

Words for Babette, from Darren Murley

I had the pleasure of meeting both Andrew and Babette as a potential new customer for a fantastic range of cookware that my company had launched back in 2008.

We wanted to talk to key cookshops about the proposition and during my initial conversation with Andrew it was immediately clear that a new range would not be listed without being thoroughly road tested!

It was Andrew that suggested I presented the products in person but not at the store – at home where Babette could also see the new products and give feedback and insight.

It was therefore with slight trepidation (Andrew and Babette had a fearsome reputation for seeing through a salesman's patter) that I presented myself at the family home in Reigate with frying pans in hand.

Over the next three hours we spent a little bit of time discussing the features and benefits of the cookware but then had the most delightful discussion over a hearty breakfast that Babette prepared for us using the cookware.

What was clear to me was Babette was as interested in the character, background and personality of both me and the company as much as the products and I have taken this lesson forward into every business relationship I have had since.

We left as friends (and Art of Living became a very successful customer) and ever since when we have met on many, many occasions, Babette always asked after my family by name.

Fast forward 10 years and on a very personal note my mother was very poorly, battling with cancer herself. She was to eventually lose her fight for life but Babette regularly contacted me to ask how we were doing even though she was now going through her own battle.

Only a couple of months ago, after getting an update from Andrew about Babette's worsening condition, I was so pleased that she took my call where I was able to share with her how much her words of comfort and strength at such a difficult time for me helped keep me going and how her own bravery was now such an inspiration.

That was the last time I was able to have a conversation with Babette who truly touched my life and will be greatly missed.