





AM Crawford and partner Emili Fox were at university when they landed their first big job, a renovation of Crawford's sister's house in Avalon.

Keeping it in the family is an architec tural tradition - English architect Sir Richard Rogers and Harry Seidler both built dwellings for their parents - and it is often the only way a graduate gets his

Despite the blood-ties, it wasn't a shoo-in for Crawford and Fox. They still had to pitch to the clients. Initially, Georgina and Terry Crawford-Smith were reluctant to hire a relative - an inexperienced one at that.

"I knew it was risky because of our relationship," says Georgina. "But Sam sat us down and persuaded us he would work really hard. He argued that he because it is rare that somebody is given an opportunity without any experience. We thought we couldn't lose."

Crawford-Smiths liked what they saw. The '50s weatherboard house was

blessed with a perrect north-easterny set it mad a quanty of its own mat we aspect and situated high on a gently sloping block of land containing three magnificent eucalypts. It had a casual "ror. Nearly all the internal walls were

uneven floors, crooked walls and dry rot in the studwork, the windows at the the kitchen from the entertaining rooms.

"We were trying to bring light and space into what is essentially a small



front turned the cottage into a hot box. would put in a lot more effort and hours 
The walls were paper-thin, none of the doors or windows closed properly and the house had no connection to the rear

Although builders had told the More importantly, when the design duo delivered their sketch plans the Crawford-Smiths to tear it down, Crawford and Fox, however, were taken with the dimensions of the "box". "We blessed with a perfect north-easterly felt it had a quality of its own that we

knocked out to create a space that flows But it had problems. Apart from the from the living and dining areas to the bathroom to the other two bedrooms.

The cladding, floors and ceilings were torn off and replaced with rough-sawn boards, knotty cypress timber and plaster-board. Sliding doors in Western red cedar replaced the painted timber frames. The front deck was enlarged and a pergola was built to shield the facade. The rear exterior wall was opened up with more sliding doors to create a continuous flow from the front to the back and out to the garden.

Only one of the three bedrooms remains in its original location. A main bedroom with ensuite was built as a rear addition, connected to the rest of the house by a corridor that runs past a new

house," says Crawford. "When you are inside with the doors open, you feel like

The parents' retreat wraps around the paved courtyard. "The rear addition isn't standard," says Crawford. "All the windows above the doors had to be made on site. That added to the cost of the building, but we felt it was worth it because there are no mullions, just an angle."

The slightly raw feeling of the building's cladding and the corrugated overhang above the front door is echoed in the kitchen. Here, Crawford and Fox exposed the sandwich layers of the pine plywood joinery, "We could have used cheaper MDF and put the laminate on the outside but we didn't want it too pretty. We wanted the kitchen to be a bit chunky," says Crawford.

Joinery is used elsewhere in the house to solve acoustic problems. Wherever possible, Crawford and Fox placed cupboards between living areas and bedrooms, or between bedrooms, to act as a sound baffle.

Crawford and Fox worked closely together on the project, "One of us would come up with an idea and the other would build from it," says Crawford.

Crawford says the builder, Peter McTaggart, soon realised they were new kids on the block and helped them out rather than taking advantage of that. "He suggested changes that made sense and saved the client money," says Crawford. "It was great having an experienced and trustworthy builder."

Story by HELEN GREENWOOD Photography by BRETT BOARDMAN



separate the dining/living areas from the kitchen, which opens through bi-fold doors (by Windoor, ph 9623 2911) to the backyard. The hoop-pine joinery is by Meg Tuckett Interiors, ph 9999 4185, and the walls are painted in Dulux White opal. Dining tables and chairs from Anibou; lounge chairs and coffee table from Norman & Quaine. 2. The veranda is made from Canadian yellow cedar and the balustrade and rail are painted in Pascal's Diamond Mine and Solomon. 3. The kitchen's hoop-pine plywood and veneer is by Claremont Joiner, ph 9790 2344. 4. The entrance stairs are covered by

CustomOrb from BHP. 5. The main bedroom's frame is recycled blackbutt timber from a bridge in Victoria, supplied by Able Timbers, ph 9477 3355. The deck is Blackbutt from Barrenjoey Timber, ph 9997 8444. 6. The walls of the main bedroom are painted in Dulux Phantom Blue. 7. Sam Crawford and Emili Fox. 8. The glass mosaics are from Pazzotti, ph 9327 1850, and the Rose White tiles from Tilecraft, ph 9737 9300. Architects: Sam Crawford and Emili Fox, ph 9280 3555. Builder: Peter McTaggart,





10 domain SMH February 18, 1999 SMH February 18, 1999 domain 11