

Kinetic Labs Gecko Switch Review

-ThereminGoat, 09/18/2022

Note: As of the time of writing this review, I am currently sponsored by Kinetic Labs and feel it is in best practices to disclose this information up front. These switches were sent to me without expectation, request, nor pay for review and I have chosen to do this review entirely of my own accord. No editorial rights were afforded to Kinetic Labs nor were they given advanced notice of this review and/or its contents.

Normally, I like to start out these reviews with some background information about the hobby, my life, or even brand-new switches and content milestones that I cross in the weeks between full length reviews. While I have still been getting as many switches as ever, one of the packages that recently crossed my doorstep had absolutely no switches whatsoever and yet I still think it is worthwhile to show off and discuss here. (Please try and contain your astonishment; it is in fact true that I buy other keyboard related things than just switches.) Very luckily, I was in the right place and the right time to make a connection with a very old keyboard enthusiast from Geekhack days gone by and I was able to secure a truly one-of-a-kind piece of keyboard history – the original SignaturePlastics DSA and SA profile mold plates for the Nuka Cola caps.



Figure 1: Original SP DSA (Left) and SA (Right) molds from the 2014 Geekhack run.

Except for the small percentage of my audience which has played some of the Fallout series of games prior, I'm sure many of you are probably scratching your heads as to *why* this mailday in particular was an absolute must have for me. The Nuka Cola keycaps were some of the earliest custom runs of keycaps hosted on Geekhack, with the initial groupbuy date for these going all the way back to 2014. For perspective, 2014 was not only two years before the first Zealios switches were made, but almost 5 years before Stealios and all of these modern switches really took off. Aside the fact that these are just downright old pieces of keyboard history, molds containing copyright logos and designs were often destroyed by SP for obvious legal reasons that I'm sure many of you could piece together. Thus, these are likely some of the only remaining keycap molds with trademark logos on them that have survived this long in private hands. Much more simply, as well, this is the first time I've ever seen molds like this documented anywhere – making this something I couldn't help but share here.



Figure 2: Backside of the DSA (Left) and SA (Right) Nuka Cola molds showing manufacturing inscriptions.

Switch Background

A simple look at all of the switches which I've reviewed over the course of 2022 would be more than enough to indicate just how much innovation and interesting design choices have been made over the past year of switches. While switches such as the Zeal 3-in-1 Clickiez, TKC Blackberries, and Drop Holy Panda X switches were all more than attention grabbing for their own reasons, there have been a decent number of exciting switches and mechanisms that have gone under the radar thus far along. Part of this is due in some part to a good few of these design choices seeing little if any marketing and often coming from more eastern facing brands rather than large western vendors. Additionally, another factor is that many of these mechanistic differences are subtle to the average mechanical keyboard enthusiast, making them much more difficult to accidentally stumble across. Thus, given that the Kinetic Labs Gecko switches are the latest silent linear switch to be released, I thought it would be worthwhile to see three different type of innovation that have occurred in *just silent linears* so far this year. (Also because I've covered the history of the Kinetic Labs Salmons, Huskies, and Hippo switches all previously in various forms of content already!)

Kailh Midnight Pros



Figure 3: Image of the Kailh Midnight Pro Light Yellow and Grey Silent switches.

First announced back on April 26th of 2022 by way of a Twitter post, the Kailh Midnight Pros were an upgraded and improved version of the Kailh Midnight Light Yellow and Grey switches released earlier in the year. In addition to boasting a slightly different color scheme as well as changed spring weightings for both of the switches, the biggest selling point was that of the “Innovative Dampener Structure” as seen in the marketing render below in Figure 4. Rather than having the dampener pads on the side of the slider rails of the stem, which is the traditional configuration for silent linear and tactile switches, the Kailh Midnight Pros fix the dampening pads along the slider rails of the bottom housings as well as directly at the point of bottom out, instead. Additionally, it can be seen both in the marketing render as well as my photograph that the slider rails are not solid, but instead consist of two upright posts at the edges of where a conventional slider rail would be.

Innovative dampener structure

Dampeners inside both sides of the base are thickened and widened, providing a better silence effect.

No dampener is placed in the central contact part of the bottom, enabling a more solid, crisp bottoming feel.

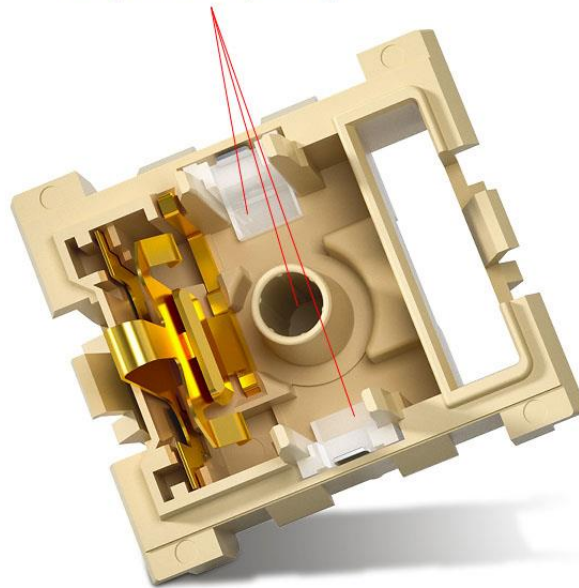


Figure 4: Marketing render of the 'innovative dampener structure' in the Kailh Pro Midnight switches.

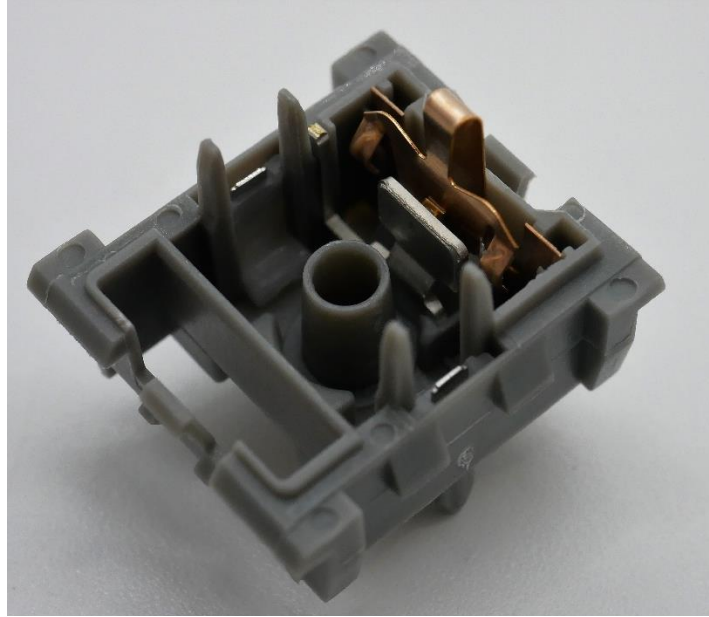


Figure 5: Real comparison image of the dampening mechanism in the Kailh Pro Midnight Grey switches.

With respect to the actual performance of the Midnight Pro Light Yellows and Greys, these silent tactiles and silent linears, respectively, both seemed to somewhat benefit from this improved, alternative dampening mechanism. As noted in my scorecards for both of these switches, the fact that the housings came in a polycarbonate over nylon configuration was rather hard to tell, with the dampening pads in the nylon bottom housings producing a similarly balanced feeling to that of the housing collisions at topping out. As well, both of these switches picked up rather strong scores for their sound with the bigger issues coming from light factory lubing rather than a lack of effectiveness of the dampening mechanism. It is uncertain if this mechanism will be continued into future Kailh silent switch releases.

JWICK Semi Silents



Figure 6: Image of the new JWICK Semi Silent switches.

Announced with perhaps the least amount of detail or clarifying information I've ever seen in a switch debut post, the JWICK 'Semi Silents' were first described in late March of 2022 by way of ZFrontier. Promising a new "semi-quiet stem", very little public information was posted about these switches until their Alibaba sales page went live two months later in May. On this sales page, example images of the new semi-silent stems were provided, showing a new twist on the classic way in which silent switches have been designed. Rather than having a singular piece of silicone or rubber which protrudes from the top *and* bottom of the stems to dampen the topping and bottoming out, the Semi Silents have a singular piece of dampening plastic attached only to the top of the stem to effectively dampen just the bottoming out.

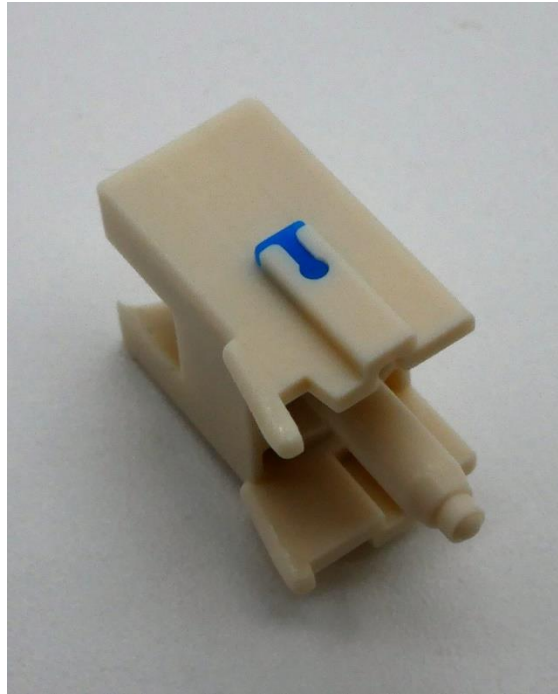


Figure 7: Profile shot of the JWICK Semi Silent stems showing only top side dampening mechanism on slider rail.

In a rather funny way, this mechanism almost strikes me as so simple that it is surprising that nobody had considered something to this effect prior to the middle of 2022. As well, a brief consideration for how this dampening mechanism was implemented points to several different routes that silenced switches may be able to evolve into in time. One such way is that of obviously dampening *only* the bottoming via placing a rubber padding on the bottom of the slider rail and not the top. A much more subtle and customizable way which this could be improved would be by allowing for the implementation of two different dampening pad hardnesses at each end of the slide, which would allow for differently muted feelings and sounds at opposite ends of the switch. Whereas the traditional silencing mechanism of silent switches has a singular piece of dampening plastic, this mechanism could clearly allow for the first truly two-tone silent switch.

In reality, though, the implementation of this mechanism in the JWICK Semi Silent switches hasn't gone over nearly as well as one would expect. Even with the switches coming in a polycarbonate over nylon housing combination, which would imply a deeper bottoming out sound and feeling, the switches have a much thinner feeling bottoming out which stands out in contrast to that of the topping out which is dampened. While we have yet to see how much attention these will catch amongst the wider community in the last quarter of 2022, I suspect that their general perception will be a key deciding factor

as to whether or not we see any of my more fancy ideas in the previous paragraph expressed in reality. (I call dibs on royalties if anyone does use these ideas, by the way.)

Haimu Heartbeats

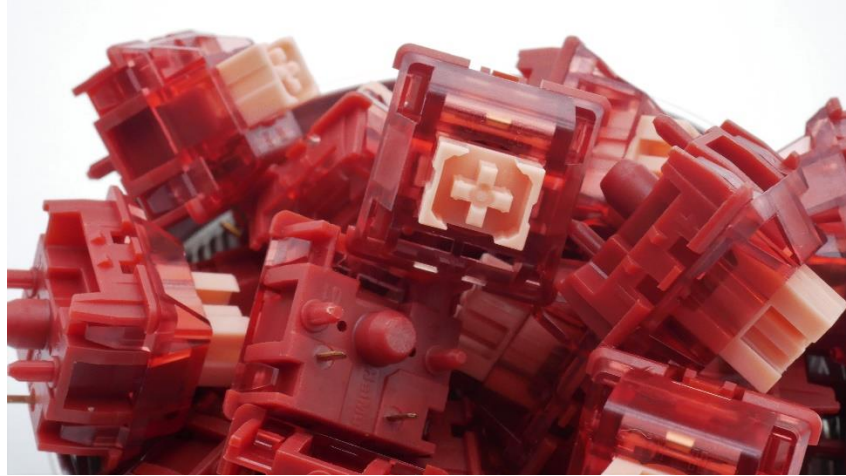


Figure 8: Image of the new Haimu Heartbeat silent linear switches.

The latest in the interesting silent switch mechanisms to have been released in 2022 thus far, the Haimu Heartbeats come from a relatively new, up and coming manufacturer by way of (another awesome sponsor of mine in) Cannonkeys. Rather than relying on silicone/rubber dampening pads affixed to the stems or the bottom housings of the switch, the Heartbeats instead rely on a pair of unique features in the stems as well as maybe a peculiar bottom housing design. Looking first to the stems on these switches, you'll see that the top and bottom of the slider rails feature 'c' like curves of POM which effectively appear to act as sort of built-in springs to dampen the bottom and topping out of the Heartbeats. While you probably have just as much skepticism about the efficacy of this design as I initially did when I sat down to write my scorecard for them, the proof is undeniably in the performance as these are truly among the most quiet silent linear switches I have ever tried.

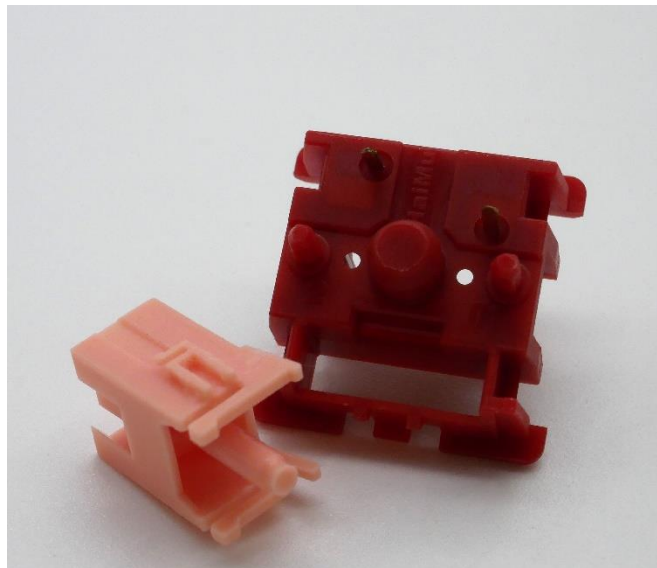


Figure 9: Demonstration of the stem spring silencing mechanism and the bottom housing holes which reduce the Haimu Heartbeats' sound.

However, to claim that the entirety of the sound dampening in the Haimu Heartbeats was a function of the stem, alone, would sell short a much more genius and subtle feature of their design as well. Located on the base of the bottom housing, it can be seen that their two tiny holes drilled between the central post of the switch and the PCB mounting pins. While initially appearing innocuous, thanks to some testing done in a recent video by Maker Mods on these switches, we see that these holes actually help to dampen the sound by what I assume is creating an effective ‘escape’ for sound within the switch. Upon drilling similar holes into another switch, Maker Mods was able to demonstrate that these holes produce a significant decrease in overall switch sound, lending further support to just how well thought out the design of these switches are. For those curious, as well, these holes have only thus far been seen in Haimu switches and switches suspected to have been released by Haimu long before we knew of their existence.

Kinetic Labs Geckos



Figure 10: This will be the one and only implicit Geico Insurance joke you will get in this entire review.

Wait, does this mean that the new Kinetic Labs Gecko switches have somehow an even *more* unique and fancy silencing mechanism than what any of the above switches have??1!?! No, in fact quite the opposite. As you’ll see in the coming paragraphs below, Gateron has chosen to take the path very much well traveled to produce a silent linear switch using the same singular silicone silencing stem piece as has been used for years on end now. Try saying that sentence three times fast. However, seeing that Gateron chose not to innovate in the face of all of this steep competition, I thought it would be a testament to Gateron’s improvements with switches broadly this year to see how these new Gecko silent linears would stand up to all the various silencing mechanisms. And that is why, as you will see below, I compare the Geckos not only to older Gateron silent switches, but also to each of the unique mechanisms shown above.



Figure 12: This is how I mentally picture the build up to this comparison at this point in the review.

The Kinetic Labs Gecko switches were released sans any form of marketing or announcement in kinda-mid-late-ish September of 2022. Assumedly priced like the other Kinetic Labs-exclusive switches around \$0.52 per switch, these switches are the fifth animal-themed switch to be released specifically by Kinetic Labs, joining the likes of Hippos, Huskies, Salmons, and Penguins. Of the Animal Family of switches released by Kinetic Labs thus far, these are the second to be produced by Gateron, with the only other being that of the Hippo linear switches. While their general stocking and longevity within the currently expanding lineup of switches at Kinetic Labs is uncertain, it is pretty strongly assumed that these will remain in stock options perpetually in similar fashion to that of other switches from the Animal Family.



Figure 11: The Kinetic Labs 'Animal Family' of switches including Salmons, Huskies, Hippos, Penguins, and now Geckos.

Gecko Switch Performance

Appearance

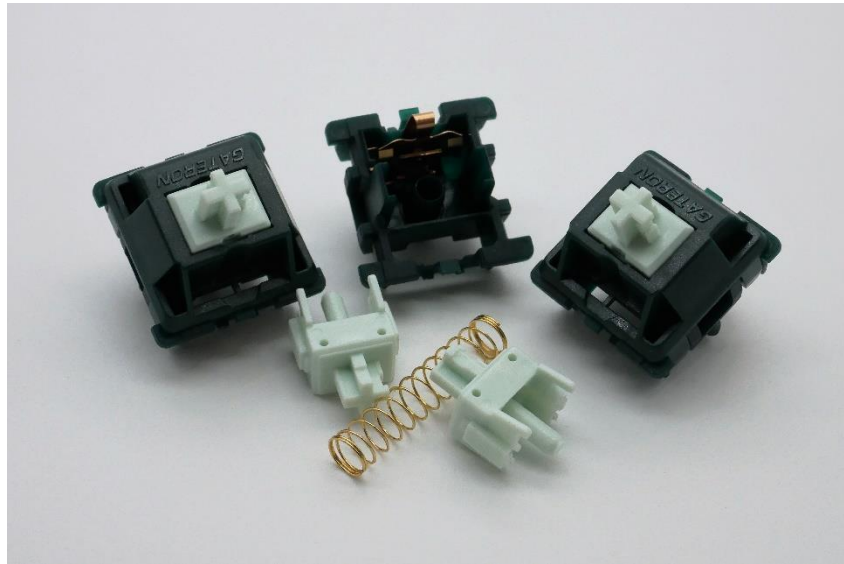


Figure 13: Kinetic Labs Gecko silent linear switches and their components.

At the highest level, the Kinetic Labs Geckos come in an entirely dark green, five pin housing with a faintly green colored stem. As many of you may have immediately considered, these draw a striking similarity to that of the SP Star Sacramento switches due to their quite dark green housing color. Comparing them side by side, they are so similar in dark lighting that I accidentally put a Gecko in the slot on my testers where the SP Star Sacramento goes. As can be seen in the photo of these two, below, I'm sure you could imagine how such a thing could have happened. Beyond the color of these switches, any truly distinguishing features of the Geckos come at a mold-detail level and thus are discussed in the paragraphs below.



Figure 14: Side by side color comparison of the Kinetic Labs Gecko (Left) and SP Star Sacramento (Right).

As is perhaps to be expected of premium Gateron switches, the top housings of the Kinetic Labs Geckos are very much identical in design to that of other previously released premium switches such as the RAMA WORKS Duck and Gateron Oil Kings. Externally, the top housings feature an inverted, raised nameplate as well as a bifurcated LED slot design with a central circular cut out to better support through-switch LEDs that are commonly used. Internally, the top housing structure of the Geckos is identical to that of the other aforementioned Gateron offerings, including the four polished rectangular pads along each edge of the top housings as well as a pair of capital letter mold markings in the upper right- and left-hand sides of the top housing underneath the nameplate. For those of you unaware, this mold design for top housings is the current standard among premium Gateron switch offerings.

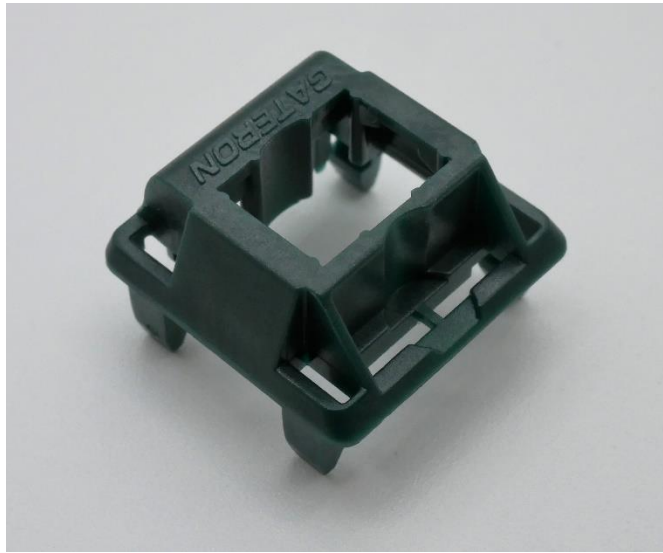


Figure 15: Gecko top housing exterior showing bifurcated LED slot and inverted 'GATERON' nameplate.

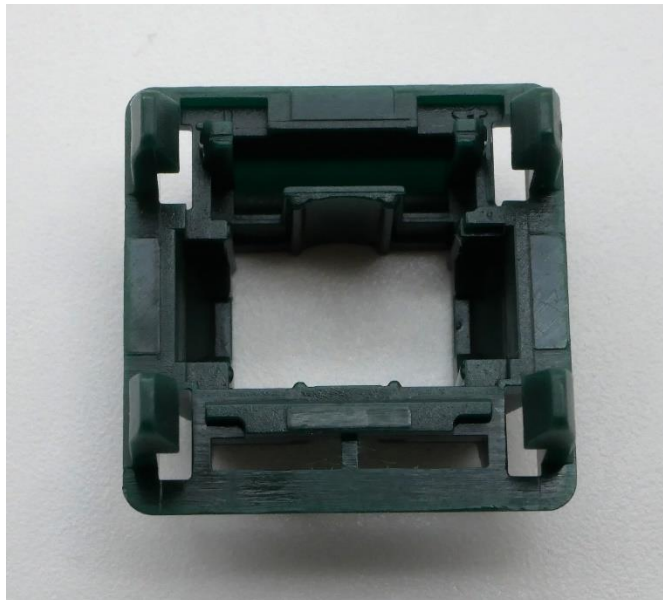


Figure 16: Gecko top housing interior showing similarities to Gateron Oil Kings as well as mold markings in the upper left- and right-hand side corners.

Interestingly, aside from the obvious differences in the design of the stems for the Geckos as a result of their dampening pads, the mold markings on the stem are actually quite different as compared to other premium Gateron offerings which I have reviewed. The first striking difference is that of the front plate of the stem, which has two mold ejector circles in the usual location directly above the stem legs followed by two additional through-stem holes above those which have unknown functionality. As well, the backplate of the Geckos is also not like that of other switches in that it has a 45-degree sloping cutoff at the bottom of the back plate as well as a potentially functional marking at the top.



Figure 14: Gecko stem front and backplates showing sloped edges and extra sets of through-switch holes with unknown functionality.

These features also come in addition to the silicone dampening pads which sit behind the slider rail sides and poke out above the top and bottom edges to produce a dampening effect with housing collisions. It's worth noting that on the bottom of the slider rail, there also appear to be two additional short dampening points on either side of the main dampening pad which may effectively aim to dampen all points of contact of the stems on the sides, rather than just the slider rail bottom. Regarding the slider rails, the Gecko switches come with a generous but not uncharacteristic for Gateron amount of factory lubing solely on the slider rails of the switch. This was removed from photographs shown above and below in order to better demonstrate the markings and mechanisms of note. A final point worth noting about the Gecko stems, as well, is that they also feature the random mixture of N/E and N/W stem notches on the keycap mounting cross as has been previously noted by me in other recent Gateron reviews.



Figure 15: Alternative view of the Gecko stems showing the protrusion of the dampening mechanism from the bottom of the slider rail.

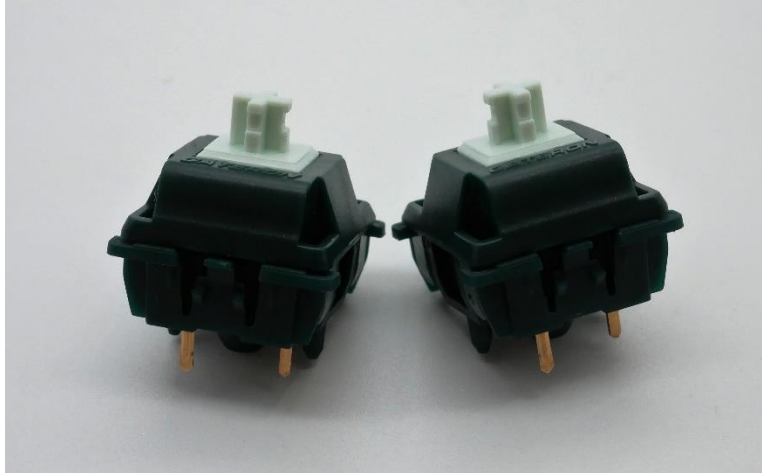


Figure 19: Gecko stem comparison showing mixture of N/E and N/W stem notches in the batch of switches which I received.

Moving finally to the bottom housings of the Geckos, these appear similar in execution to that of the Gateron Oil Kings, though slightly different in the finer details. While these share the same rounded, hill-like bottoming outs at the bottom of the slider rails, the Geckos feature only one set of mold ejector marks in the base of the bottom housing and four in the upper corner of the rim of the bottom housing. This is in juxtapose to the Oil King's four mold ejector circles in the base and eight along the upper rim of the switch. As well, the LED slot region in the Geckos is completely open, allowing for a wider range of LED usage with these switches than most other recent premium Gateron releases.

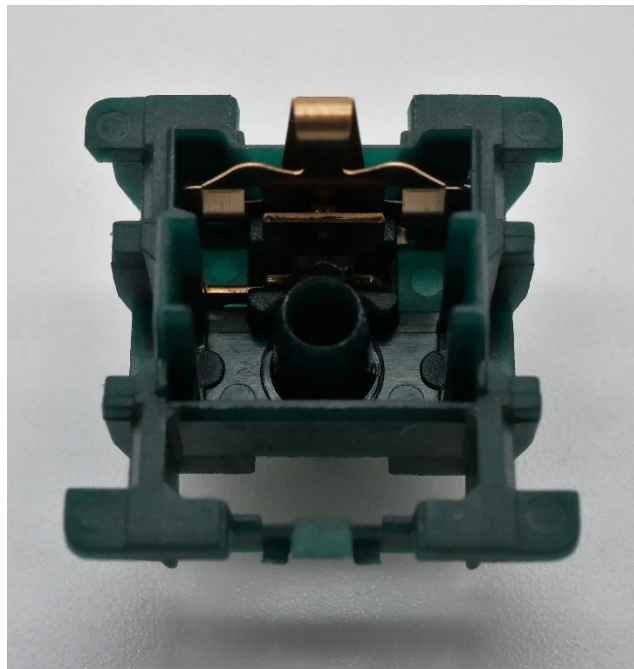


Figure 20: Gecko bottom housing internals showing wide open LED slot and hill-like bottoming out regions at the bottom of each slider rail.

Further lending credence to the fact that these bottom housings do not appear to have been used in any of the other recent Gateron releases is that of the mold markings on the outside of the bottom housings. Rather than featuring the 'GATERON' anticounterfeit tag between the metal PCB pins, the Gecko switches feature a large, single capital letter or number marking which is only commonly seen on Gateron switches which were custom orders (e.g. Gateron Giants, Gateron Tangerines, Keyfirst Creams, etc.). Strangely, as well, *all* switches in the batch that I received featured a 'Q' marking below the right PCB mounting pin, a feature which would initially seem like a mold marking. However, this would be the first time that an entire batch of switches I received contained an identical mold marking even as the capital letters/number mold markings between the metal PCB pins change. As for what this added zero marking is supposed to indicate, I am entirely uncertain.

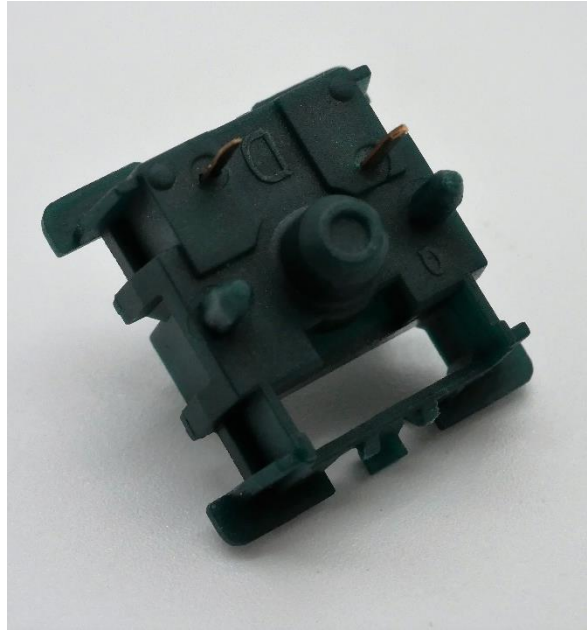


Figure 21: Gecko bottom housing externals showing mold markings as well as PCB mounting pins.

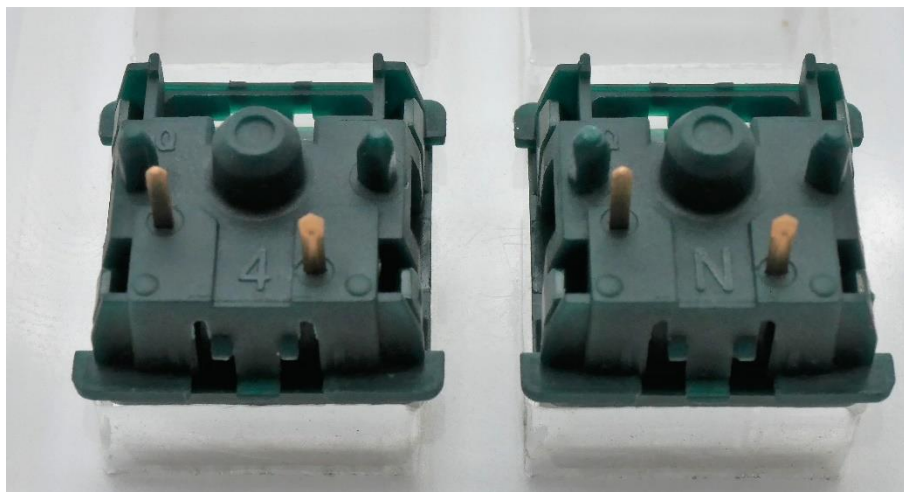


Figure 16: Pair of Gecko bottom housings demonstrating large number and letter mold markings as well as the consistency of the 'Q' marking as stated above.

Push Feel

When it comes to the push feeling of the Kinetic Labs Gecko switches, they are not nearly as mundane nor similar to that of older silent linear switches which also use this traditional mechanism. While these still do have an ever so slight softness to their housing collisions because of the dampening pads, the actual topping and bottoming out onto the housings feels much more stiff and as if the dampening pads aren't entirely there. Looking to the force curve for the Kinetic Labs Geckos, below in Figure 23, this is especially noticeable in the general sharpness of the topping and bottoming out transitions, something which is normally much more rounded and parabolic in shape for most other silent linear switches. As for the actual housing collisions, themselves, they are fairly balanced with a medium to deep feeling collision that is still somewhat dampened but nowhere near 'mushy'. Both due to how the actual silencing mechanism of the Geckos feels when compared to older Gateron silent switches as well as the force curve of the switches, I almost feel like the toughness of the dampening pads in the Geckos may be greater than that previously used.

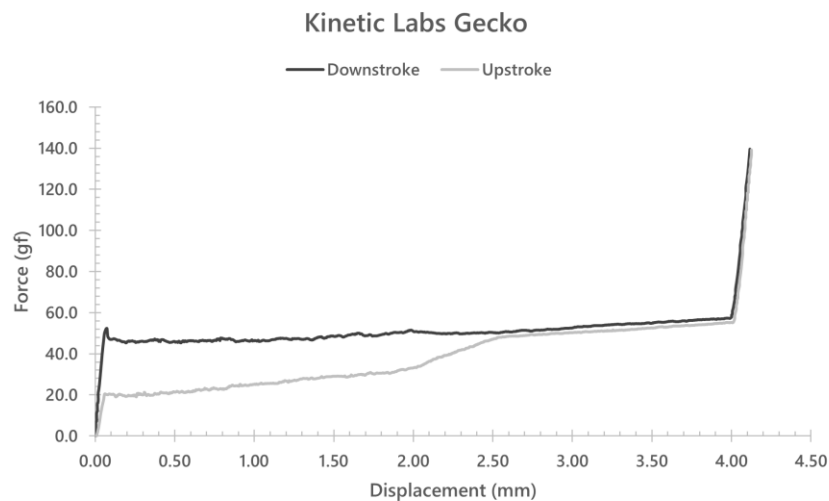


Figure 17: Force curve diagram for the Kinetic Labs Gecko switch.

As for the smoothness of these silent linear switches, they are rather on par with recent Gateron releases which have featured notably strong performances regarding factory lubing. Rather consistent across all of the switches that I received in my batch, the visually lesser factory lubing on the slider rails of the Geckos produces a smooth feeling with no scratch consistently throughout the stroke. As for how intensely lubed it feels, the smaller amount used here than in switches such as the Oil Kings allows the Geckos to finely straddle the line between over and under lubed, taking the best from both worlds. Additionally, it is especially worth noting that if you are interested in the factory lubing of these switches that you should check out the 'Break In' section below, as these switches stay like-stock for quite a bit longer with break in as compared to the vast majority of other switches which I've put through similar testing.

Sound

Regarding the all-important sound aspect of any silent linear switches, I think that the Geckos perform strongly though not quite to that level of perfection. Even though the overall volume is towards the lower end among all silent linear switches, there is still a subtle mushiness to the sound of the topping and bottoming out that can be picked up at the highest actuation speeds where switches make their most sound. As well, the occasional switch (< 10% of my batch) has a subtle amount of ping to the spring

which doesn't strike me as excessive nor out of bounds for Gateron's manufacturing. While this statement regarding ping may lead one to assume that this must be a function of the factory lubing, I would be hesitant to claim this as the smooth sound of these switches is actually rather well preserved across the batch that I received. Straddling the same fine line noted above in the 'Push Feel' section, there is still a general clearness to what little sound does come out of the Geckos as a result of the lighter factory lubing, which is not accompanied by any scratch noise whatsoever.

Wobble

When I initially tested the stem wobble of the Kinetic Labs Gecko switches, I have to be honest in saying that I had really though that I was misremembering the other Gateron switches which I've reviewed recently. Even though all of those switches had pretty good stem wobble, the Geckos are quite noticeably better with respect to both directional stem wobble as well as cross-batch consistency. It's up at that point where it's reaching the top of my scoring system as can be seen below, and it almost certainly would not be a problem for any keyboard user.

Measurements

<i>Kinetic Labs Gecko Switch Measurements</i>			
	Component	Denotation	mm.
Stem	Front/Back Plate Length	A	7.20
	Stem Width	B	5.50
	Stem Length with Rails	C	8.56
	Rail Width	D	2.16
	Center Pole Width	E	1.86
	Rail Height	F	5.03
	Total Stem Height	G	12.12
Bottom Housing	Diagonal Between Rails	L	9.60
	Interior Length Across	M	9.74
	Rail Width	N	2.61
	Center Hole Diameter	O	2.49
Top Housing	Horizontal Stem Gap	X	7.70
	Vertical Stem Gap	Y	6.03
Methods	Number of Switches Used		3
	Replication Per Measurement		3

If you're into this level of detail about your switches, you should know that I have a switch measurement sheet that logs all of this data, as well as many other cool features which can be found under the 'Archive' tab at the top of this page or by clicking on the card above. Known as the 'Measurement Sheet', this sheet typically gets updated weekly and aims to take physical measurements of various switch components to compare mold designs on a brand-by-brand basis as well as provide a rough frankenswitching estimation sheet for combining various stems and top housings.

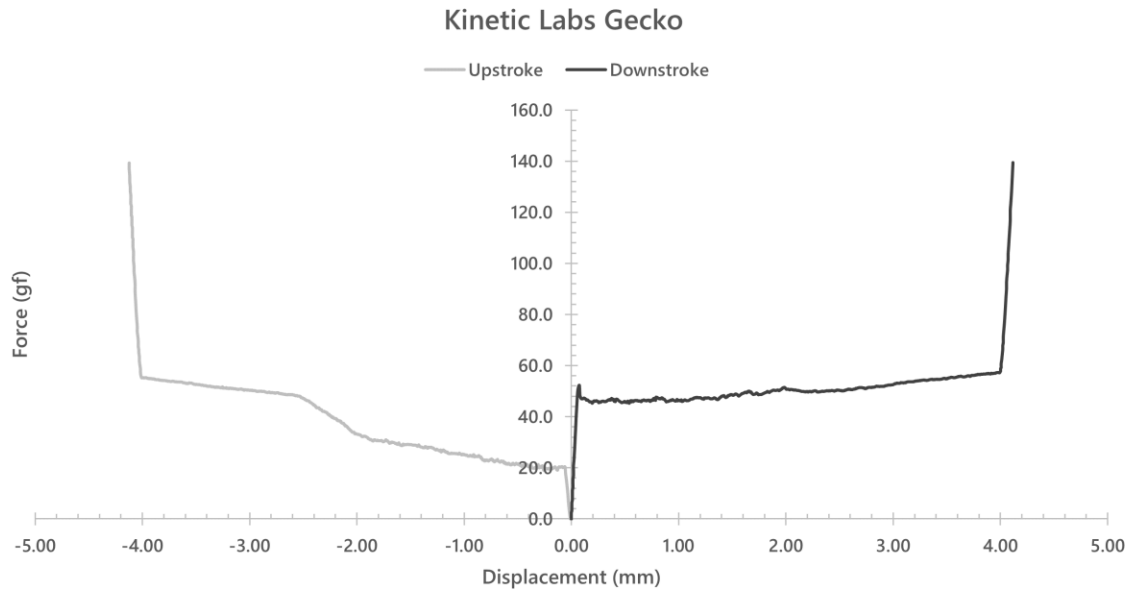


Figure 19: Kinetic Labs Gecko switch 'butterfly style' force curve diagram.

Kinetic Labs Gecko	
<i>Type: Silent Linear</i>	<i>Gateron</i>
Total Stem Travel	3.995 mm
Peak Force	57.5 gf
Bottom Out Force	57.5 gf
# of Upstroke Points	1114
# of Downstroke Points	1149

Figure 18: Numerical details regarding the stock Kinetic Labs Gecko switch force curve diagram.

The latest in the content-adjacent work that I've picked up, the new 'Force Curve Repository' is now hosted on GitHub alongside the Scorecard Repository and contains all force curves that I make both within and outside of reviews. In addition to having these graphs above, I have various other versions of the graphs, raw data, and my processed data all available for each switch to use as you please. Check it out via the 'Archive' tab at the top of this page or by clicking any of the force curve cards above.

Break In

Kinetic Labs Gecko Break In Testing			
Metric	Activations		
	17,000	34,000	51,000
Push Feel (Overall)			
Smoothness			-
Ping (Spring/Leaf)			
Wobble (Overall)			
Stem Wobble	-	-	-
Top Housing Wobble			
Sound (Overall)			
Scratchiness			
Ping (Spring/Leaf)		-	-

Color Scale			
Improvement	+	++	+++
Deterioration	-	--	---
Null Change			

Break In Notes:

17,000 Actuations

- Out to 17,000 actuations, the Kinetic Labs Gecko switches are surprisingly resilient and very hard to pick out from stock switches blindly. When I can actually tell which pile is which, I feel like there *might* be some slight migration in factory lubrication in the 17,000-actuation set of switches, though I really do feel like this might be in my head this time.
- The only noticeable difference between these and the stock Geckos is a slight increase in N/S and E/W direction stem wobble after the break in period. This is fairly average and a consistent trend across the switches which I've analyzed with the break in machine thus far.

34,000 Actuations

- Yet again, out to 34,000 actuations these switches seem quite resilient to change and more or less feel identical to those of the stock switches. The general lack of change with respect to the overall feeling of the switches out to this extent is rather impressive and definitely something which I did not expect.
- The *only*, extremely minor difference which I was able to discern in the Geckos broken out to 34,000 actuations was a very subtle uptick in pinging from the spring. Honestly, I'd be hard pressed to think many people would notice this when using these in a completed build, and especially after using them for the length of time it would take to hit 34,000 actuations.

51,000 Actuations

- While the previously above-mentioned points at 17,000 and 34,000 actuations holds true here, the push feeling of the 51,000 actuation Geckos is subtly different. While they are still quite smooth throughout their stroke, it feels as if the lubrication on the stem has migrated to the top and bottom of the slider rails, leading to a slightly thicker, almost subtly sticky topping and bottoming

out. Again, much like with the extremely subtle spring ping at 34,000 actuations, I really would be hard pressed to think that most people would notice this in a build.

- The Kinetic Labs Gecko switches are by far the most resilient to break in testing of any of the switches that I've tested with this instrument thus far. To be entirely honest, I almost wish I could give 'half minus' marks rather than full ones as the changes I nitpicked on here were quite minimal at best.

Other



Figure 20: Kinetic Labs Gecko bags along with most of their other Animal Family switch packaging.

Would it really be a Kinetic Labs switch release from the Animal Family without a cute packaging and adjacent mascot to go with? As fate will have it, I actually didn't get my Gecko switches from Kinetic Labs until about 3 PM on Friday of this past week as opposed to the week prior only because they were waiting on the bags and stickers to arrive. It was definitely worth the wait though, as this little Gecko mascot is just too damn cute.

Comparison Notes to Other Notable Silent Linears 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 switches to the Geckos switches side by side.

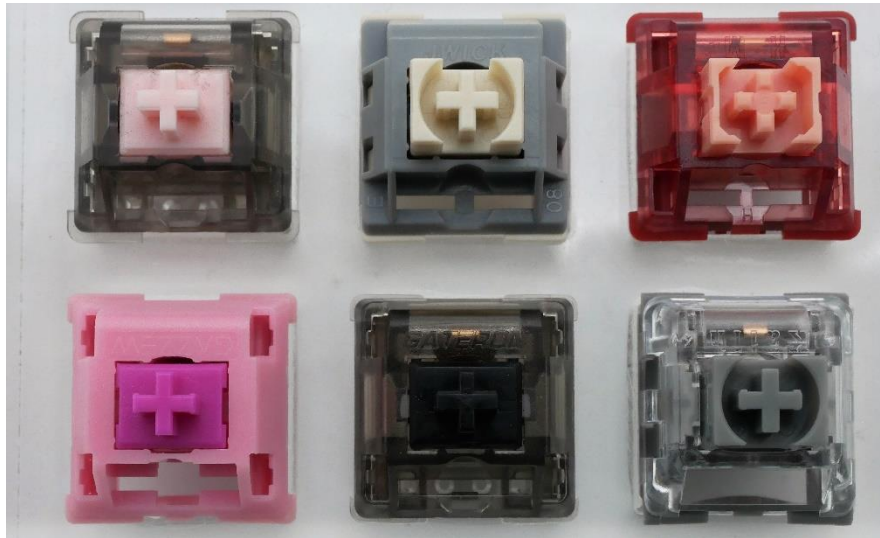
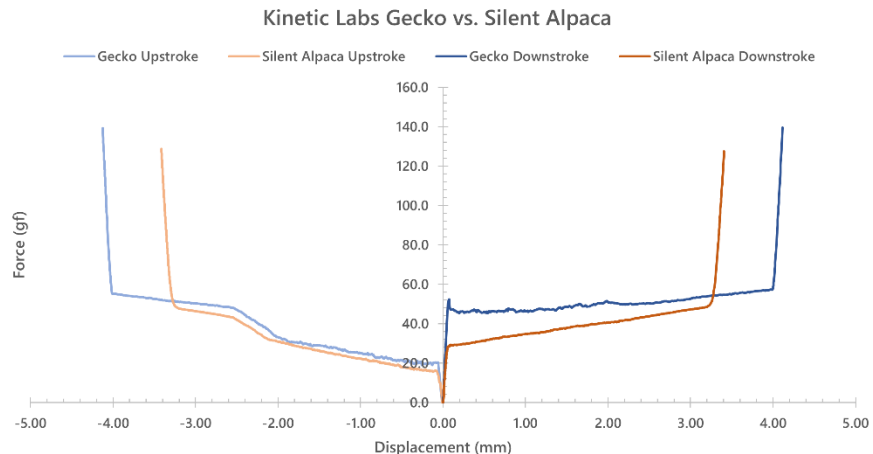


Figure 21: Switches for comparison. (L-R, Top-Bot: Silent Alpaca, JWICK Semi Silent, Haimu Heartbeat, Bobagum (62g), Gateron Silent Ink V2, and Kailh Midnight Pro Grey)

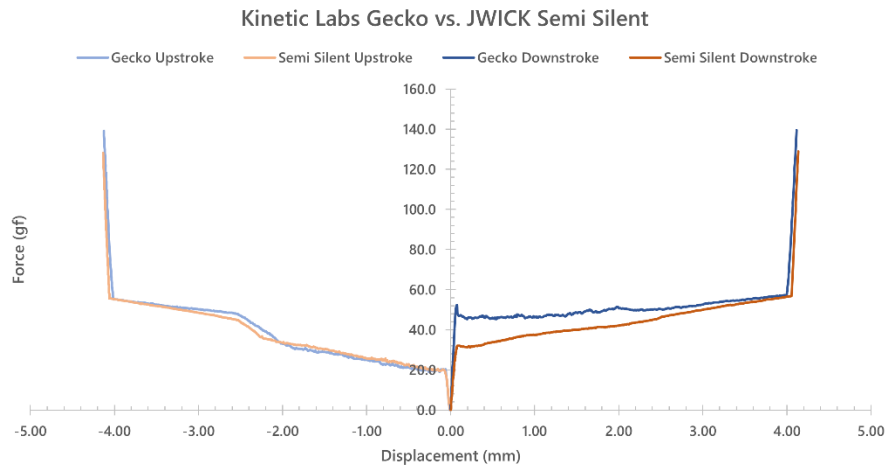
Silent Alpaca

- On a straight volume comparison, the Geckos are noticeably more silent than that of the average Silent Alpaca switches. Comparing to a group of Silent Alpacas, though, the batch wide variability in the Alpacas becomes much more apparent and the better Silent Alpacas are comparable to those of Geckos.
- While the Silent Alpaca switches didn't have all that much stem wobble in either direction, the improved Gateron molding in the Geckos really does give them much less stem wobble than the Silent Alpacas.
- While the Silent Alpacas and Geckos are fairly comparable to each other in terms of overall smoothness, there is a big difference in how much lube is present. While the Silent Alpacas are fairly lightly lubed (even by modern Durock/JWK standards), they definitely feel more thinly lubed than that of Geckos, lending to a more 'character-laden' feeling.



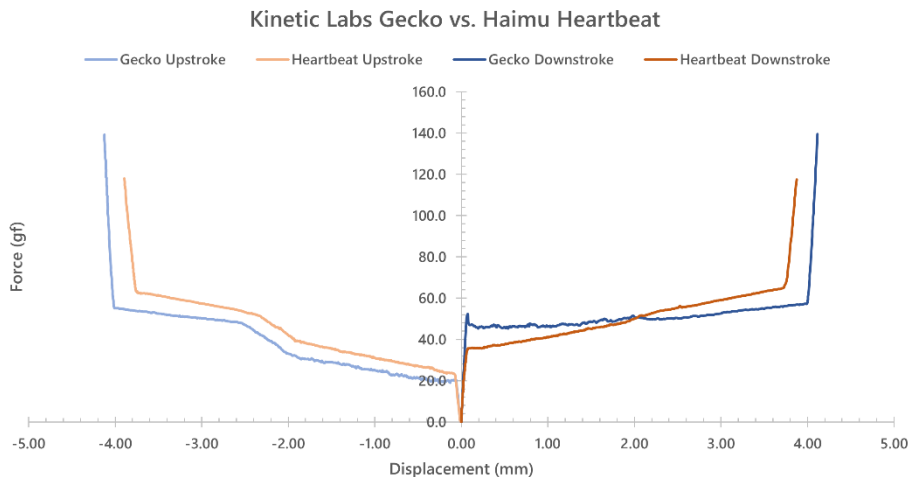
JWICK Semi Silent

- In terms of overall volume, the JWICK Semi Silents are just barely louder than that of the Gecko switches, and unsurprisingly as a function of their louder bottoming out where the padding is not present on the stems.
- Interestingly, while there is much more of a gap between the stem and top housings in the JWICK Semi Silents, the stems overall have a slightly lesser wobble in both N/S and E/W directions than the Geckos.
- With respect to smoothness, the heavier lube application in the Geckos switches leads to an overall smoother experience than the Semi Silents, and is slightly reminiscent of (as of the time of writing this) modern premium Gateron offerings.



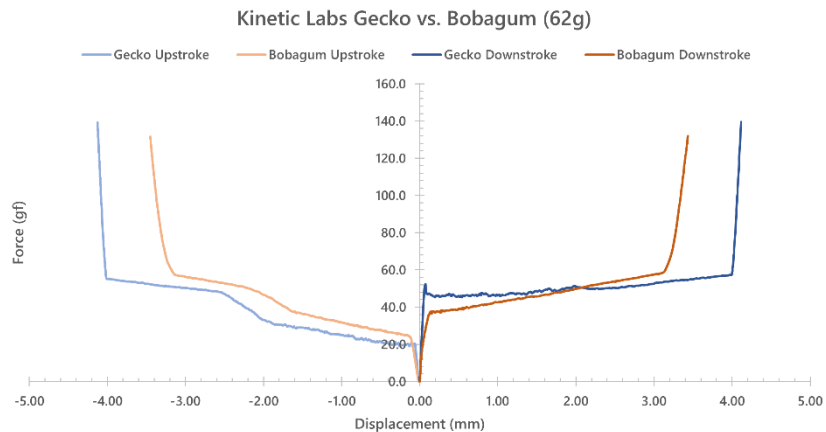
Haimu Heartbeat

- The Haimu Heartbeats are by far not only the most quiet switch on this entire list, but are noticeably more quiet than the Geckos at nearly every single point throughout the stroke.
- The Heartbeats and the Geckos are fairly similar in terms of overall smoothness for the majority of their strokes, but the Geckos have subtle points towards the ends of the stroke in some of the switches where they stop being quite as smooth.
- The Kinetic Labs Geckos definitely do edge out the Heartbeats with respect to both N/S and E/W direction stem wobble.



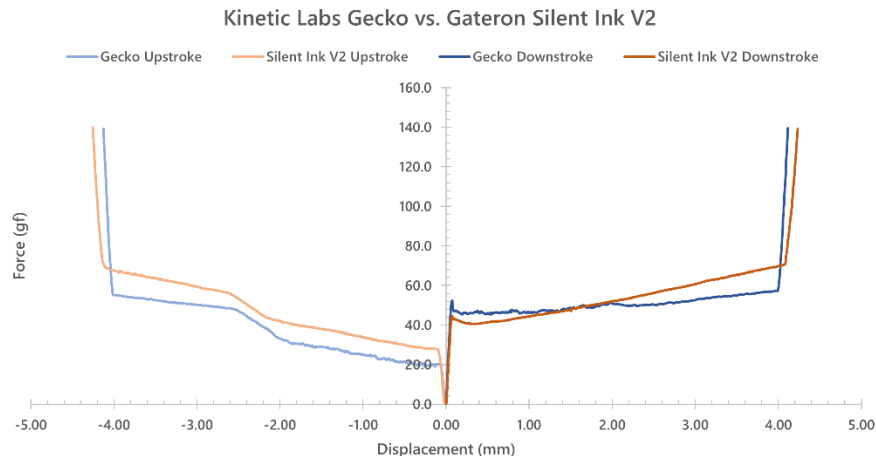
Bobagum (62g)

- Of all of the switches on this list, with respect to both volume and type of sound, the Bobagum switches are the most similar to that of the Kinetic Labs Geckos. Users who like the Bobagums, I would guess, have a decently good chance of enjoying the Geckos as well.
- Another reason that really makes the Geckos stand out as much more like the Bobagums than other switches on this list is that their stem wobble is similar to that of the Bobagums. While it is noticeably less consistent cross batch, the good Gecko switches are nearly the same in terms of quality.
- The bottoming out of the Geckos feels ever so slightly more firm than that of the Bobagums. This is especially noticeable in the sharpness of the bottoming out between the two in their comparison force curve, below.



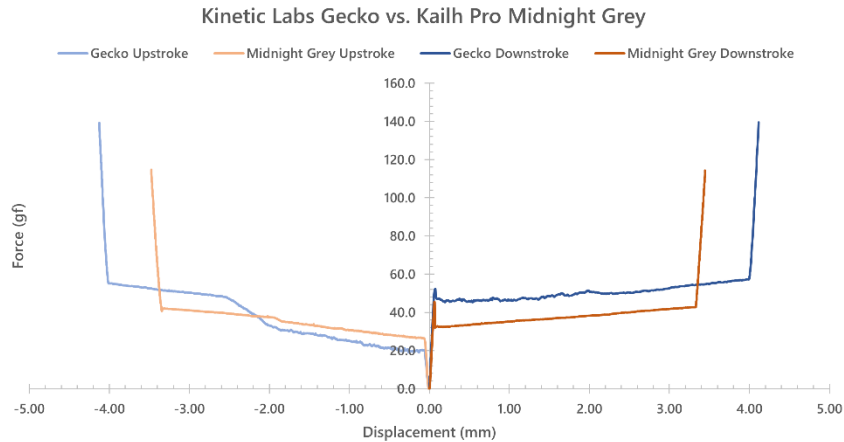
Gateron Silent Ink V2

- Much like the Silent Alpaca comparison above, the Gateron Silent Ink V2s are noticeably louder in their housing collisions than that of the Gecko switches. Implicitly, this comparison alone just shows much Gateron has improved their molds and techniques over the last few years.
- Another indication of just how much the molds have improved with time is that there is noticeably less N/S and E/W direction stem wobble in the Geckos than those of the Silent Ink V2s.
- While both switches are decently well smooth with their factory lubrication, the Silent Ink V2s have a subtle bit more scratchiness to them than the Geckos, though to be entirely honest this is an extremely hard difference to detect.



Kailh Pro Midnight Grey

- Even though the Pro Midnight Greys and the Geckos have comparable bottoming out feelings and sound, the topping out of the Pro Midnight Greys is a bit sharper and louder with respect to overall volume.
- The Geckos are pretty noticeably better than the Kailh Midnight Pros with respect to their stem wobble in both directions.
- There is a much more prevalent amount of scratch in both of the Pro Midnight switches than there are in the Geckos, and all other modern, premium Gateron offerings for that matter.



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.

Kinetic Labs Gecko		
<i>Type: Silent Linear</i>		<i>Gateron</i>
28	/35	Push Feel
23	/25	Wobble
8	/10	Sound
15	/20	Context
6	/10	Other
80	/100	Total

Push Feel

Coming factory lubricated with the same attention and care that Gateron has put into many of their premium releases in 2022, these silent linears are scratch-free both throughout their strokes and across the batch. As for the housing collisions, even with the traditional silent linear stem design, they are incredibly well balanced and have a medium-deep feeling with just the tiniest bit of roundness from the silencing mechanisms; There’s not a bit of mushiness in sight.

Wobble

Probably the most surprising feature on this switch is just how good the stem wobble in both the N/S and E/W directions are. While Gateron's recent releases have been good broadly speaking, there's so little wobble in both directions of the Geckos that you would be hard pressed to find anyone who would take issue with it.

Sound

Definitely on the quieter side of silent linears in terms of overall volume, the Geckos even at their highest actuation speeds barely pick up any noise. What noise is picked up is mostly housing collisions which are just the tiniest bit mushy in tone, but otherwise deep like the push feeling of them. Like their push feeling, as well, there is no sound from scratch across any of the batch which I received.

Context

Coming as the fifth installment of the Kinetic Labs Animal Family of switches, the Geckos are poised to be an affordable, constantly stocked option around a rather competitive \$0.50 per switch price tag. While there was no marketing pre-release, the launch point for these switches couldn't be better given the track record of the Huskies, Hippos, and Salmons before them.

Other

While slightly mundane in light of the innovation spree in 2022, it's nice to see Gateron squeeze as much quality and performance out of this tried-and-true silencing mechanism.

Statistics

Average Score			Kinetic Labs Gecko		
26.6	/35	Push Feel	28	/35	Push Feel
17.0	/25	Wobble	23	/25	Wobble
5.6	/10	Sound	8	/10	Sound
12.7	/20	Context	15	/20	Context
6.1	/10	Other	6	/10	Other
68.0	/100	Total	80	/100	Total
Gecko Overall Rank			T-#9/192 (80/100)		
Gecko 'Hard' Rank			T-#7/192 (59/70)		
Gecko 'Soft' Rank			T-#51/192 (21/30)		

If you are looking at this statistics section for the first time and wondering where the hell are the other 191 switches that I've ranked are, or what 'hard' versus 'soft' ranks refer to specifically, I'd encourage you to head on over to my GitHub linked in the table above or at the links in the top right hand of this website to check out my database of scorecards as well as the 'Composite Score Sheet' which has a full listing of the rankings for each and every switch I've ranked thus far.

Final Conclusions

Keeping in mind the relative simplicity in the design of the silencing mechanism in the Kinetic Labs Gecko switches, its rather impressive just how well they perform straight out of the box. While there is something to be said about all of the fresh silencing mechanisms which have popped up in 2022 thus far, it is apparently really hard to beat the tried-and-true method at its best. Throughout the end of 2021 and all of 2022 thus far, Gateron has been a strong contender for manufacturer of the year, constantly improving on old designs, releasing new ones, and entirely revamping their entry lines of switches with the KS9 2.0 Pros. As it would seem, they also didn't balk at the chance in improving upon their silent linear design as well, showing new molds, their improved lubing technique, and perhaps some other subtle changes in the design of these new Gecko switches. While I am not entirely blown away that these switches performed as well as they did with this contextual understanding in mind, it is still pretty damn impressive that they were competitive with all three of the new silencing mechanisms which I showed off at the start of this article.

Speaking as to the potential legacy of the Gecko switches, as a whole, I think these actually have a rather decent shot of having some staying power within the community. Amidst all of the updates to switches thus far by Gateron, these are the first truly upgraded silent linears which they have made, which will certainly attract attention at the price point of approximately \$0.50 per switch. As well, the Geckos are in the hands of Kinetic Labs which certainly helps their future community adoption. Potential accusations of bias aside, you would be hard pressed to argue that Kinetic Labs' ability to select good switch designs and to stand by them isn't among the best of vendors out there today. To that end, I am very glad to see that the Animal Family of switches is continuing to grow, and still offering rather solid performing, well thought out designs in the form of the Gecko silent linears.

Sponsors/Affiliates

Mechbox.co.uk

- A wonderful UK based operation which sells singles to switches that I've used above in my comparisons for collectors and the curious alike. Matt has gone out of his way to help me build out big parts of my collection, and buying something using this link supports him as well as my content!

KeebCats UK

- A switch peripheral company based out of the UK which sells everything switch adjacent you could ask for, they've been a huge help recently with my film and lube supply for personal builds, and they want to extend that help to you too. **Use code 'GOAT' for 10% off your order when you check them out!**

Proto[Typist] Keyboards

- An all-things keyboard vendor based out of the UK, proto[Typist] is a regular stocker of everything from switches to the latest keyboard and keycap groupbuys. While I've bought things from the many times in the past, they also are a sponsor of my work and allow me to get some of the great switches I write about!

MKUltra Corporation

- We may have stolen a few government secrets to get this one together. MKUltra is a US vendor that truly fills all the gaps other vendors simply don't offer and is continuing to expand their switch and switch related peripherals by the day. **Use code 'GOAT' for 5% off your order when you check them out!**

Divinikey

- Not only do they stock just about everything related to keyboards and switches, but they're super friendly and ship out pretty quick too. Divinikey has been a huge help to me and my builds over the last year or two of doing reviews and they'll definitely hook you up. **Use code 'GOAT' for 5% off your order when you check them out!**

ZealPC

- Do they really need any introduction? Zeal and crew kicked off the custom switch scene many years ago with their iconic Zealios switches and the story of switches today couldn't be told without them. **Use code 'GOAT' (or click the link above) for 5% off your order when you check them out!**

MechMods UK

- A rising vendor based in the UK, Ryan and crew have been a pleasure to work with and have nearly everything you'd need to build your first or fourteenth keyboard. **Go build your latest or greatest one right now with them by using code 'GOAT' at checkout for a 5% discount!**

Dangkeeps

- A longtime supporter of the website and the collection, Dangkeeps has quite possibly the widest variety of switches of any vendor out there. Not only is their switch selection large, but it rotates and is constantly adding new stuff too. **You're going to need 5% off your order with my affiliate to save off the cost of all those switches!**

SwitchOddities

- The brainchild of one my most adventurous proxies, SwitchOddities is a place where you can try out all the fancy, strange, and eastern-exclusive switches that I flex on my maildays with. **Follow my affiliate code and use code 'GOAT' at checkout to save 5% on some of the most interesting switches you'll ever try!**

Cannonkeys

- Does anybody not know of Cannonkeys at this point? One of the largest vendors in North America with keyboards, switches, keycaps, and literally everything you could ever want for a keyboard always in stock and with an incredibly dedicated and loving crew. **Follow my affiliate link above in their name to support both them and I when you buy yourself some switches!**

Kinetic Labs

- One of the most well-rounded keyboard vendors out there, Christian and crew have been supporters of all my switch and switch-adjacent needs for some years now. **I'm honored to have them as an affiliate and think you should check them out using my affiliate link above to support both them and I when you check out their awesome products!**

Further Reading

Geekhack Out of the Vault – Series II IC Thread

Link: <https://geekhack.org/index.php?topic=64963.0>

Wayback: <https://web.archive.org/web/20220918005558/https://geekhack.org/index.php?topic=64963.0>

Kailh Midnight Pro Switch Twitter Announcement

Link: <https://twitter.com/KailhSwitch/status/1519160307746181120?s=20&t=1hDdOardS-vp5gjBZS6-7A>

Wayback:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20220918005528/https://twitter.com/KailhSwitch/status/1519160307746181120?s=20&t=1hDdOardS-vp5gjBZS6-7A>

JWICK ‘Semi Silent’ ZFrontier Announcement

Link: <https://www.zfrontier.com/app/flow/4ZBA1N6kzYOY>

Wayback:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20220918005451/https://www.zfrontier.com/app/flow/4ZBA1N6kzYOY>

JWICK Semi Silent Alibaba Sales Page

Link: https://www.alibaba.com/product-detail/JWK-Semi-Silent-Switch-62g-Gold_1600496357398.html

Wayback: https://web.archive.org/web/20220918005333/https://www.alibaba.com/product-detail/JWK-Semi-Silent-Switch-62g-Gold_1600496357398.html

Maker Mods’ Haimu Switch Review Video

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahShvBMoMWk&ab_channel=MakerMods