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**For Immediate Release**

**CIRCLE PEAK CAPITAL NAMED FINALIST IN THE INAUGURAL M&A ADVISOR  
MIDDLE MARKET FINANCING AWARDS - DEAL PARTNERS HONORED**

New York, NY, June 20, 2006 – The M&A Advisor honored Circle Peak Capital and its deal partners as a finalist in the retail category for its Shari’s Management Corp. deal, which closed December 30, 2005.

The award competition honored the top middle market financing deals in 13 different categories during an inaugural tribute and awards dinner held Tuesday, June 20 at The Drake Hotel in Chicago. A panel of judges from graduate schools of business and leading business publications reviewed the entries and selected the winners.

Shari’s Restaurants is the largest full-service casual family restaurant chain in the Pacific Northwest. Circle Peak, its co-investors and management owned 100% of the company at the close.

“Circle Peak Capital believes that collaborative partnerships with talented operating executives throughout the life cycle of our investments best serve our investors over the long-term, by integrating core operating skills into our diligence, strategic planning, and ongoing corporate governance. The partnership with Shari’s management, and our own operating advisor and board member, Kerry Kramp, embodies this philosophy,” said Circle Peak Managing Partner R. Adam Smith.

“We have been truly amazed at the volume of nominations for these awards and the obvious enthusiasm behind them. The response demonstrates the importance of the middle market industry to the overall health of the economy,” says Roger Aguinaldo, Publisher and CEO of The M&A Advisor.



Circle Peak partnered with junior capital partners Carlyle Mezzanine Partners LP, Falcon Investment Advisors LLC, and Sankaty Advisors LLC on the Shari's transaction. The transaction also involved senior capital providers and industry leaders Capital Source Finance LLC, Magnetar Capital, LLC and Wells Fargo Foothill.

Deal advisors included Daniel J. Eisner and Nigel Austin of Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP, and Kerry Kramp, a Circle Peak operating advisor who has more than 30 years of family dining restaurant experience, most recently as CEO of Buffets, Inc. He will be a senior operating advisor and non-executive board member for Shari's. Additional advisors on the Shari's acquisition included KPMG, Marsh, Gaiatech, Foster Pepper, The Hale Group, and Mount Vernon Strategies.

#### Shari's Management:

Shari's Management Corporation (aka Shari's Restaurants) is the leading family-style dining chain in the Pacific Northwest operating approximately 100 units in Oregon, Washington and surrounding states. The Company has established itself as the regional leader by combining quality food and pleasant surroundings with good value, efficient service and 24-hour accessibility. Shari's serves more than 20 million customers annually, and approximately half of its client base dines at the chain at least once a week.

#### M&A Advisor

The M&A Advisor is a newsletter, website, and conference publisher delivering services that provide executives, M&A professionals, and others about the intricate world of buying and selling middle market companies. The company's products include The M&A Advisor monthly newsletter; The M&A Advisor Online (<http://www.maadvisor.com>); The M&A Advisor Conference series (<http://www.maadvisor.com/conference>); The M&A ALERTS e-zine; special reports, software, and publications; and consulting services. For further information, visit <http://www.maadvisor.com>, or call 1-877-99-MERGE (1-877-996-3743).

#### About Shari's Management:

Shari's Management Corporation (aka Shari's Restaurants) is the leading family-style dining chain in the Pacific Northwest operating approximately 100 units in Oregon, Washington and surrounding states. The Company has established itself as the regional leader by combining quality food and pleasant surroundings with good value, efficient service and 24-hour accessibility. Shari's serves more than 20 million customers annually, and approximately half of its client base dines at the chain at least once a week.

#### Circle Peak Capital LLC:



Circle Peak Capital LLC (“Circle Peak”) is a private equity investment firm based in New York, NY that invests in established small- and mid-cap private companies in the consumer sectors. Circle Peak’s principals and advisors are experienced in investing in, managing, operating and advising companies with between \$10 million and \$500 million in sales. The company is dedicated to partnering with proven management, and supplementing management teams where necessary, building profitable and sustainable businesses, and realizing significant returns on capital for its principals, management teams and investors. For more information, go to <http://www.circlepeakcapital.com/> [www.circlepeakcapital.com](http://www.circlepeakcapital.com) or call 646-230-8812.