

Among the designers of the fashion collection were Bon Gavino-Gautier, chair of the Uniform Manufacturers Organization and Designers Association (UNIMODA), Jamie Espadilla of The Jaime Collection, Curitthy Manzanero of Shelmed Cottage Industries, Emeretha Daniel of Nooks Co Ltd, and Anthony Cruz Legarda, featured designer based in New York and the fashion show's creative director.

“Bagong Habi: Salinlahi is all about making new, innovative and world-class textiles and a showcase of designs for different facets of life. It is synergistic—it was made possible through the collaboration of individuals who are passionate about our own culture, natural resources, and great talent in manufacturing,” Legarda said.

“Bagong Habi: Salinlahi aims to iron out all misconstrued perceptions towards indigenous fabrics that they are impractical, itchy, uncomfortable and drab,” said DOST-PTRI director Dr. Carlos Tomboc.

Meanwhile, according to Ms. Nora Mangalindan, R&D Team Head at DOST-PTRI, the tropical fabrics used by the designers in their collections were enzyme-treated to eliminate their itchiness. The fabrics, in addition, are no longer stiff, have a softer drape, and can easily comply with any design. Washing will be easier, too, as they no longer require dry-cleaning.

“The clothes are surprisingly light and comfortable. I love their feel. I am really not a fan of *barong* but these (barongs) are stylish, unique and perfect for those who want to be fashionistas for a change,” said Miguel Masigan, one of the night’s models.

“They are very comfortable, trendy, and not itchy. I feel good wearing them. It is so like *me*,” quipped Veronica De Castro, another model. (
By George Robert Valencia III)