

Partnerships

Annabel Boshier and Mary Berry

When a celebrity cook's youngest daughter spotted good business potential in their secret family recipe for salad dressing, the Mary Berry & Daughter range was born

Annabel Boshier



The whole family was wild about mum's salad dressing and friends were always asking for our secret recipe, so I thought: "let's bottle it and share it". I saved up, went down to the East End of London, filled the car with bottles, then started making small batches in mum's kitchen. My father would help me hammer in the corks.

We've worked together for 11 years but I first appeared as mum's assistant on her television show, *Afternoon Plus*, when I was five. I was the chief taster for ice cream and cakes for her books—a childhood dream. Mum's mother is 100 in July and still makes the Original Family Recipe Salad Dressing for us. This is a family business; we all feel deeply about it.

We often generate ideas about new sauces and products around the kitchen table. When we disagree, we agree to disagree, but it can be anything from new marketing campaigns to what soup we're going to have for lunch. I think the hardest challenge was proving that I am a capable businesswoman.

Mum and I are both driven, we live for each day. I get my enterprising spirit from her—she has always been an inspiration, she's achieved so much in her life. But there are certain business leaders who have made an impact on me, in particular Richard Branson.

Mum and I both love a good challenge. When we take time out we both love to be by the sea with a shrimping net and bags for picking mussels.

"I get my enterprising spirit from mum—she has always been an inspiration to me"

Sometimes we have different ideas about new products, because I'm thinking of a younger market, but we eventually meet half-way. I admire mum's strength and endurance and her ability to remember and tell good jokes—though it's irritating that she weighs less than me.

Knowing the company has gone from a simple idea to a very successful financial venture is a delight. The business is based on a high-quality product and it's much loved by our customers—hence the continuing and significant growth in sales.

I think our main strengths are our positive outlook, confidence in our brand and strong family values. At times it feels like we devote our time 24/7 to this business. I've spent years working every weekend at

agricultural shows back-to-back. Last year, I spent a lot of time in the US attending some of the main food shows. It was worth it—the Hollandaise and Béarnaise sauces are now being sold throughout the US.

We have developed into an efficient business operation and have a strong team behind us. But like many other women, I am used to multi-tasking, so I'm successfully juggling work and motherhood.

Mary Berry



My husband has always said my salad dressing is the best ever and there was quite a lot of interest from people who attended my AGA workshops. Then, in 1991, Annabel suggested we make it and sell it from home. The Mary Berry & Daughter range was officially launched in 1994.

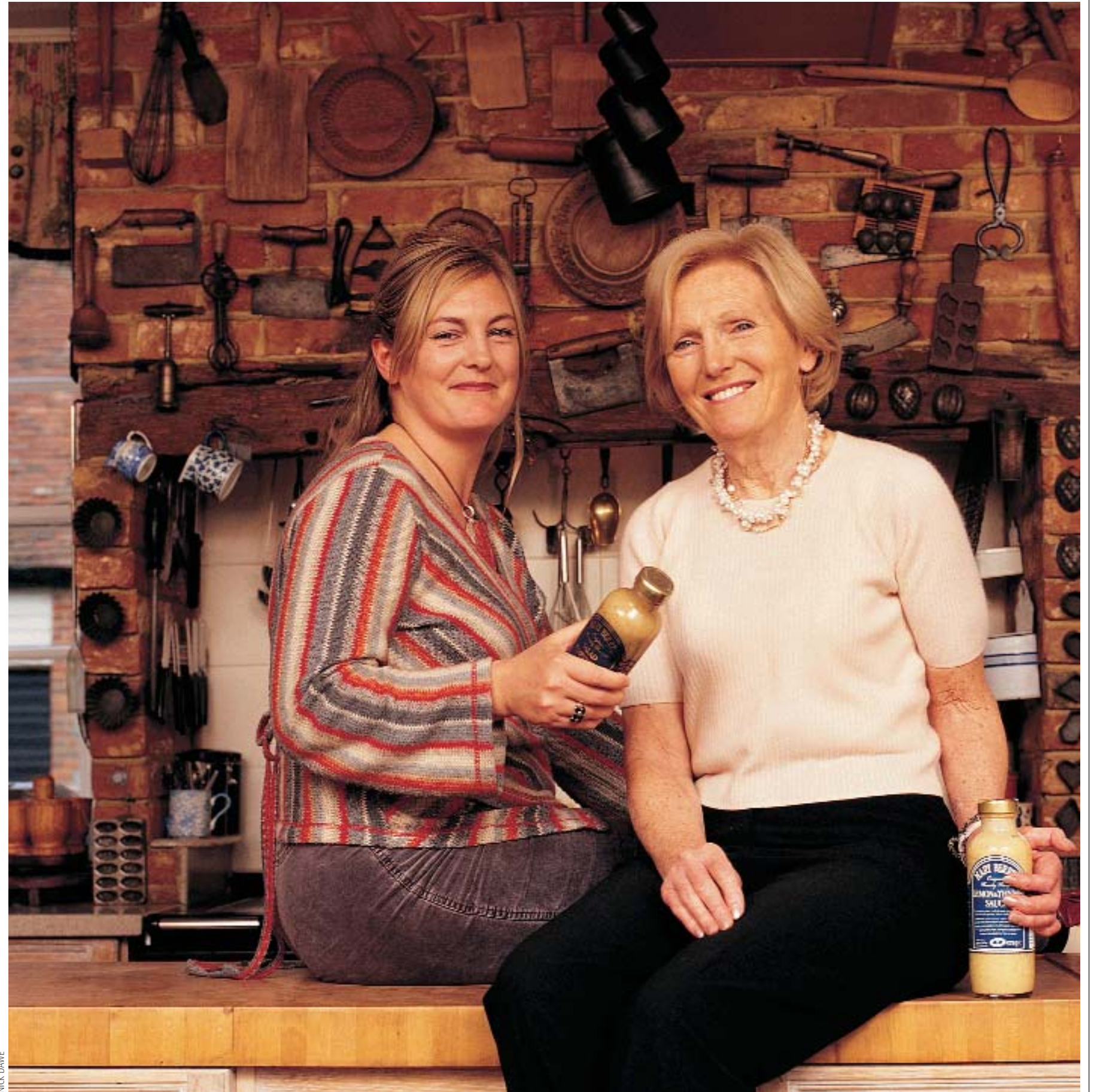
We're both enthusiastic, love good food and creating the best recipe we can. Annabel is wonderful at promoting products—her enthusiasm never wanes. I do most of the development of the recipes and control the technical side.

We share the same beliefs and that is wonderful for a mother and daughter to have. We also have the same passion for the products so both have really high standards. We differ in that Annabel wants it done today and I am happy to see it through gently. We rarely disagree—if we do it is because Annabel has a more flamboyant nature so she is keen to run with a PR or marketing idea. I am more cautious and am always keeping an eye on the budget.

Annabel has a wonderful fresh, young approach. She has a great flair for design and amazing stamina. She travelled young and has an exciting life full of different stories and dreams. I think this is wonderful—she brings this energy to work. She is inclined to leave things to the last minute though and doesn't always dot the i's and cross the t's—that is left for mum to do.

I always hoped that Annabel would want to be involved with one of the aspects of our cooking business. She has never been fazed by anything—she takes every challenge. There are no specific hours for this business—sometimes we are at full pelt, sometimes we have more time to develop new ideas but the general running of the business ticks along daily.

My favourite dressing is the Salad Dressing because it's the one I have been making forever.



NICK DAWE