

## BREYER OFFERS FOILED AGAIN MODEL

When it comes to things like government intelligence, the location of oil deposits, or even the formula for Coca-Cola, it's all very top secret. So too are the decisions of the famed Breyer Co. which proclaims it makes "the world's finest model horses."

That's why when it was announced Tuesday morning, June 16, that Breyer had made a model of Foiled Again, the world's richest Standardbred, Heather Vitale, considered the catalyst behind the idea, displayed her excitement by simply proclaiming: "Yay!"

"I talked to Moira (Fanning, director of publicity and event operations for The Hambletonian Society/Breeders Crown) and even though I knew (trainer) Ron Burke knew and that the owners knew, I didn't even discuss it with them and they didn't discuss it with me," said Vitale. "Everything was really hush hush."

Fanning said the idea would never have come to fruition without Vitale's enthusiasm.



"Nobody in harness racing could get it done, but she kept at it until Breyer agreed to do it," said Fanning. "It was only her."

Based in Delaware, Vitale, known for co-hosting the TV shows Post Time and PA Harness Week, which showcases racing in Delaware and Pennsylvania, wanted to find a way to immortalize Foiled Again, who has career earnings of more than \$7 million. She relayed her sentiments to Ron Burke, the trainer and co-owner of Foiled Again.

"I saw Ron Burke at the Meadowlands one night in the spring of 2014 and I told him I loved this horse so much," remembered Vitale. "He has brought so much joy to the fans of the sport. I told him I thought the horse should be immortal. I said I didn't know what I was going to do to make it happen, but this is a horse that decades from now, when they hear the name Foiled Again, they would know how spectacular he was."

Vitale said she was in her production office a short time later and looked at some Breyer horses she owned.

"All of a sudden it hit me, oh my gosh, Foiled Again!" she said.

Vitale said she went to the Breyer website and filled out the standard request form, but her response was the standard "thank you for your submission." She then tried to search out the company's

marketing person and also asked all of her contacts if they had any connections with Breyer.

"I figured they were not going to just listen to the chick from Delaware who loves harness racing," said Vitale. "So I started posting on Facebook for fans to push it. Go to the Breyer Facebook page and on Twitter and tell them you want to see Foiled Again as a Breyer."

Vitale said she was astounded by the response.

"There were so many posts. I remember trying to count them one day," she said. "In December, they contacted me that they were considering it. I knew it wasn't because I had written them a bunch of letters; it was because his fans pushed and pushed on social media."

Breyer wanted photos of Foiled Again done immediately, so Fanning enlisted photographer John Sanucci to go to Burke's base at Gaitway Farm in New Jersey on a bitter December morning.

"I had John go over on a freezing cold morning and take pictures," remembered Fanning. "I never told him or anybody why. It was a very top-secret thing."

Breyer has done Standardbreds in the past, including one of Hambletonian, which is the only custom model made. Other models include Adios, Strike Out, Laag, Niatross and Dan Patch. A sulky can be purchased separately.



Heather Vitale and Foiled Again.

Vitale offered to raise funds so Breyer could have a Foiled Again model made, but she said the company did it on their own. The model is Breyer's generic pacer with Foiled Again's markings. A launch party for the model will take place Saturday, July 4, at The Downs at Mohegan Sun Pocono, when Foiled Again is scheduled to start in the Ben Franklin Pace.

Fanning said the Hambletonian Society has purchased a smaller "stablemates" version of Foiled Again, which the Meadowlands will give away on Hambletonian Day on Aug. 8.

"I may have been the initial push, but thankfully, so many people love this horse, but I could not have done it without Moira and I could not have done it without the fans," concluded Vitale.—By Gordon Waterstone