



Darden Restaurants Announces 2009 'William B. Darden Distinguished Supplier Award' Winners

ORLANDO, Fla., June 29, 2009 /PRNewswire-FirstCall via COMTEX News Network/ -- Darden Restaurants, Inc. announced today 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 are recognized at a dinner in Orlando on June 25.

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

"Supplying more than 1,700 restaurants throughout North America with more than \$7 billion in annual sales 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:

- Basix Restaurant Services, a division of Armada Supply Chain Solutions - for helping Darden optimize its flow of goods, eliminate transportation risk, and providing innovative and creative solutions to supply chain management.
- Bakers Pride Oven Company, part of the Standex Cooking Solutions Group, Standex International - for supporting Red Lobster in the system-wide implementation and launch of its new Wood-Fire Grill cooking platform.
- Lotito Foods, Inc. - for creating an innovative new cheese product at a lower cost and sponsoring several trips to Italy, allowing Olive Garden's culinary team to work with local chefs to develop new menu item ideas.
- Louisa Food Products, Inc. - for helping Olive Garden develop its Mezzaluna filled pasta, leading to a successful national promotion.
- Potandon Produce - for providing multiple Darden brands with potatoes during a crop shortage, while avoiding disruption to operations and ensuring the highest-quality product.
- Save On Seafood - for its innovative product development work with Bahama Breeze, leading to several new menu items and a regional fresh fish program that features a variety of products during their peak seasons.
- T. Marzetti - for creating several sauces - with attention to cost and quality - for Red Lobster and LongHorn Steakhouse - including garlic grill sauce, maple cherry glaze and avocado ranch dressing.
- Taste It Presents, Inc. - for helping develop 11 of Seasons 52's mini indulgences - including the Mocha Macchiato.
- Thai Union Seafood - for consistently providing Red Lobster with high-quality and value-added shrimp, while maintaining focus on service, innovation, cost and sustainability.
- Tom Cat Bakery, Inc. - for helping The Capital Grille develop a variety of brioche, improving the bread basket offering and increasing customer satisfaction.
- Tyson Prepared Foods (Tyson Foods, Inc.) - for providing Red Lobster with premium soups and sauces - like bacon cheddar potato soup and roasted red pepper sauce - for its lunch menu roll-out.

Darden Restaurants, Inc., (NYSE: DRI), the world's largest full-service restaurant company, owns and operates more than 1,700 restaurants that generate \$7 billion in annual sales. Headquartered in Orlando, and employing 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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