

DARDEN RESTAURANTS INC  
Form DEFA14A  
August 11, 2011

**UNITED STATES**  
**SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION**

Washington, D.C. 20549

**SCHEDULE 14A**

**Proxy Statement Pursuant to Section 14(a) of the  
Securities Exchange Act of 1934**

**(Amendment No. )**

Filed by the Registrant

Filed by a Party other than the Registrant

Check the appropriate box:

Preliminary Proxy Statement

**Confidential, for Use of the Commission Only (as permitted by Rule 14a-6(e)(2))**

Definitive Proxy Statement

Definitive Additional Materials

Soliciting Material Pursuant to §240.14a-12

**DARDEN RESTAURANTS, INC.**

(Name of Registrant as Specified In Its Charter)

(Name of Person(s) Filing Proxy Statement, if other than the Registrant)

Payment of Filing Fee (Check the appropriate box):

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x No fee required.

.. Fee computed on table below per Exchange Act Rules 14a-6(i)(1) and 0-11.

(1) Title of each class of securities to which the transaction applies:

(2) Aggregate number of securities to which the transaction applies:

(3) Per unit price or other underlying value of the transaction computed pursuant to Exchange Act Rule 0-11 (set forth the amount on which the filing fee is calculated and state how it was determined):

(4) Proposed maximum aggregate value of transaction:

(5) Total fee paid:

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- .. Fee paid previously with preliminary materials.
  
- .. Check box if any part of the fee is offset as provided by Exchange Act Rule 0-11(a)(2) and identify the filing for which the offsetting fee was paid previously. Identify the previous filing by registration statement number, or the Form or Schedule and the date of its filing.

(1) Amount Previously Paid:

(2) Form, Schedule or Registration Statement No.:

(3) Filing Party:

(4) Date Filed:

**\*\*\* Exercise *Your Right to Vote* \*\*\***

**Important Notice Regarding the Availability of Proxy Materials for the  
Shareholder Meeting to Be Held on September 22, 2011.**

**DARDEN RESTAURANTS, INC.**

**Meeting Information**

|                                 |                              |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Meeting Type:</b>            | Annual                       |
| <b>For holders as of:</b>       | July 29, 2011                |
| <b>Date:</b> September 22, 2011 | <b>Time:</b> 10:00 a.m., EDT |

**Location:** Hyatt Regency

Orlando International Airport

9300 Airport Boulevard

Orlando, Florida 32827

*1000 DARDEN CENTER DRIVE*

*ORLANDO, FL 32837*

For information on how to obtain directions to be able to attend the Annual Meeting and vote in person, please contact the Company's Corporate Secretary at 1000 Darden Center Drive, Orlando, FL 32837 or by calling 407-245-6565.

You are receiving this communication because you hold shares in the above named company.

This is not a ballot. You cannot use this notice to vote these shares. This communication presents only an overview of the more complete proxy materials that are available to you on the Internet. You may view the proxy materials online at [www.proxyvote.com](http://www.proxyvote.com) or easily request a paper copy (see reverse side).

We encourage you to access and review all of the important information contained in the proxy materials before voting.

**See the reverse side of this notice to obtain proxy materials and voting instructions.**


## Before You Vote

### How to Access the Proxy Materials

**Proxy Materials Available to VIEW or RECEIVE:**

NOTICE AND PROXY STATEMENT      ANNUAL REPORT


**How to View Online:**

Have the information that is printed in the box marked by the arrow  (located on the following page) and visit: [www.proxyvote.com](http://www.proxyvote.com).

**How to Request and Receive a PAPER or E-MAIL Copy:**

If you want to receive a paper or e-mail copy of these documents, you must request one. There is NO charge for requesting a copy. Please choose one of the following methods to make your request:

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1) <i>BY INTERNET:</i>  | <a href="http://www.proxyvote.com">www.proxyvote.com</a>                   |
| 2) <i>BY TELEPHONE:</i> | 1-800-579-1639   |
| 3) <i>BY E-MAIL*:</i>   | <a href="mailto:sendmaterial@proxyvote.com">sendmaterial@proxyvote.com</a> |


\* If requesting materials by e-mail, please send a blank e-mail with the information that is printed in the box marked by the arrow  (located on the following page) in the subject line.

Requests, instructions and other inquiries sent to this e-mail address will NOT be forwarded to your investment advisor. Please make the request as instructed above on or before September 8, 2011 to facilitate timely delivery.

## How To Vote

### Please Choose One of the Following Voting Methods

**Vote In Person:** At the meeting, you will need to request a ballot to vote these shares.

**Vote By Internet:** To vote now by Internet, go to [www.proxyvote.com](http://www.proxyvote.com). Have the information that is printed in the box marked by the arrow  available and follow the instructions.

**Vote By Mail:** You can vote by mail by requesting a paper copy of the materials, which will include a proxy card.

**Voting Items**

**The Board of Directors recommends you**

**vote FOR ALL on proposal 1.**

1. To elect a full Board of 12 directors from the named director nominees to serve until the next annual meeting of shareholders and until their successors are elected and qualified. The 12 director nominees are as follows:

**Nominees:**

- |                               |                              |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 01) Leonard L. Berry          | 07) William M. Lewis, Jr.    |
| 02) Odie C. Donald            | 08) Senator Connie Mack, III |
| 03) Christopher J. Fraleigh   | 09) Andrew H. Madsen         |
| 04) Victoria D. Harker        | 10) Clarence Otis, Jr.       |
| 05) David H. Hughes           | 11) Michael D. Rose          |
| 06) Charles A. Ledsinger, Jr. | 12) Maria A. Sastre          |

**The Board of Directors recommends you vote FOR proposals 2 and 3.**

2. To approve the amended Darden Restaurants, Inc. Employee Stock Purchase Plan.

3. To approve an advisory resolution on executive compensation.

**The Board of Directors recommends you vote 1 YEAR on proposal 4.**

4. To provide an advisory vote on the frequency of future advisory votes on executive compensation.

**The Board of Directors recommends you vote FOR proposal 5.**

5. To ratify the appointment of KPMG LLP as our independent registered public accounting firm for the fiscal year ending May 27, 2012.

**NOTE:** To transact such other business, if any, as may properly come before the meeting and any adjournment.

