

DARDEN RESTAURANTS INC
 Form 4
 June 20, 2005

FORM 4

UNITED STATES SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
 Washington, D.C. 20549

OMB APPROVAL

OMB Number: 3235-0287
 Expires: January 31, 2005
 Estimated average burden hours per response... 0.5

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STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP OF SECURITIES

Filed pursuant to Section 16(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, Section 17(a) of the Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935 or Section 30(h) of the Investment Company Act of 1940

(Print or Type Responses)

1. Name and Address of Reporting Person *
HELSEL STEPHEN E

2. Issuer Name and Ticker or Trading Symbol
DARDEN RESTAURANTS INC [DRI]

5. Relationship of Reporting Person(s) to Issuer
 (Check all applicable)

(Last) (First) (Middle)
5900 LAKE ELLENOR DRIVE, P.O. BOX 593330
 (Street)

3. Date of Earliest Transaction (Month/Day/Year)
06/16/2005

____ Director _____ 10% Owner
 Officer (give title below) _____ Other (specify below)
SVP and Controller

ORLANDO, FL 32859-3330

(City) (State) (Zip)

4. If Amendment, Date Original Filed(Month/Day/Year)

6. Individual or Joint/Group Filing(Check Applicable Line)
 Form filed by One Reporting Person
 Form filed by More than One Reporting Person

Table I - Non-Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned

| 1. Title of Security (Instr. 3) | 2. Transaction Date (Month/Day/Year) | 2A. Deemed Execution Date, if any (Month/Day/Year) | 3. Transaction Code (Instr. 8) | 4. Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed of (D) (Instr. 3, 4 and 5) | 5. Amount of Securities Beneficially Owned Following Reported Transaction(s) (Instr. 3 and 4) | 6. Ownership Form: Direct (D) or Indirect (I) (Instr. 4) | 7. Nature of Ownership (Instr. 4) |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| | | | | (A) or (D) Price | | | |
| Common Stock | 06/16/2005 | | A | 4,875 A \$ 0 | 89,788 | D | |
| Common Stock | | | | | 2,397.028 ⁽¹⁾ | I | Savings Plan |

Reminder: Report on a separate line for each class of securities beneficially owned directly or indirectly.

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SEC 1474 (9-02)

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Table II - Derivative Securities Acquired, Disposed of, or Beneficially Owned
(e.g., puts, calls, warrants, options, convertible securities)

| 1. Title of Derivative Security (Instr. 3) | 2. Conversion or Exercise Price of Derivative Security | 3. Transaction Date (Month/Day/Year) | 3A. Deemed Execution Date, if any (Month/Day/Year) | 4. Transaction Code (Instr. 8) | 5. Number of Derivative Securities Acquired (A) or Disposed of (D) (Instr. 3, 4, and 5) | 6. Date Exercisable and Expiration Date (Month/Day/Year) | 7. Title and Amount of Underlying Securities (Instr. 3 and 4) |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Stock Option (Right to Buy) | \$ 33.095 | 06/16/2005 | | A | 19,500 | 06/16/2008 ⁽²⁾ 06/16/2015 | Common Stock 19,500 |

Reporting Owners

Reporting Owner Name / Address

Relationships

Director 10% Owner Officer Other

HELSEL STEPHEN E
5900 LAKE ELLENOR DRIVE
P.O. BOX 593330
ORLANDO, FL 32859-3330

SVP and Controller

Signatures

Douglas E. Wentz, Attorney-in-fact for HELSEL, STEPHEN E., 5900 Lake Ellenor Drive,
P.O. Box 593330, Orlando, FL 32859-3330, Darden Restaurants, Inc. (DRI)

06/20/2005

__Signature of Reporting Person

Date

Explanation of Responses:

* If the form is filed by more than one reporting person, see Instruction 4(b)(v).

** Intentional misstatements or omissions of facts constitute Federal Criminal Violations. See 18 U.S.C. 1001 and 15 U.S.C. 78ff(a).

- The number of shares reported is based on a plan statement dated March 31, 2005, and is derived from an undivided interest in a fund
- (1) consisting of both Darden common stock and a small cash position that fluctuates from time to time. The number of shares reported may change based on the size of the cash position at the time of reporting.
 - (2) The option vests in two equal annual installments beginning 6/16/08.

Note: File three copies of this Form, one of which must be manually signed. If space is insufficient, see Instruction 6 for procedure. Potential persons who are to respond to the collection of information contained in this form are not required to respond unless the form displays a currently valid OMB number.