

**Darden Restaurants Earns National Recognition for Diversity**  
**Monday, September 17, 2012 12:00:00 PM (GMT)**

ORLANDO, Fla., Sept. 17, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- Darden Restaurants has been recognized by three national publications for its commitment to diversity in its business practices and among its family of restaurants: Red Lobster, Olive Garden, LongHorn Steakhouse, Bahama Breeze, Seasons 52, The Capital Grille, Eddie V's and Yard House.

(Logo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20050203/FLTH026LOGO> )

Darden has been honored with the following recognitions:

- *Black Enterprise Magazine* included Darden among its **"40 Best Companies for Diversity,"** recognizing the company's commitment to inclusion as part of its business strategy. This marks the fourth consecutive year and sixth time Darden has appeared on this list.
- HispanicBusiness Media also named Darden as one of its **"2012 Best Companies for Hispanics"** for its commitment to diversity in all areas of its corporate structure. Darden ranked 13<sup>th</sup> on the list of 55 companies and appears on the list for the seventh consecutive year.
- *LATINA Style Magazine* ranked Darden among the 50 best companies in its **"2012 LATINA Style 50 Report,"** which recognizes the best companies for Latinas to work for in the U.S. Darden ranked 24<sup>th</sup> on the list of 50 companies and appears on the list for the sixth consecutive year.

"At Darden, we consider diversity and inclusion business imperatives that are critical to our success and future growth," said Clarence Otis, Chairman and CEO of Darden. "Every level of our organization is strengthened by a diversity of perspective, attitude and ideas. By fostering and embracing diversity, we enrich our business and our culture."

Darden's long history of diversity and inclusion dates back to 1938, when company founder Bill Darden welcomed anyone as a guest in his first restaurant during an era of racial segregation and discrimination. Today, diversity remains at the core of Darden's culture. The company's diversity initiatives reflect its guiding principles to attract and retain a workforce that embodies its diverse customer base, provide opportunities for diverse suppliers, and contribute to the well-being of the communities it serves.

**About Darden Restaurants:**

Darden Restaurants, Inc., (NYSE: DRI), the world's largest full-service restaurant company, owns and operates more than 2,000 restaurants that generate \$8.0 billion in annual sales. Headquartered in Orlando, and employing more than 185,000 people, Darden is recognized for a culture that rewards caring for and responding to people. In 2012, Darden was named to the FORTUNE "100 Best Companies to Work For" list for the second year in a row and is the only full-service restaurant company to ever appear on the list. Our restaurant brands — Red Lobster, Olive Garden, LongHorn Steakhouse, Bahama Breeze, Seasons 52, The Capital Grille, Eddie V's and Yard House — 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](http://www.darden.com).

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**Countries:** United States

**Industries:** Food & Beverages, Restaurants

**Languages:** English

**Primary Identifiers:** DRI-US

**Related Identifiers:** DRI-US

**Subjects:** Corporate Social Responsibility, Human Interest Groups