

HELSEL STEPHEN E
Form 4
January 13, 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

Check this box if no longer subject to Section 16. Form 4 or Form 5 obligations may continue. See Instruction 1(b).

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)
01/11/2005

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

ORLANDO, FL 32859-3330

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

(City) (State) (Zip)

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 Indirect Ownership (Instr. 4)
				(A) or (D) Code V Amount (D) Price			
Common Stock	01/11/2005		M	3,593 A \$ 6.4763	86,645	D	
Common Stock	01/11/2005		F	1,732 D \$ 28.05	84,913	D	
Common Stock					2,418.852 ⁽¹⁾	I	Savings Plan

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

Persons who respond to the collection of information contained in this form are not required to respond unless the form

SEC 1474 (9-02)

displays a currently valid OMB control number.

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)	8. Amount or Number of Shares
Stock Option (Right to Buy)	\$ 6.4763	01/11/2005		M	3,593	12/12/1999 01/12/2005	Common Stock	3,593

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) 01/13/2005

__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 December 31, 2004, 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.

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.