

# Terno



*Terno of black illusion tulle and applied lace*

## Terno

It has been called a masterpiece, a classic, a national treasure. Terno: from the Spanish word meaning "to match." It was the handiwork of not just one couturier but a coming together of the innovations of many. The Filipino terno alludes to the matching of blouse and skirt, joined at the waist to form a one-piece creation, with both bodice and skirt made of the same material.

But the seamlessness is only one of its inventive features. The sleeveless are upright, flat against the shoulders like clipped butterfly wings. Its low neckline contours the bosom. The whole is nipped at the waist to let fall a shapely skirt that is rounded, flared or trailed at the hem.



*Butterfly sleeve of the terno*

A peak achievement in the continuum of the Filipino national costume, the terno is what became of the original baro't saya, transformed into the Maria Clara, which, in turn, was metamorphosed into the traje de mestiza.

Gone is the panuelo which became cumbersome when the sleeves were clipped like butterfly wings. So, too, went the tapis, to allow the skirt to flirt with the whims of fashion. Skirt draping, shirring, folding, pleating, and layering were just some of the fashionable touches.

Pioneering fashion designer like Pacita Longos, Juanita Roa, and Ramon Valera innovated on the terno and their designs elevated this national costume to a world-class high fashion statement.

source: <http://www.filipinoheritage.com/costumes/terno.htm>

### The Ins and Outs of the Terno

The *terno* should be distinguished from such other Filipino dresses as the informal *balintawak* and the *patadyong*. Lacking the *terno's* svelte sophistication, these rural costumes are worn mainly by barefoot dancers of the *tinikling* and by carabao-riding maidens in the landscapes of Amorsolo. The *terno*, on the other hand, goes with the stately grace of the *rigodon de honor*, *flores de mayo* processions, coronation nights and the Malacañang Palace.

The *terno*, as we know it today, evolved from an ensemble called *baro't saya* (blouse and skirt). Traditionally, it consisted of four parts — the *camisa* (a short blouse with sleeves), the *alampay* or *pañuelo* (a type of shawl worn over the *camisa*), the *saya* (a long skirt) and the *tapis* (a short overskirt wrapped around the *saya*).

Contrary to the observations of foreigners during the last century, the veil was not an intrinsic part of the native dress. It was worn only to church, but since our female ancestors were a pious lot, they were often seen with their heads covered. The church-going *colegiala* of the 18<sup>th</sup> century wore a thick *baro't saya* with long narrow sleeves, a shroud-like veil and an *estampita* (saint's picture) hanging from her neck to deliver her from evil. By the 1750's, the *colegiala's* mother was wearing a large cape-like *pañuelo* and a wide floor-length *saya*.

At the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the *terno* had acquired the features that were to distinguish it until the end of the colonial era. In 1803, Fr. Joaquin Martinez de Zuñiga noted that the Tagalog women wore "a kind of little shift, which scarcely reaches the navel." He described the *alampay* as a "handkerchief loosely covering the neck" and the *saya* as a "white linen cloth (which) encircle the body and is fastened by a button at the waist. They throw over this a colored stuff, manufactured by the inhabitants of Panay" — undoubtedly the *tapis*. "Over all is worn a mantle, for the most part black, which covers the body from head to foot" — probably the view from the confessional.

Source: Roces, Alfredo. (Ed). (1978). "The Ins and Outs of the Terno," *Filipino Heritage: the Making of a Filipino Nation* Vol. 10, pp. 2536-2541. <<http://www.kasal.com/rr/archfili/archfili27.html>>

### The Fashion History of the Philippine Dress

THE WOMEN'S CLOTHING PHILIPPINE TERNO - In the historical account of the Filipino women's dress, the most prominent among them is the TERNO. Prior to this, ordinary women wore the "kimona" and "saya" at home. This clothing ensemble evolved from the different international influences such as the exotic Hindu-Chinese race and many others.

But documents have it that it originally consisted of four parts - the camisa (a short blouse with sleeves), the "alampay" or "panuelo" ( a type of shawl worn over the camisa), the saya (long skirt) and the tapis (a short overskirt worn over the saya). A modified design, however, would differentiate the Mestizas (half- Spanish women) from the lass who fall way behind. The former would omit the "tapis" which was then considered as a garment for servants. From the Traje de Mestiza, the terno had notable transformations, which later came to be called as the PARES, longer skirt of narrow width then to MASCOTA which was similar to the PARES, except from its flowing skirt. As fashionable as these outfits were the "Panyo" (kerchief) worn over the head and neck and the "Mantilla" (shawl of varied cuts and embroidery) which replaced the widely-used oversized shawls. Perhaps, the all-too-familiar term Maria Clara is what we are familiar with among the variations of the Terno. It was named after the heroine in Rizal's novel, Noli Me Tangere. This terno was usually made of satin or Deduyo pinapanuelo and with scalloped trimmings at the wrists.



SPANISH ERA - When the Spaniards ruled over the country, one of their three missions was to spread Christianity. With the advent of religiosity and veneration of the Blessed-Virgin, the Filipino women's clothing transformed to that of conservatism. Showing off certain parts of the body like one's foot or leg, was a great taboo. Coined from the Spanish term for "matching," the TERNO was composed literally of two parts, the lower and the upper part.

Modern innovations in the 20th century produced the siete CUCHILLOS (seven knives) which, as the name implies was composed of seven layers fitted together to create a whole skirt. Slowly the panels were reduced to five, CINCO PANOS, three, TRES PANOS and down to two, DOS PANOS. Since the Colas (firm support for the skirt) rather posted as an inconvenience, the shortened dove tail was created and was called LA PALOMA, meaning "the dove". The tail of the terno was still in use until the early years of 1930s when its popularity started to wane.

Source: <http://www.mybarong.com/womensrtw.html>

Ref.: <http://www.seasite.niu.edu/tagalog/Cynthia/costumes/terno.htm>