



Darden Restaurants Announces 2010 'William B. Darden Distinguished Supplier Award' Winners

ORLANDO, Fla., May 3, 2010 /PRNewswire via COMTEX News Network/ -- 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 of more than 1,500 suppliers from around the world 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 will be recognized at a dinner in Orlando on May 4.

(Logo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20050203/FLTH026LOGO>)

"Serving more than 400 million meals a year in 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. "These companies have surpassed expectations and been true business partners by finding ways to contribute to Darden's success through innovative products and results-driven initiatives."

This year, 11 companies were recognized:

- **Boston Beer Company** - for supporting Red Lobster in its system-wide introduction of Sam Adams Boston Lager draft, including the development of a trademarked, signature pint glass for use in all Red Lobster restaurants.
- **C.H. Guenther & Son, Inc.** - for enabling Red Lobster to move to trans fat-free Cheddar Bay Biscuits and working with other suppliers to aid in their development as secondary suppliers.
- **Coca-Cola** - for its innovative product development work with multiple Darden brands and its support of LongHorn Steakhouse and the "Live at LongHorn" music program through the Coke Zero/Darius Rucker national sweepstakes promotion.
- **ESKCO Marketing Solutions** - for working with Seasons 52 to design new executions for its core menu and cocktail menu.
- **Florida Stainless Fabricators, Inc.** - for helping Bahama Breeze's culinary and operations teams redesign the kitchen layout in the brand's new restaurant prototype, leading to a significant cost savings.
- **Hallvard Leroy AS** - for their high level of service, collaboration and responsiveness in adjusting their production and marketing processes in order to become a strategic supplier of Norwegian salmon, while also partnering with Darden during a period of extreme global market challenges.
- **Lotito Foods Inc.** - for their consistently outstanding support of all Darden concepts, including new product ideas and implementation that have helped deliver superior results and substantial cost savings.
- **Nestle Foodservices - North America** - for its contributions to Olive Garden's Sauce Excellence program.
- **Pilgrim's Pride** - for providing LongHorn Steakhouse with high-quality, fresh chicken products at significant cost savings.
- **Thai Union Seafood** - for consistently providing Red Lobster with high-quality and value-added shrimp, while maintaining focus on service, innovation, cost and sustainability.
- **Windsor Quality Foods, LTD** - for helping Olive Garden develop its Pansotti pasta, leading to a successful national promotion.

About Darden Restaurants

Darden Restaurants, Inc. (NYSE: DRI), the world's largest full-service restaurant company, owns and operates 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. 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.

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