden's fiscal 2008 first quarter.

Same-restaurant sales at Red Lobster increased 6% to 7% for fiscal June, which reflected a 3% to 4% increase in guest counts and a 3% to 4% increase in check average. The check average increase was a result of a 2% to 3% increase in pricing and a 0% to 1% increase from menu mix changes. Last year, Red Lobster had an approximate 5% decrease in same-restaurant sales.

Same-restaurant sales at Olive Garden increased 3% to 4% for fiscal June, which reflected an approximate 1% increase in guest counts and a 2% to 3% increase in check average. The check average increase was a result of an approximate 3% increase in pricing and a 0% to 1% decrease from menu mix changes. Last year, Olive Garden had a 3% to 4% increase in same-restaurant sales.

Darden Restaurants, Inc., headquartered in Orlando, FL, owns and operates nearly 1,400 Red Lobster, Olive Garden, Bahama Breeze, Smokey Bones and Seasons 52 restaurants with annual sales of $5.9 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, risks associated with our plans to continue to improve financial performance at Bahama Breeze to support new restaurant growth, the closure and disposition of certain Smokey Bones restaurants and the anticipated sale of the remaining Smokey Bones restaurants, and other factors discussed from time to time in reports filed by the Company with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

SOURCE Darden Restaurants, Inc.

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