



## HALF YEAR TRADING UPDATE

7 April 2010

The Board of Marston's PLC issues its trading update following the end of the first half of the current financial year on 3 April 2010. The Interim Results for the 26 weeks ended 3 April 2010 will be announced on 20 May 2010.

### Trading

We remain on track to meet our expectations for the financial year and continue to see improvement in each of our trading divisions.

In Marston's Inns and Taverns, our managed pubs division, like-for-like sales for the 26 weeks to 3 April were 1.4% ahead of last year. Like-for-like food sales growth of 2.5% is strong and is accompanied by like-for-like wet sales growth of 0.5%. Trading over the whole Easter holiday period, including Easter Sunday and Monday which fell in the second half-year, was good and slightly ahead of last year. Operating margin continues to improve versus last year, in line with our plans.

In Marston's Pub Company, our tenanted and leased pubs division, underlying profit trends have continued to improve with like-for-like profits estimated to be down 4.6%, which compares favourably to the 4.9% decline reported in the AGM statement in January. Approximately 83% of the estate is now let on substantive agreements (including Retail agreements and Tracker agreements) compared to around 80% at the end of the last financial year. We now have 52 pubs on Retail agreements, with performance in line with our expectations.

In Marston's Beer Company, ale volumes were in line with last year, and premium ale volumes increased by 4%. We have recently developed and launched a new cask beer technology - Fastcask - which increases the distribution potential of our brands and which we believe represents a medium term growth opportunity. The recently announced Tetley brewing contract will improve brewing efficiency and contribute to continuing good cost management.

Net debt and cashflow are in line with our expectations.

### New Build Development Programme

Our development plans are on track. We will open 15 new food-led managed pubs this financial year, having opened six to date in Aylesbury, Caterham, Daventry, Ashbourne, Sittingbourne and Newark, and we are currently on site in all of the remaining nine locations. These form part of our plan to open 60 new pubs of this type over a three year period.

Performance in the new openings to date is encouraging with the run-rate for both turnover and returns slightly ahead of our targets, which are £20,000 per week for turnover and 15% EBITDA return on capital.

### Outlook

Although the trading environment remains challenging, we are encouraged by our performance in the first half year. Trading in each of our divisions continues to improve.

Our progress in developing high quality new-build pub-restaurants together with innovation in the operation of tenanted and leased pubs and in brewing provides a solid platform for growth.

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**NOTES TO EDITORS**

- Marston's is a leading independent brewer and pub operator.
- It has an estate of 2,167 pubs situated nationally. The estate comprises 1,676 tenanted or leased pubs, and 491 managed pubs.
- It is the UK's leading brewer of premium cask and premium bottled ales, including Marston's Pedigree and Hobgoblin. The beer portfolio also includes Banks's, Jennings, Wychwood, Ringwood, Brakspear and Mansfield beers.
- Marston's employs over 12,000 people throughout England and Wales.