

Martin Bautista brings sexy back to Cinderella

Christopher De Venecia - The Philippine Star ⓘ

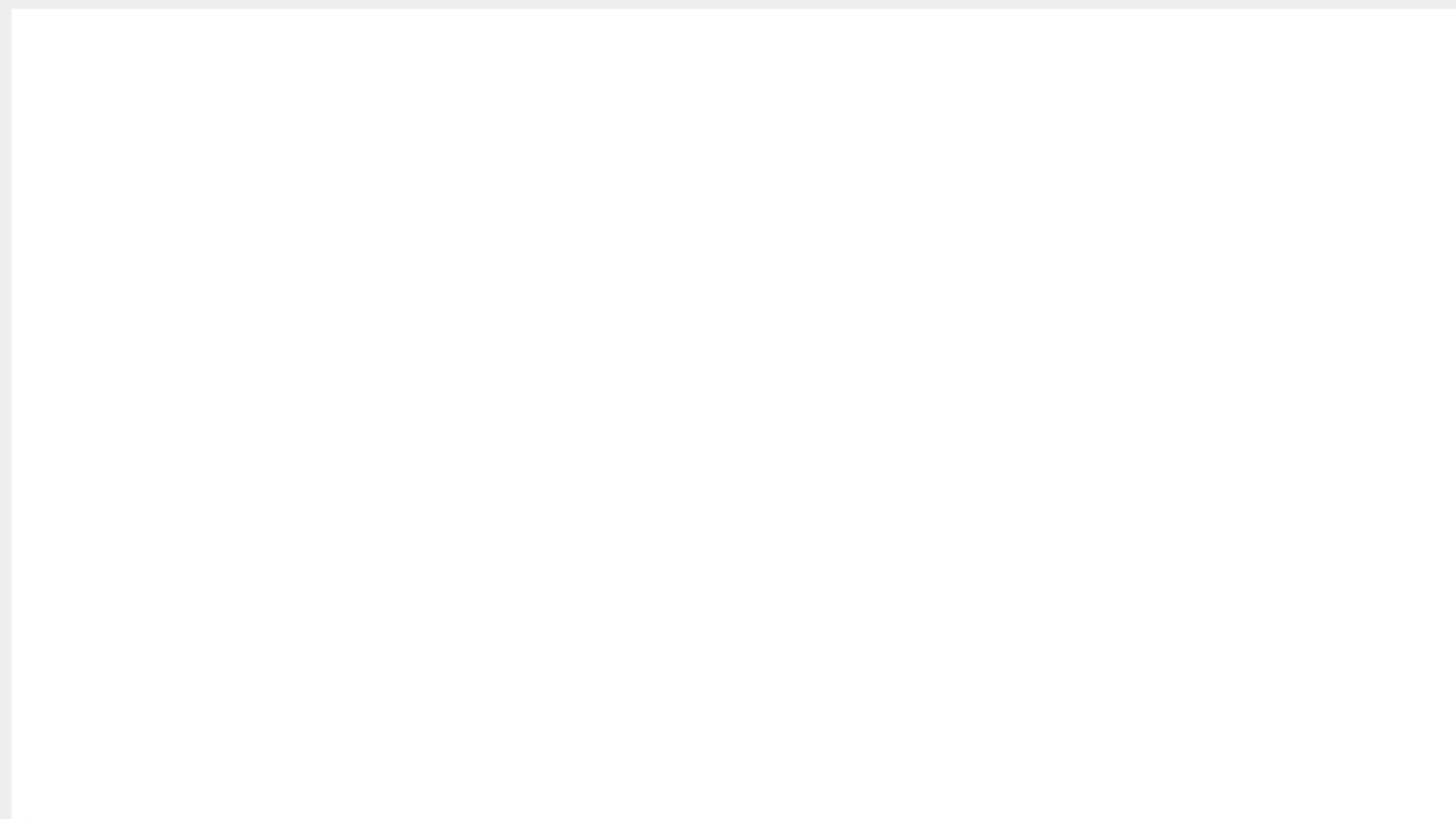
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MANILA, Philippines - When a classic makeover moment enters the equation like those youâ€™ve see on *Oprah* or *The Tyra Banks Show*, or dare I say it, *How Do I Look?*, you canâ€™t help but notice and root for the underdog to wow the peanut gallery and drive it straight home. Itâ€™s an age-old story, dating back to Julia Roberts in *Pretty Woman*, Laney Boggs in *Sheâ€™s All That*, to even Miley Cyrus in, well, the recent VMAs. Okay, maybe not the last one. But in an age when foreign brands, made-to-order, and online retail have just about changed the landscape of Philippine fashion completely, itâ€™s about time that long-time retail brand Cinderella decided to get its long-overdue makeover and â€™git with the program â€™ for starters, via partnering with one of the Philippinesâ€™ most sought-after young fashion designers, Martin Bautista.

Itâ€™s no secret that his name is synonymous with the relaxed garment construction and drapery that most women today have come to love. With clients spanning celebrities, debutantes, socialites, businesswomen and everyday women, Bautistaâ€™s no-frills, signature jersey constructions have become the kind of second skin or body armor of choice for women who like to stand out during the day, and especially during cocktail hour. It is this same verve and keen aesthetic that Bautista brings to the table as part of Cinderellaâ€™s efforts to re-establish itself as a pioneer in fashion retail.

â€™s very talented, and he listens,â€™ shares Cinderella vice chairman Therese Coronel-Santos about the young designer. â€™From the business side, we always tell him that designing is not always designing per se. Ready-to-wear or coming out with a capsule collection is entirely different.â€™ Coronel-Santosâ€™ realistic approach to fashion is something that meshes with Bautistaâ€™s view on how clothes should flatter and have no particular prejudice as to who is able to wear them. He enthuses, â€™Women today are so different. Theyâ€™re much more in control and that amazes me. This collection is dedicated to them â€™ to enhance the quality of their everyday lives.â€™



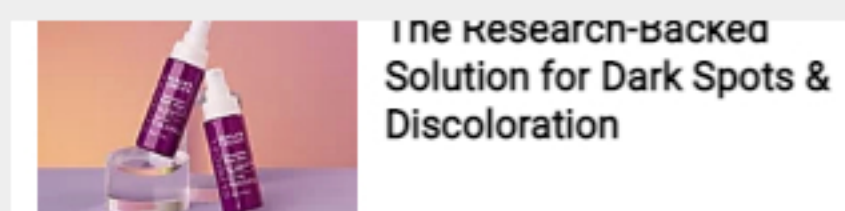
Coronel-Santos, who has taken a shine to the designer for his effervescence and professionalism, adds, â€™When Martin presented his prototypes and came up with the actual samples for the collection, we didnâ€™t really get the â€™model-modelsâ€™ to try it.â€™ Instead, they got real people, real women â€™ â€™people from the office,â€™ she adds. â€™Iâ€™m not young anymore but I can wear his clothes. Even an 18- or 20-year-old or a middle-aged person can wear his clothes. Thatâ€™s the kind of talent we need in a designer. I think Martinâ€™s on the right track.â€™

During last weekâ€™s launch of both the Martin Bautista x Cinderella pre-holiday 2013 collection and Cinderellaâ€™s Alabang Town Center flagship store, it was evident that this was the kind of effort that would rather walk the walk, than talk, in the same breath that Bautistaâ€™s clothes leave lots to the imagination and room for the wearer to interpret them according to her own personal style. He describes the Martin Bautista woman as someone who is spontaneous, smart, and a realist â€™ â€™the type who loves to wear her dresses more than once, yet manages to make it look different every time.â€™ His collection was everything that it promised to be â€™ contemporary, timeless, and proof that in most cases, less is definitely more.

The way Bautistaâ€™s clothes draped on both the mannequins and several of the women seen at the event, including event host Cloie Concepcion, seemed to synergize with the look and feel of the new interior design concept that Cinderella has embarked upon, in collaboration with Hong Kong-based international retail design consultant Red Goodss. To keep itself at par with its competitors, Cinderella chief executive officer Arthur G. Coronel tapped the group to help set up a new identity for the brand that will continue on into the next decade.

Terry Waterhouse, director of Red Goodss, said that Cinderella had to â€™create a new persona â€™ they had to reinvent themselves.â€™ He pointed to the â€™Câ€™ in Cinderellaâ€™s logo and said that while reinvention was a real challenge, â€™C, apart from the brand, also stands for change.â€™ With regards to the capsule collection, he knew historically that the retail brand was famous for collaborating with Philippine fashion designers over the years and had established a very good private label for fashion design. â€™One of the things I wanted to do is make the store come alive using local fashion designers. Thereâ€™s a huge opportunity here,â€™ he says. Seeing the confluence of both the younger and older set at the launch, and the kind of confidence that both the clothes and this change enables, consider this long-overdue makeover for Cinderella well underway.

The Martin Bautista x Cinderella pre-holiday 2013 collection is available at both the Glorietta and Alabang Town Center branches. For more info, follow them on Facebook at Cinderella.ph, or Twitter and Instagram at @cinderella_ph.



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