

COSEQUIN PRESENTS AFTERCARE SPOTLIGHT: HAGYARD INTRODUCES THE PENSIONERS' CLUB

by **Jen Roytz**

Courtesy PaulickReport.com



Dear Birdie with Mason and Canterbury

Ever wonder what happens to our favorite celebrity Thoroughbreds, or their parents, once they retire from not only racing, but breeding? Unless they retire to a highly visible farm like Old Friends, it can be hard to track them down.

Hagyard Equine Medical Institute in Lexington, Ky., one of the largest equine veterinary practices in the world, is celebrating these stalwart producers of the sport's biggest moments through its newly created Pensioners' Club.

As the breeding season ramps up, Hagyard will be honoring pensioned broodmares and stallions with regular features on their social media accounts chronicling their accomplishments and life as a retiree. Each featured retiree will receive a cozy Weatherbeeta turnout blanket featuring the Hagyard logo.

The program is the brainchild of Hagyard veterinarian Dr. Rocky Mason, DVM, whose rounds include regular trips to the farm of iconic racing philanthropist Marylou Whitney to care for her broodmares and pensioners. It's one of his "patients," Dear Birdie, who is the inaugural member of Hagyard's Pensioners' Club.

"I was at Mrs. Whitney's farm and here's Dear Birdie standing in front of me, 29-years-old and I'm giving her vaccinations and floating her teeth," said Mason. "I was so impressed with how

great she looked and that's because Mrs. Whitney values and takes excellent care of all of her horses, even those long past their productive years. Mrs. Whitney has won the Eclipse award and earned other accolades, but we felt she needed more recognition for her responsible horse ownership and breeding.ö

Dam of Belmont Stakes winner Birdstone and Kentucky Oaks winner Bird Town, Dear Birdie was honored as the 2004 Broodmare of the Year. Her bloodlines have proved to be prolific, as Birdstone went on to sire Kentucky Derby winner Mine That Bird and Belmont winner Summer Bird, among other Grade 1 winners.

Her legacy continues to grow, as her granddaughter, Tweeterdini (by Bernardini and out of her daughter, Tweeter) foaled the morning she was presented with her blanket.

Mason, along with fellow Hagyard veterinarian Dr. Ken Canterbury, DVM, who took care of Dear Birdie earlier in her life, presented the mare with her blanket this week at Marylou Whitney Stables. Canterbury also got to check in on Twitterdini and her new foal.

öOur veterinarians will be choosing the horses to honor with blankets, since they are the ones who are so closely involved with the farms and know these horses so well,ö said Allison Rogers of Hagyard. öWe want these farms to get the credit they deserve for caring for these horses so well in their twilight years.ö

Hagyard plans to honor one to two horses a week throughout the winter and will feature each horses' biography and photo on their Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages.

öHagyard has a 14-year tradition of helping the Thoroughbred breeders of Central Kentucky to achieve success in the foaling barn and at the track,ö said Mason. öOver those years we've identified some owners and breeders who stand out as bastions of responsible breeding. We, quite simply, want to offer and show our gratitude in the hopes of solidifying other breeders' roles in ensuring racehorses' forever well-being.ö

For more information on Hagyard's Pensioners' Club or to follow them on their social media channels, go to www.hagyard.com.

Jen Roytz is a marketing, publicity and comprehensive communications specialist based in Lexington, Kentucky. A native of Cleveland, Ohio, her professional focus lies in the fields of Thoroughbred racing, health care, corporate and non-profit marketing. She holds board affiliations with the Make a Wish Foundation, Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance and the Retired

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