

KTT Strawberry Switch Review

-ThereminGoat, 01/30/2021

If you have just clicked onto this after having viewed my mail day posts on my Instagram or Twitter from earlier this week, there's a nonzero chance you are a bit disappointed in me. Thankfully, I'm not necessarily shy of disappointing people I feel beholden to due to my lovely parents and actually have a couple of reasons for doing this review. First of all, the biggest reason that I chose to review these switches over the SP Star Magic Girls, Dragonfruits, or even the Penguin switches I teased from earlier this week is simply because I wanted to. Secondly, while I was messing around with my other switches that I have received in the mail over this last week, I was quite honestly taken aback by not only the performance of these switches, but also a neat historical tidbit that I picked up along the way and wanted to get to share both of these things with you all. Ultimately, in a roundabout way, I'm just going to blame you all for me doing this review.

Before I do launch into review, though, I will say that KTT is a brand of switches still widely unknown to people outside of the few Discord servers that I do frequent and have discussions on often. While these switches from KTT are beginning to gain some real popularity, and I have a feeling that they will soon explode onto the scene much in the same fashion as SP Star's lineup has, I did not stumble across them on my own. Like many of the newer, fancier switches that I come across in this day and age, they have been brought to my attention or proxied for me by a few really kind and caring individuals who are awesome enough to continue to support me and my collection. So, even though I have a long list of close friends, social media followers, and even Patreon patrons to thank for each and every post that I am able to do, I want to dedicate my thanks this week to those people who are helping me stay on the cutting edge of switches coming out of China each month. Even without stating your names, you know who you are and I wouldn't be able to bring a review like this to the table if it wasn't for you all.



Figure 1: One of them also sent a ton of other colorful switches alongside the KTT Strawberries that I get to share with you guys in the coming weeks!

Switch Background

So, I'm going to be honest and break your hearts yet again to let you know that this section will most likely *not* be what you are expecting in an ultra-deep dive into the history of KTT Strawberries with prices, dates, drama, a visit from Carmen Sandiego, etc. The reason for this, quite simply, is that I am not entirely aware of where these switches came from nor their history given that they are directly from a private, QQ-only China based groupbuy. However, before you choose to skip yet another section of this review, I will instead go through the entire history of KTT switches as understood by a westerner who can't read a single thing posted on ZFrontier.

The beginnings of my experience with KTT switches came rather unceremoniously via short notice from one of the individuals that I had routinely proxied switches from China with. Being notified in early to mid-October of 2020, I was made aware of a 'new switch brand' out of China being sold under the name 'KTT' which we had initially jokingly assumed was associated with TTC at time of purchase. Shortly after agreeing to purchase these ridiculously cheap switches at something like \$0.30 per switch, I was presented with the first KTT switches to breach the western half of the world: KTT Sea Salts and KTT Cloud Blues.



Figure 2: Original mailday post of mine from November 1st, 2020 featuring KTT Cloud Blues (Top Left) and Sea Salts (Front Middle).

Arriving with a weird 'mountainous looking', single character logo on the nameplate and Kailh-esque clamshell top housings, I will admit that I was expecting the quality and performance of these switches to parallel their initial price. Much to my surprise, however, they *didn't* feel or perform cheaply. Instead of a scratchy and wobbly performance like I would have expected, these switches were surprisingly smooth and had a noticeable, but definitely within the realm of reasonable stem wobble to them. In fact, I was so inspired by the performance of these switches that I ended up giving them both scorecards that have left them in the 8th and 11th best linear switch slots even to this current day where I've got 26 linear scorecards as of the time of writing this section. With such a great performance, and their biggest knock only being the clamshell style housings, I was hoping it was only a matter of time before more KTT switches would come down the pipeline for me to get to experience.

Living up to this hope, the following months after I was first introduced to the Sea Salts and Cloud Blues netted releases or release announcements for a pair of other KTT switches. Only a few short

weeks after my first KTT mail day, I ended up receiving the next set of KTT switches to make their way to the US – KTT Red Wines. Coming in two variants, the first set of Red Wines I received featured a clear top housing and RGB-like bottom housing, whereas the later version I received came in an all-white housing reminiscent of Gateron Merlot switches. Both of the Red Wines, like the ones before them, also came featuring clamshell style top housings as well.

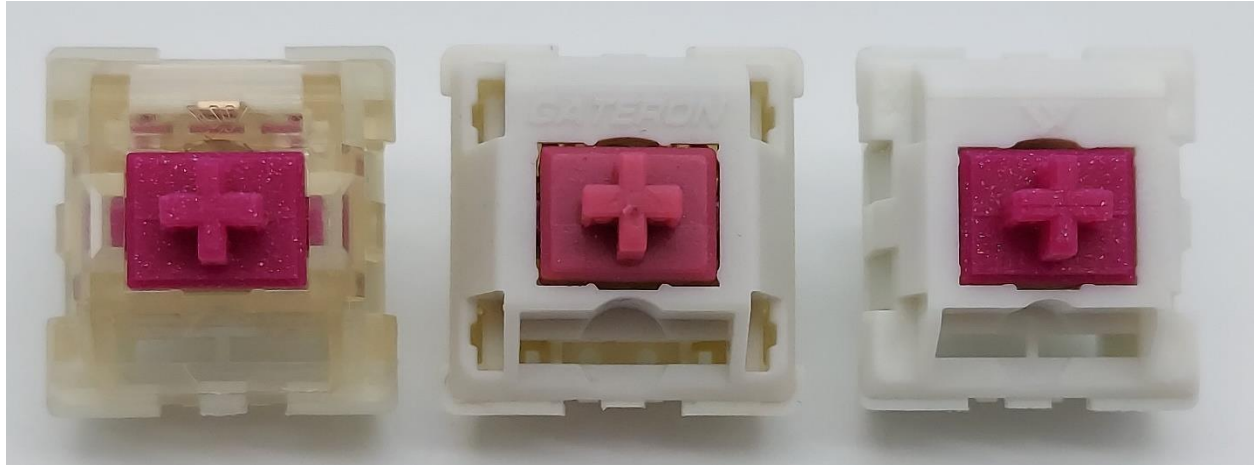


Figure 3: Gateron Merlot (Middle) compared to both versions of KTT Red Wines. (Note the sparkly stems on the KTT Red Wines!)

Much like with seemingly all modern switch releases, after getting my taste at my first couple of KTT switches, though, I began to be quickly outpaced by the flurry of releases following the Red Wines. Seemingly at an exponentially faster rate with each release, KTT quickly released KTT Roses, Golds, Holy Dogs, Grapefruits, and then eventually the Strawberries, which inspired this initial articles. While each of these were released at various points in the last few months and reached different levels of exposure in western facing markets, one thing that was certainly noteworthy over this progression of time is that KTT transitioned to a 4-Pin top housing at some point, pivoting away from their original clamshell style design in exchange for a slightly higher price point.

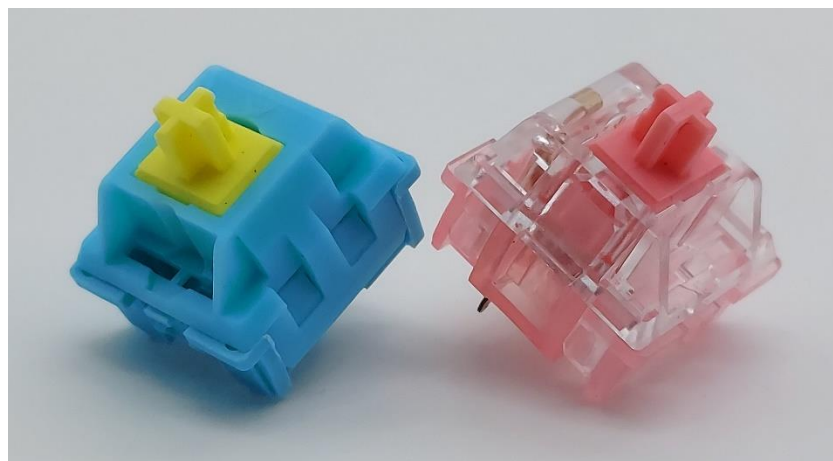


Figure 4: KTT Clamshell top housing (Left) and 4-Pin top housing (Right).

Most recently, in mid-January of 2021, an Eastern facing groupbuy for KTT Matcha switches were announced, making the all-green, 4-pin top housing switches the latest of releases for KTT as of the time of writing this article. In the midst of this flurry of releases, though, it does appear that KTT has been even more busy with eastern-exclusive releases of other switches that I've not heard much about.

Seemingly without names that I nor any of my proxies can find at the current moment, I can only simply suffice to know of their existence via the following photograph. Ideally, if I had more editing time and less studying to do this weekend, I'd turn this into a funny 'Wanted' style poster.



Figure 5: KTT Matcha picture from the QQ-exclusive Groupbuy.



Figure 6: Picture of unnamed, KTT branded switches from ZFrontier.

As a final note of historical interest regarding these switches prior to actually getting into a performance review of the KTT Strawberries, during writing I was made aware that KTT was not only short for 'Kang Teng Te', but that this name translates into English as 'Content'. While this particular translation likely doesn't mean anything to anyone outside of rather diligent switch collectors, 'Content' was one of the first complete set of 'random knockoff nameplate' switches that I was able to collect back when I first got into collecting switches. So, while the nameplates and molds have certainly changed over the last couple of years, much like with Huano's recent resurfacing, I'm super excited to get to draw a connection between 'old' modern Content switches that have been sitting in my testers for some time now and 'new' KTT ones that I will be slowly adding in time.



Figure 7: Picture of Content family of switches with two different top housing variations.

KTT Strawberry Switch Performance

Appearance

While it is definitely a bit difficult to see when the switch is together in one piece, the KTT Strawberries actually come with a completely clear top housing featuring a completely blank nameplate free of the 'mountain' logo that is present on other KTT switches. The bottom housing, which makes up the entirety of the color of the switches is a slightly cloudy, pink lemonade shade of pink that, when together in a complete switch, tints the top housing a similar shade of pink. Differing from both the top and bottom housings, the stems in these switches are almost a grapefruit pink shade, having a slightly more orange-heavy hue than the bottom housings. Inside, these come with fairly 'normal' looking gold-plated spring around 62g in bottoming out weight with fairly tightly wound coils.

Working in reverse order for the housing components and their more particular identifying marks, the KTT Strawberry bottom housings come in plate-mount only style featuring two very large, smooth,

and shiny circles in place of where PCB mount legs would be on the switches. Additionally, on the bottom side, a large mold marking number is printed sideways between the switch pins as can be seen below. From the top side view of the bottom housing, there are no particularly interesting internal features, though the inside lip of the top housing is particularly noteworthy for the ‘slanted’ internal corners on the front side of the switch, giving the LED slot a more trapezoidal shape than is commonly seen in other switches.

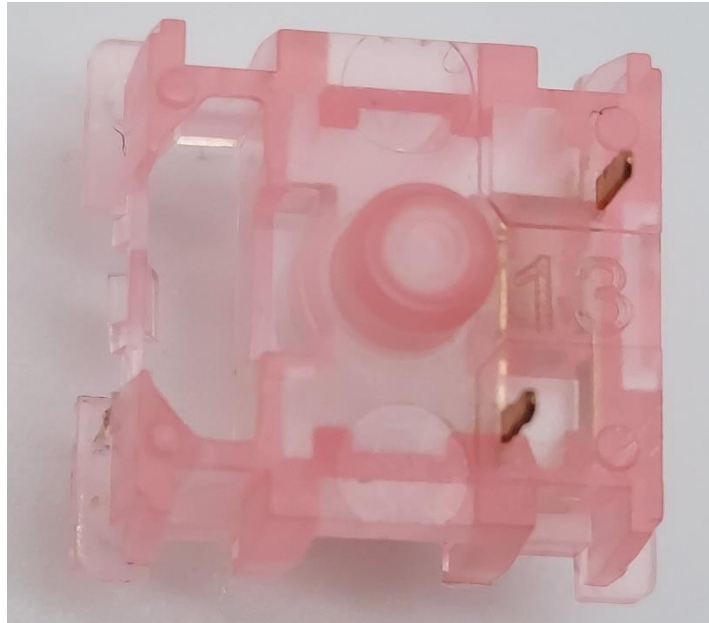


Figure 8: KTT Strawberry bottom housing mold identification markings.

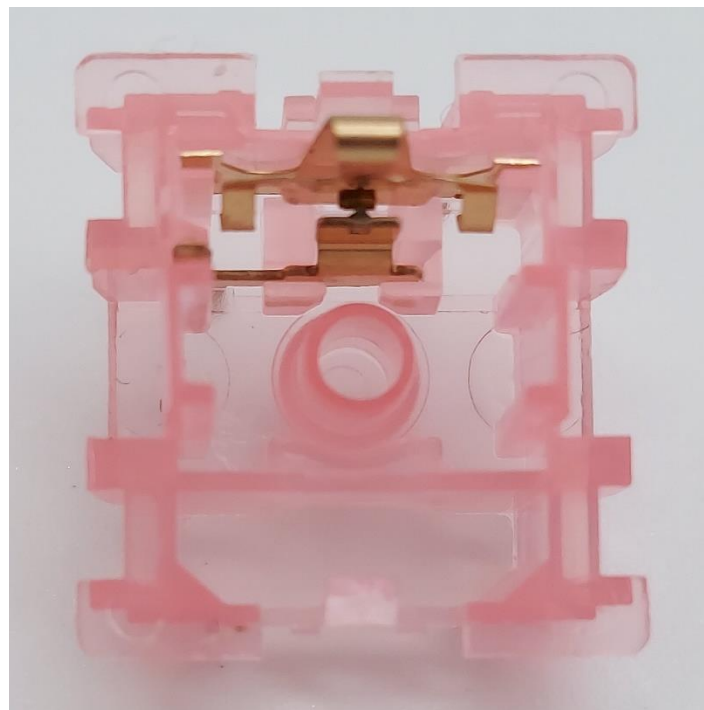


Figure 9: KTT Strawberry top housing with slanted corners on the LED slot.

Coming with an ever so slight factory lubing on the slider rails, the stems of these switches are definitely the structurally least interesting component of the switches. While they are fairly similar to linear stems from JWK V1 molds due to their non-tapered slider rails, these switches differ ever so slightly in that they do not feature any mold imprints on the back panel of the stems. As well, instead of a smooth tapered center mast, these stems have a ‘tiered’ taper to them.

The top housings of the KTT Strawberries are also a bit unremarkable when considered within the overall scope of strange top housing offerings out there, but they do pack a few more interesting features than the stems themselves. Both being viewable from the top side of the top housings, the first noticeable feature is that the LED slot is ‘bifurcated’ and has a thin plastic divider in the center of the switch. While this isn’t particularly novel, as this thing has been seen before in older switch offerings from Outemu, it certainly is out of place in the more modern scene. An additional, and definitely unique point about the design of these top housings is that the mold number is centered on the top side front edge of the LED slot. While KK Lightwave V2 switches also have their mold markings on the LED slot, these are the first switches to have it “front and center” as such that I am aware of.



Figure 10: Picture of backside and center pole taper of KTT Strawberry stems.

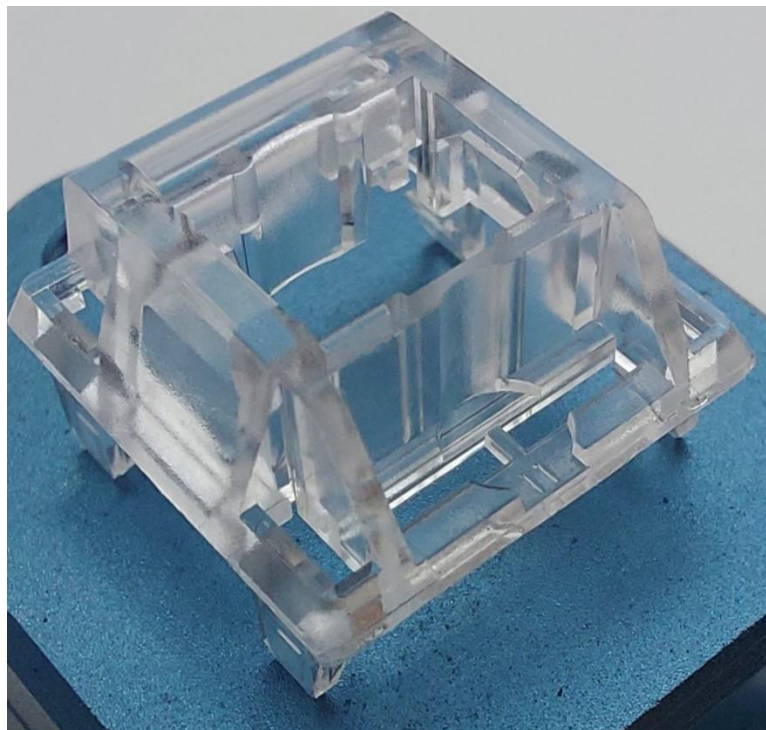


Figure 11: Bifurcated LED slot and mold markings for KTT Strawberry top housings.

Push Feel

Very much in line with my initial surprise about the push feel of the KTT Cloud Blue and KTT Sea Salt switches when I first got them, the KTT Strawberries also greatly surprised me. While they aren't entirely smooth, and instead have an ever so slight, velvety scratch feeling throughout the entirety of their stroke, they are noticeably smoother than most switches and are consistent between the different samples that I tried. For the relative cheapness of these switches at the \$0.30-0.40 per switch range they were teased on ZFrontier with, these are definitely comparable to JWK's linear switches in terms of sheer smoothness per cost.

Aside the smoothness of these switches, both the bottoming out and the topping out are noticeably standouts as well. The bottoming out of the Strawberries walk the fine line between 'mushy' and 'muted firm' feelings extremely well, leaving a very solid feeling bottoming out experience with just a bit of a give that really helps dampen the bottom out feeling. As well, the topping out of these switches emulates this feeling to some degree, just not to the same extent. While this is almost certainly a result of the top housing material being slightly thinner than that of the bottom housing, it still produces a solid topping out experience noticeably better than the recent trends of polycarbonate top housings in recent JWK releases.

Sound

In general, it would be quite easy to shorten this section down to a sentence or two for most reviews given that generally a switch's sound and push feel could be described in nearly identical terms. The KTT Strawberries don't contribute anything to breaking this trend. While there is virtually no scratch noise, nor noise from bottoming or topping out at low activation speeds, as faster typing speeds are reached *some* noise is able to be picked up from the switch. At faster activation speeds, these switches pick up a mid-toned, snappy sounding topping out that constitutes the majority of the noise with only a slight bit of the velvety scratch noise able to be heard if you are listening quite closely. Overall, though, at normal typing speeds these switches are fairly muted, firm, and fall directly in line with desired sound (or lack thereof) from modern linear switches.

Wobble

Wobble is one of the few things that KTT has done entirely well across their (brief) history. With respect to top housings, clamshell housings always have quite literally no wobble to them whatsoever and KTT even manages to pull this off in their transition into 4-pin top housings as well. While not quite up to same level of rigidity as the top housings, the stems in the KTT Strawberries are also very solid with respect to wobble, having likely unnoticeable amounts of stem wobble in both directions and an ever so slightly greater wobble in the E/W direction.

Other

While normally this section has neat historical notes, interesting quirks in design and functionality, or simply things that I felt too lazy to edit into the rest of the review post writing, this is definitely a first for the 'Other' section. Out of the thousands upon thousands of switches that I've opened using my trusty, blue Ai03 switch tester, I can not seem to open these KTT Strawberries well *at all*. In fact, the few random switch openers I did have lying around all somehow seem to universally struggle with opening these switches. While this sounds like more of a 'me' problem than a 'switch' problem, difficulty in opening these housings unless extra force is used could ultimately increase the potential for a greater chance of warping the pins in the top housings upon opening of them, which would lead to top

housing wobble. However, since I don't do much modding for my reviews I can't really give a great description of how this potential impact is noticed over time. Your mileage will almost certainly vary.

Comparison Notes to Other Notable Linear Switches

Note – These are not aimed at being comprehensive comparisons between all factors of these switches as this would simply be too long for this writeup. These are little notes of interest I generated when comparing these pieces to the KTT Strawberries side by side.



Figure 12: Switches for comparison. (L-R, Top-Bot: Tealio V2, Alpaca V2, Gateron Cap Yellow, TTC Gold Pink, Lavender, Novelkeys Cream)

Tealio V2

- While not by much, the KTT Strawberries are just a hair smoother than the Tealio V2 switches. This is comparing multiple sets of both against each other as I have a couple of each lying around in random piles strewn about my apartment.
- While the four-pin top housings of the Strawberries do seem susceptible to opening fatigue and thus may become wobbly after repeated openings, they still do have better wobble all around as compared to the Tealio V2s, which are especially wobbly in the E/W direction of the stem.
- On an overall sound comparison, at all typing speeds the KTT Strawberries are noticeably quieter than the Tealio V2s.

Alpaca V2

- While both of these switches have fairly solid bottoming out sounds that are quite muted, the Alpaca V2s do sound just a hair bit more muted in stock form, though either one of these could easily edge the other out with a bit of aftermarket lubing.
- Both of these switches, as well as the TTC Gold Pinks on this list are just further confirming this weird trend I am noticing in that switches with pink in their color scheme in one form or another tend to largely be better than other non-pink switches. Weird.
- The topping out of the Alpaca V2s feels a bit more firm and solid than that of the KTT Strawberries.

Gateron Cap Yellow

- The Gateron Cap Yellows, at all points throughout the stroke of the switches, are noticeably more scratchy and less consistently lubed than the KTT Strawberries.
- As well, much like with the other Gateron switch on this list, the Cap Yellows have noticeably more stem wobble than the KTTs, and especially so with respect to the E/W direction.

- While definitely louder than the KTT Strawberries, as compared to all other switches on this list, the Gateron Cap Yellows definitely have the most ‘full bodied’ bottoming out sound.

TTC Gold Pink

- While these two switches pretty much feel identically smooth, there is a bit more noticeable scratch sound in the Gold Pinks than in the Strawberries.
- In a bit of a surprising twist, even though the Gold Pinks have a significantly lighter stem weight than the KTT Strawberries, they also have a much more high-pitched and loud topping out sound. Typically, louder topping out sounds are associated with heavier spring weights ‘forcing’ the stem into the top housings harder.
- Even though the Gold Pinks are still better than most, they do have a bit more stem wobble in both the N/S and E/W stem directions as compared to the Strawberries.

Lavender

- Of all of the switches on this list, I would say that these two are the closest in terms of overall sound profile, with the KTT Strawberries being just a hair louder in the bottom out.
- As well, these have very similar stem wobble in both the N/S and E/W stem directions.
- The KTT Strawberries feel just a bit smoother in terms of the stock, factory lubing between these two switches, *but* the bottoming and topping out of the Lavender switches is a bit more solid, and well-rounded feeling than the KTTs.

Novelkeys Cream

- In no surprise to anybody who has ever used these before, the stock Novelkeys Creams feel noticeably scratchier than the Strawberries. (This even holds true for ‘broken-in’ Creams as well.)
- Overall, the Novelkeys Creams have noticeable N/S and E/W stem and top housing wobble that simply isn’t there in the KTT Strawberries.
- The topping and bottoming out of the Novelkeys Creams is noticeably louder than the KTT Strawberries, and especially so at faster activation speeds.

Scores and Statistics

Note – These scores are not necessarily completely indicative of the nuanced review above. If you’ve skipped straight to this section, I can only recommend that you at least glance at the other sections above in order to get a stronger idea of my opinion about these switches.

KTT Strawberry		
30	/35	Push Feel
20	/25	Wobble
8	/10	Sound
15	/20	Context
6	/10	Other
79	/100	Total

Push Feel

While even I felt a bit hesitant about such a score being given to such a ‘new’ manufacturer in KTT, these switches check nearly all the hallmarks of a good linear switch. If they were only just a tiny bit smoother and had a better topping out feeling, these switches would be absolute “endgame” material.

Wobble

Rock solid top housings mixed with unnoticeable-with-caps on stem wobble is hard to get wrong. The difficult opening of these switches, as discussed in ‘Other’, though does leave them a bit prone to top housing wobble issues if opened.

Sound

The only real knock against these switches is that they pitch up in volume at faster typing speeds. At lower to normal typing speeds these are that smoothly quiet, solid, and firm sounding linear switches that people are seeking out these days.

Context

Riding off of a solid performance and hype around KTT switches, these being one of the first examples of 4-pin housings from them only cranks up the interest further. At their extremely low eastern prices for the quality they bring to the table, these are not only great switches on their own but should usher in some serious respect for what KTT has coming.

Other

Aside all of the praises for performance, interesting color way, and developmental promise these switches bring, there is a concern with how difficult they are to open ultimately leading to performance issues in users that open the switches for modifications’ sake.

Statistics

Average Score			KTT Strawberry		
25.6	/35	Push Feel	30	/35	Push Feel
15.8	/25	Wobble	20	/25	Wobble
5.9	/10	Sound	8	/10	Sound
11.9	/20	Context	15	/20	Context
5.9	/10	Other	6	/10	Other
65.1	/100	Total	79	/100	Total
Strawberry Overall Rank			#7/55 (79/100)		
Strawberry 'Hard' Rank			T-#5/55 (58/70)		
Strawberry 'Soft' Rank			T-#10/55 (21/30)		

Final Conclusions

I'll gladly step up and admit that I had not originally written this review with the burning desire to review the KTT Strawberry switches *specifically*. Hell, I hadn't even really sat down and messed with them all that much since they came in the mail earlier this week anticipating that they would be effectively no different than the KTT Sea Salts and Cloud Blues that I had first tried and was impressed with. So, to that end, I started out this review hoping more to introduce the wider western audience to KTT switches as they are not only becoming more and more prevalent, but are also improving their performance per price metric by a seemingly hefty amount with each release. While this performance trend will obviously plateau at some point, the KTT Strawberries definitely blew me away with how they seemingly took leaps and bounds of improvements on things like push feel and wobble that I didn't think previous KTT releases had done that bad of a job on.

Taking this one step further, I think the release of these KTT switches has really helped to facilitate a brief, but albeit important point to be made about modern switch companies. Switch brands and manufacturers that were once considered the 'Chinese-knockoff Old Guard' to collectors back when I first started, such as Content or Huano, are starting to come back with new releases to try and cash in on the popularity of the switch market right now. As well, we've even seen the introduction of new companies/brands in the form of SP Star and Everglide as a valid competitor at their respective price points within the market. While we all find some solace in the time-tested classics such as Gateron, JWK, or Kailh, the rise (or "re-rise") of smaller outfits like KTT, TTC, Huano, and SP Star are pushing harder than ever for you to step outside of your comfort zone and try newer, more exotic brands. Even though they may not be perfect, "10/10 Endgame" switches, I really implore you to go out and explore some of these new and upcoming brands even if you do have to shop at some strange places or wait extra long on shipping to get them. Brands like KTT, whether you believe it or not, are what are going to forge a path that all enthusiast switch companies will end up following someday soon – and it's a great time to get in on it while it is still cheap. So, even if they may seem a bit different than your favorite Alpacas or Tangerine V2 switches, maybe go try out some KTT Strawberries – they're just one of *dozens* of interesting, 'niche' switches you've not yet come to enjoy.

Further Reading

[KTT Strawberry and KTT Orange ZFrontier IC](https://www.zfrontier.com/app/flow/DG607MRdRrAY)

Link: <https://www.zfrontier.com/app/flow/DG607MRdRrAY>

[Dangkeeb's KTT Rose Sales Page](https://dangkeeb.com/products/ktt-rose)

Link: <https://dangkeeb.com/products/ktt-rose>

Wayback: <https://web.archive.org/web/20210130025122/https://dangkeeb.com/products/ktt-rose>

[Alphakeys' KTT Rose Sales Page](https://alphakeys.ca/products/ktt-rose)

Link: <https://alphakeys.ca/products/ktt-rose>

Wayback: <https://web.archive.org/web/20210130025248/https://alphakeys.ca/products/ktt-rose>

[Koe's KTT Wine Red Linear Typing Sound Test](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9biIJ3aPYWs&ab_channel=Koe)

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9biIJ3aPYWs&ab_channel=Koe

[Strange, Unnamed KTT Switch Releases](https://www.zfrontier.com/app/flow/DAKMWwRLVxLP)

Link: <https://www.zfrontier.com/app/flow/DAKMWwRLVxLP>