

Obsidian L Switch Review

-ThereminGoat, 12/18/2022

With the weather starting to dip into the negatives here in Minnesota, I'm finally coming around to the realization that the end of 2022 is basically only a few weeks away. In the heat of research and finishing out my final semester of coursework the days more or less have just blended together with the only real breaks in time coming every other week with switch reviews. Alongside this realization that we are rather quickly moving towards 2023, I've also come to recall that I am getting ever closer to having posted reviews on this website for *three* consecutive years now. While normally this is the place where I thank all of you for your kind support and readership over those years, I am instead just left at the end of this paragraph pondering how you all let me get this far. Did nobody think to make sure that I'm not insane?

All things considered, it has been quite the year for both switch reviews as well as innovations in the MX switch footprint. 'New Nixie's, 3-in-1 Clickiez, Blackberries, and so many more switches all come to mind when looking back over the crazy year of releases that 2022 has been. Even though I've been more than lucky to review dozens of these amazing switches this year, I know for a fact that I missed plenty that would have made for good reviews all on their own. Some part of this has come from the fact that my reviews have grown in size rather substantially since the start of the year, now featuring both break in testing as well as force curves to help increase my word count and data I can provide in each review. Another part has come from the fact that I've picked up many new side projects along the way such as the Force Curve Repository which now has over 400 different switch force curves in it. However, what exactly the line up of articles are for the incoming year is something that I'm not even certain about, as I have so many ideas that I want to execute on both with reviews and my secret side projects. All I can say is that I hope you'll continue to be with me there throughout 2023 and thank you for checking out the last review of 2022.

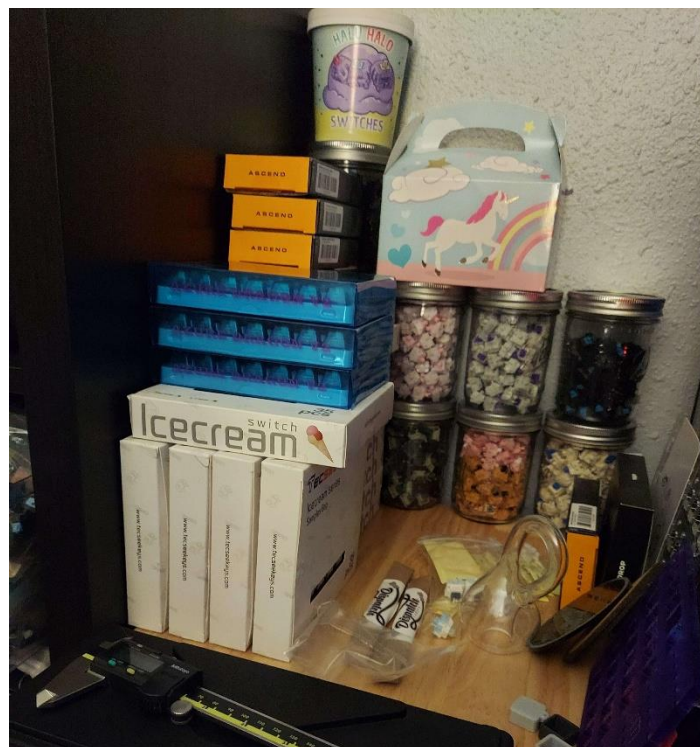


Figure 1: I expect this end of my desk will be fully consumed by the end of next year.

Switch Background

The history of 43 Studio and the Obsidian family of switches is quite possibly one of the histories and lineages that I've beaten the most to death here throughout the years. While I have plenty of massive standalone articles such as the Stealios Controversy and Pandaverse to explore singular topics and groups of switches, bits and pieces of this designer's history have been sprinkled into now four different reviews if you count this one. In the H1s, Obsidians, and More Switch Drama article I introduced 43Studio, followed by discussions of their various releases and history in both my Opblack and Obsidian Pro Switch Reviews. Hell, in the latter of those articles I even went as far as to share and discuss two different prototype switches of theirs that will never be released and have even less information in their backstory than I have presented here at the start of this paragraph. And with all of that history so damn well documented, it's kind of hard to find anything at all to talk about in this Switch Background section.



Figure 2: Sometimes what it feels like when I rehash stories I've already covered a few times.

With that in mind, the unique position that 43 Studio has held in the switch community as well as my own personal collection over the past couple of years is more than worth some discussion on its own. While there are plenty of designers who have released small handfuls of switches over their brief switch designing career, 43 Studio has been a designer in China who has been cranking out designs under that moniker since the end of 2019. Pairing this up with a pretty substantial western outreach and connections with quite a few vendors in both NA and EU markets, 43 Studio has arguably become one of the most recognizable eastern switch designers to reach western markets since their debut. Hitting it off the best with western audiences with the original Opblack release, subsequent releases of future rounds as well as other offerings in the Obsidian Pro switches has sustained their interest to this day and is very likely what

led to their desire to offer the Obsidian L switches to western vendors such as KeebCats and Divinikey (both of whom are awesome sponsors of mine). However, to consider the success and releases of 43 Studio in this extremely western-centered viewpoint would honestly sell short their presence on the global stage as they are assumedly even more involved in the eastern community.

While I in no way, shape, nor form can claim to fully understand just how the eastern mechanical keyboard scene operates, I don't think many people realize just how different switch releases can be over there than from what they are like here. With a significantly increased proximity to manufacturers, as well as a significantly increased ability to communicate complex design wishes to them, it is not uncommon for relatively small sales of switches to be run over in eastern markets that simply couldn't happen here. Utilizing platforms such as QQ and Wechat over more common western keyboard communities' places such as Discord and Reddit, the eastern communities have quite frequently run small batches of < 20,000 switches for insular groups of community members and absolutely zero outside marketing whatsoever. Due to the insulated and secretive nature of many of these sales, its not uncommon for even the most dedicated switch collectors here in the west to hear about these at all, if ever get a chance to collect and/or review them. In much the same fashion, even 43 Studios operates this way a little bit for their releases, even if only for a short while.

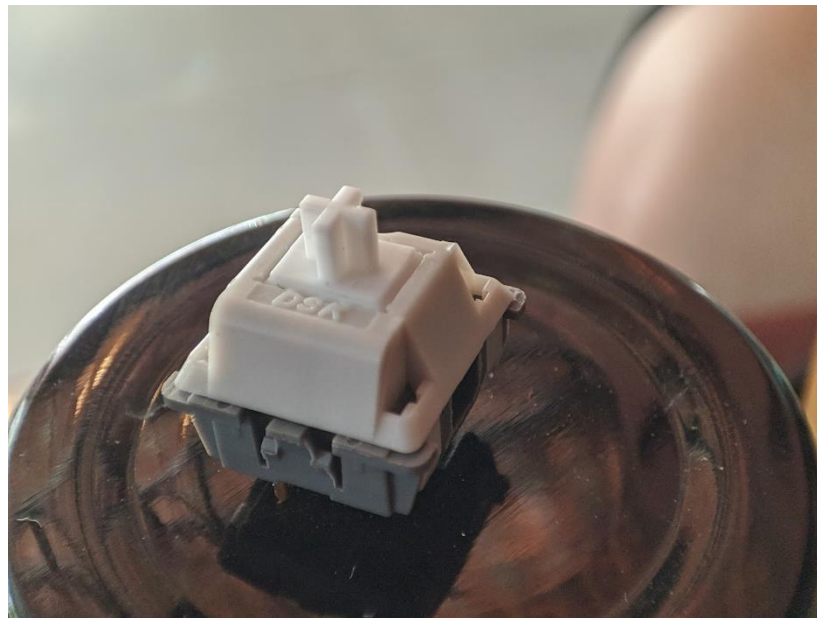


Figure 3: One such instance of a completely unknown switch from a Vietnamese switch collector.

While both the east and the west shared releases of 43 Studio's switches such as Obsidians, Opblacks, Popus, etc., many people would be surprised to hear that there has also been an 'Opblack SE' switch that was ran sometime in the last year or two. Ostensibly ran via this more secretive, eastern exclusive route, its very much likely that wider western audiences simply will never know about these switches at all unless 43 Studio decides to release them to western vendors. Funny enough, I have some insight that the Obsidian L switches very much operated in this fashion as well as I received my batch directly from 43 Studio all the way back in July of this year. For comparison, western vendors have only recently started stocking these in the past few months. Keeping that delay between eastern and western releases in mind, its entirely likely that there are already new 43 Studio switches in the works or that have been released that we over here won't hear about at all until well into 2023.

What makes 43 Studio unique in all of these releases and my vague suggestions about eastern exclusive switches is their steadfast dedication to connecting their switch releases to western audiences. Sure, the Obsidian SE switches might not have made it over here, but the fact that they are releasing *some* switches to western vendors is more than can be said for the vast majority of switch designers and sellers over in the east. While I'm sure each and every groupbuy runner and switch designer has their own reasons for not wanting to put up with the hassle of dealing with western vendors and collectors like me, the success that 43 Studio *has* seen should really be indicative of the fact that western audiences are really interested in the switches that are being produced for eastern markets first. So, if anyone from Chinese markets in particular are reading this, I highly encourage you to push designers to bridge the gap with western vendors and the community if at all possible. I suspect that eastern markets still have a few burgeoning designers that could really make a name for themselves in 2023 so long as they choose to reach out like 43 Studio has thus far.



Figure 4: Opblack SE switch compared to OG Opblack (Left) and ALS (Right).
(Courtesy of ShadowProgr)

Climbing off of my soapbox a bit to bring this review back to the scope of 43 Studio's Obsidian L switches, as implied before there isn't all that much historical context I have for these switches. While I know that they were at least produced and sold in the east as early as July of 2022, the Obsidian Ls began to make their appearance in late 2022 in western markets around \$0.65 per switch depending on the vendor they were purchased from. Similar to that of the original Obsidian switches with respect to their polycarbonate & nylon mixture top housings and nylon bottom housings, the major marketing point which inspired the 'L' in the name is that of a new long-pole stem made of Durock/JWK's 'P3' stem material. Whether or not they will see repeated production runs and/or restocking with western vendors is currently unknown, but it is assumed they'll be around for a reasonable amount of time as it is still possible to purchase Opblack and Obsidian Pro switches via some vendors well after their initial release dates.

Obsidian L Switch Performance

Appearance

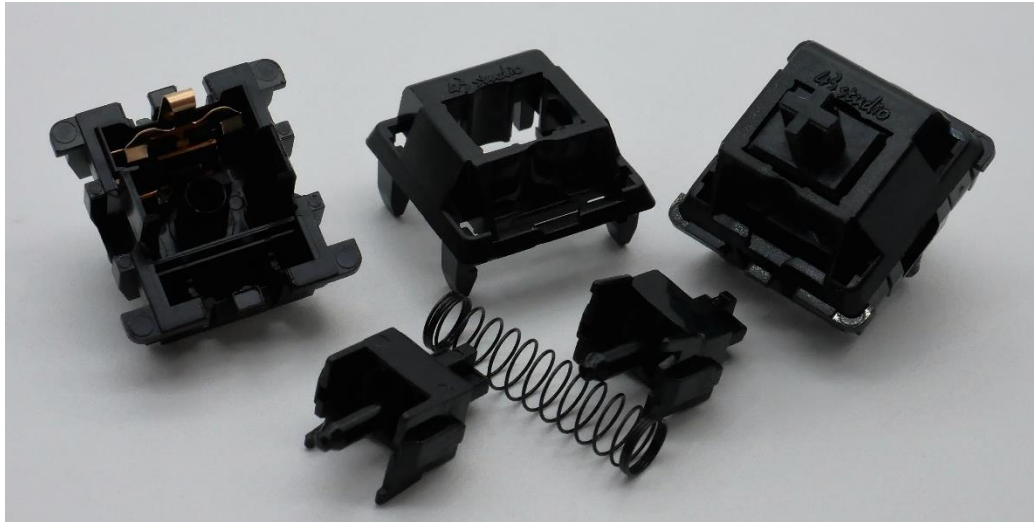


Figure 5: Oh look, another Obsidian switch with all black components.

At the highest level, the Obsidian L switches come in a predictable all-black colorway similar to that of all of the other Obsidian switch iterations from 43Studios. Interestingly, these are immediately distinguishable from that of more recent Obsidian switch entries such as the Pro and Pro V2s in that the Obsidian L switches are opaque black whereas the Pro line carry a very subtle translucency to their top housings. This is particularly noticeable when looking just underneath the nameplate region where the leaf resides in the closed switches. However, the differences in appearances between the latest Obsidian switches in the Ls and the Pro/Pro V2s does not just stop at the highest level. A deeper look into the mold-level details can help shed some light as to the design of these switches as well as explain some of their performance notes in the following sections.



Figure 6: Obsidian Pro V2 (Left) top housing translucency as compared to the Obsidian L (Right) opacity.

Initially setting out into the top housings of the Obsidian L switches, I must admit that I was expecting at least a subtle update to the design of them given the stem material changes. While it may not be immediately recallable to many readers, its not uncommon for manufacturers and/or designers to change both top housings and stem molds at the same time to prevent one from falling out of spec with the other and leading to obviously implied wobble issues. Instead of any updates, these look more or less just like that of the Pros and original Obsidians before them. Externally there is the same comic sans-like '43 studio' nameplate as well as a long rectangular LED slot with centered circular indentation. Internally we get a bit of a blast from the past in my review history and encounter the classic Durock/JWK top housing molds featuring capital letter mold markings in the upper left- and right-hand corners as well as rectangular raised features on each of the four sides.



Figure 7: Obsidian L top housing externals showing '43 studio' nameplate and long rectangular LED slot with centered circular indent.

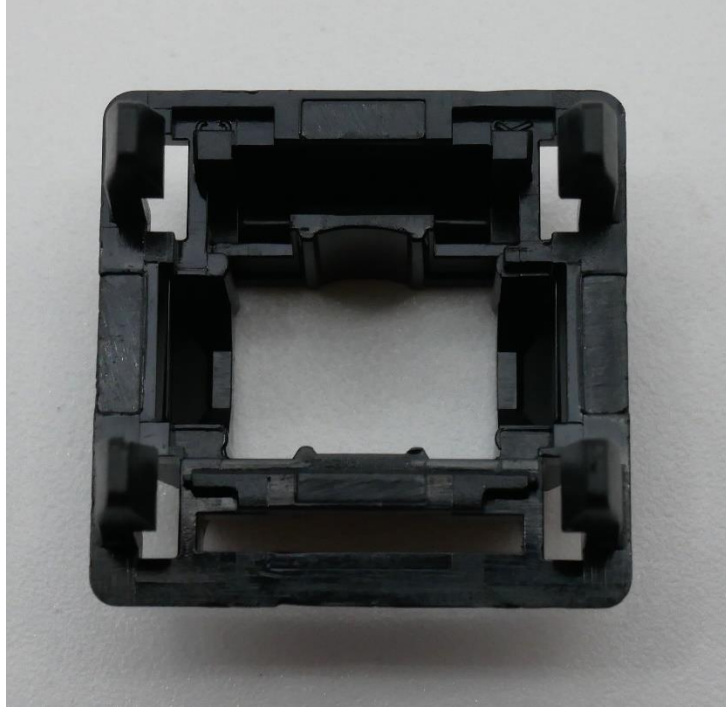


Figure 8: Obsidian L top housing internals showing rectangular pads all four sides and partial capital letter mold markings in upper corners.

Coming next to the stems of the Obsidian L switches, these at least appear to be a bit more refined and different than that of the previous Obsidian switches before them, as one would expect. While they opt to come in standard MX style mounts like that of all other 43 studio switches except the original Obsidian Pros, they come in a much longer stem length just shy of 13.00 mm in total length and with tapered slider rails as well. Additionally, I swear I feel like the central pole taper is a bit more aggressive in these new 'P3' material stems, though to be entirely honest I'm not quite certain how to measure or verify this for myself. Other than that, the only other feature perhaps worth noting is that the pair of mold ejector circles is not located on the front plate of the stems where they are in the majority of other switches, but rather on the backplate instead.



Figure 9: Obsidian L stems showing backplate mold ejector circles, tapered slider rails, and tiered center pole.

Did I already mention the blast from the past with respect to the top housing mold features being similar to old Durock/JWK markings? Well in case I didn't make that point salient the first time, it should become *infinitely* more clear here in the bottom housings. The same presence of 8 mold ejector circles around the upper rim as well as four in the base of the bottom house interior is dead on similar to that of old Durock/JWK designs and the exterior only further exudes that energy. On the underside of the bottom housings, there is a single capital letter mold marking between the third and fourth LED/diode pins that makes it more or less appear as if these switches are using much more old molds than recent Obsidian releases. While yes, there is at least one obvious design choice difference in that the bottom of the slider rails are slightly padded on the inside, it more or less appears as if these were molds that could have been used with Opblack or original Obsidian switches before them.

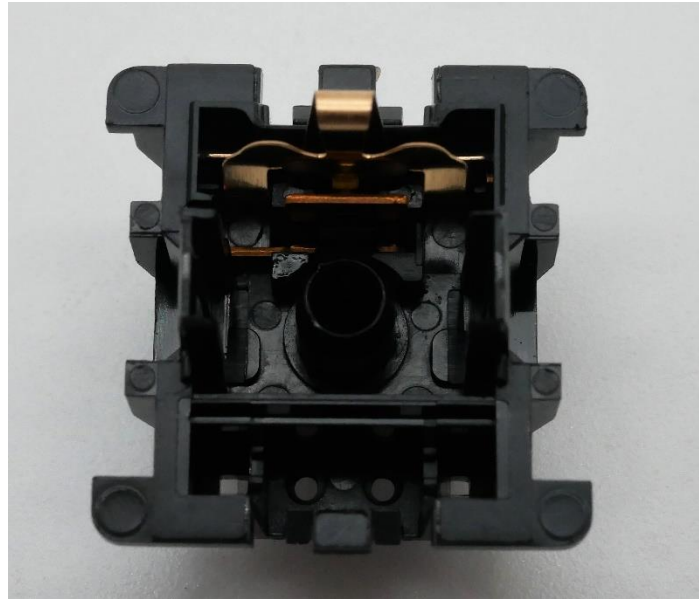


Figure 9: Obsidian L bottom housing internal design showing mold indentation circles around upper rim and padded bottoming out rails.



Figure 8: Obsidian L bottom housing external design showing single capital letter mold marking between 3rd and 4th LED/Diode pins.

Push Feel

To put this rather bluntly given all the people who have complained about the long windedness of my reviews in recent months: I'm rather unimpressed with how the Obsidian L switches turned out. Now, before you immediately jump to pointing out my well documented personal distaste for long poled switches as the obvious source of bias in this conclusion, I do want to note that the long pole is actually the least of my issues with these switches. In fact, I would say that these hardly strike me as switches that one would market as 'long pole', as they come across a bit more subtle than many of the true needle-point bottom outs people have come to expect with that marketing term. The polycarbonate/nylon over nylon construction of the housings in the Obsidian switches has always personally come across as a bit thin and somewhat plasticky feeling without any lubrication in the switches to dampen these housing collisions out, but these new 'P3' material stems only heighten this level of thinness even further. Pointed in the bottoming out with a slightly more ragged, but equally as plasticky topping out on either ends of a somewhat smooth but not all that great linear region makes for a rather rough experience for a modern linear switch.

Given the newness of these switches and their subsequent release prior to (or at least in the same rough timeframe as) the Obsidian Pro V2 switches, I genuinely had expected these would pick up on the improved mold smoothness and overall solid design that 43 Studio was seemingly working towards in more recent releases. Hell, even the unreleased Pink and 'Switch With No Good Name' prototypes I have from 43Studio come across with a better construction that is a bit more smooth than these. With this sort of feeling in mind, it's pretty hard not to look at the mold similarities between the top and bottom housings to previous 43 Studio switches and just discount this as a marginal update on those outdated designs. And that's not necessarily saying outdated with respect to the sum total of switches – I mean outdated with respect to *43 Studio's own progress*.

With all that framing and disappointment in mind, I do want to say that perhaps the smoothness isn't nearly as bad as I had chalked it up to be in those initial paragraphs. While certainly not as smooth as more recent 43 Studio switches, this strikes me as decently average across the sum total of linear switches that are out there on the current market today. Match this up with the relatively consistent spring design across 43 Studio's releases as can be seen in the 'Switch Comparison' section below, and its not all that out of the realm of expectations for their switches. That being said, though, you would have a hard time guessing these came after the Pro and Pro V2 switches when trying these out.

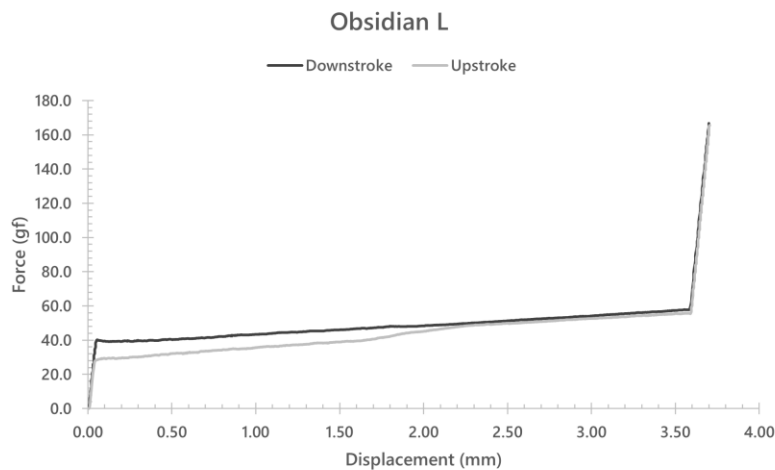


Figure 10: Obsidian L complete force curve diagram.

Sound

Furthering the meme yet again with respect to the similarities between the ‘Push Feel’ and ‘Sound’ sections, the notes I made above regarding the general thinness and sharpness of the housing collisions are *rather significantly* more noticeable in the sound category as a whole. While I have no doubt that these switches were intended to be a bit on the higher pitched side with a polycarbonate/nylon mixed top housing as well as a bottom out onto a stem pole, what the Obsidian L switches deliver is quite a bit away from those expectations. Even without much sound prevalent from scratch, the sharp and pointed bottom out on the opposite end from the thin, plasticky, and somewhat jagged sounding topping out makes for an experience that is a bit out of the norm for 43 Studio’s Obsidian family of switches. With respect to their sound score found below, I perhaps give these almost too much benefit of the doubt in case I just somehow don’t comprehend something about this design that I should be seeing. (To be entirely honest, I’ve questioned my own intuition several times over given how far these deviated from my expectations.)

Wobble

Even with lackluster push feel and sound performances as noted above, the stem wobble in the Obsidian L switches is by far the most egregious issue present in their stock form. On a single switch basis, there is more N/S and E/W stem wobble than all previous 43 Studio switches as well as the *vast* majority of all switches ever having been made by Durock/JWK. I genuinely suspect that this is due solely to the redesign/remolding of the stems ostensibly without any sort of changes to the top housing molds or tolerances. Leading to a nearly circular amount of wobble, I would imagine quite a few people would have an issue with these switches.

However, that is not to say that the issues stop there at the single switch view, either. When comparing across the small but not insignificant batch of switches I received, the variability was quite stark. I’d say roughly 1/3 switches had this sort of ‘holy shit’ level of stem wobble I alluded to in the previous paragraph whereas the other 2/3rds were slightly better, but not by much. If I were to build a board with these, it is very likely that I would need to go through and divide up the switches in the batch that I received in order to perhaps skirt around some of these drastic wobble differences in their stock forms.

Measurements

Obsidian L Switch Measurements			
Component		Denotation	mm.
Stem	Front/Back Plate Length	A	7.03
	Stem Width	B	5.52
	Stem Length with Rails	C	8.56
	Rail Width	D	2.10
	Center Pole Width	E	1.90
	Rail Height	F	5.03
	Total Stem Height	G	12.99
Bottom Housing	Diagonal Between Rails	L	9.50
	Interior Length Across	M	9.62
	Rail Width	N	2.61
	Center Hole Diameter	O	2.25
Top Housing	Horizontal Stem Gap	X	7.65
	Vertical Stem Gap	Y	6.02
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.

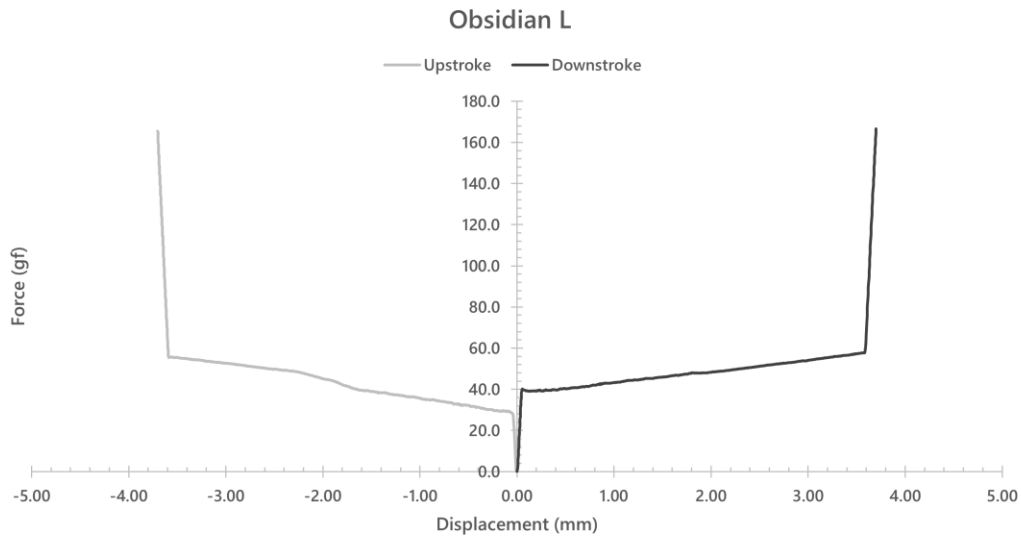


Figure 11: Obsidian L switch 'butterfly style' force curve diagram.

Obsidian L	
<i>Switch Type: Linear</i>	<i>Durock/JWK</i>
Total Stem Travel	3.585 mm
Peak Force	57.9 gf
Bottom Out Force	57.9 gf
# of Upstroke Points	1334
# of Downstroke Points	1331

Figure 12: Numerical details regarding the stock Obsidian L 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

Obsidian L 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

- Even though the Obsidian L switches have quite a large amount of stem wobble as is in their stock form, this does somewhat appear to increase at 17,000 actuations across the batch of switches that I tested.
- Interestingly, while there was not a substantial improvement in the sound with respect to either the scratchiness or the leaf ping of the switches, the overall 'plasticky' vibes that I've mentioned

in the review above do appear to tone down quite a bit. Even after just a little bit of breaking in these switches come across much more palatable and in line with expectations.

34,000 Actuations

- The same exact points regarding both the sound of the switches as well as stem wobble at 17,000 actuations appears to hold true here at 34,000 actuations without many changes on that front.
- The one difference at this point in testing, however, is that the Obsidian L switches also begin to ever so slightly feel more smooth and as if their small grain scratch has rubbed away. At 34,000 actuations this is incredibly subtle but it definitely becomes much more readily noticeable beyond this point.

51,000 Actuations

- Out at 51,000 actuations, there does not appear to be much of a difference in the performance of the broken in Obsidian L switches versus their stock counterparts that wasn't previously noted in the 34,000 and 17,000 actuation sections above.
- While I don't think that this breaking in necessarily moves the needle a lot on the Obsidian L switches, it does at least give a little bit of hope that their performance may initially improve over their out of the box performance and provide a better experience with some level of modifications.

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 switches to the Obsidian L switches side by side.

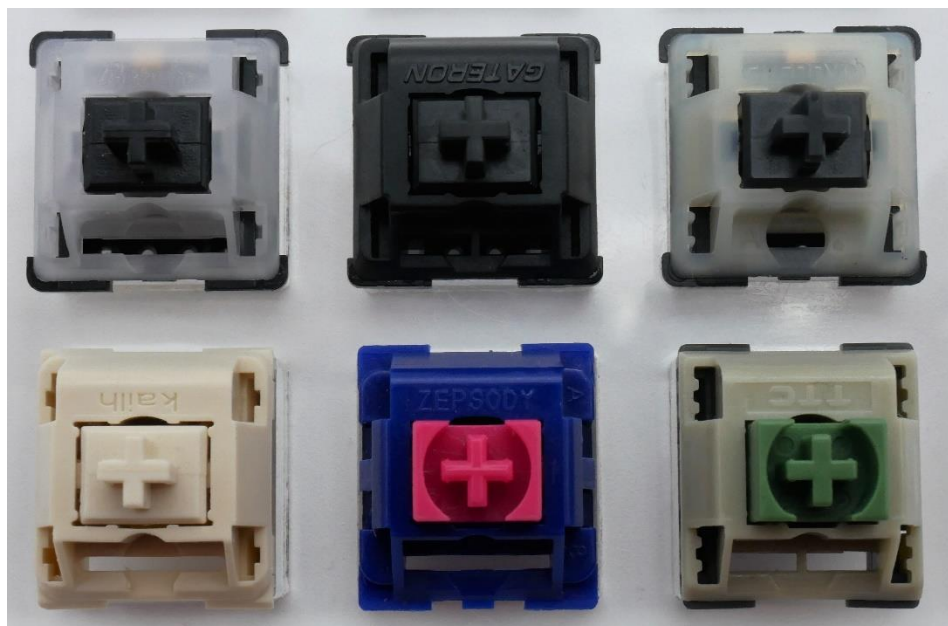
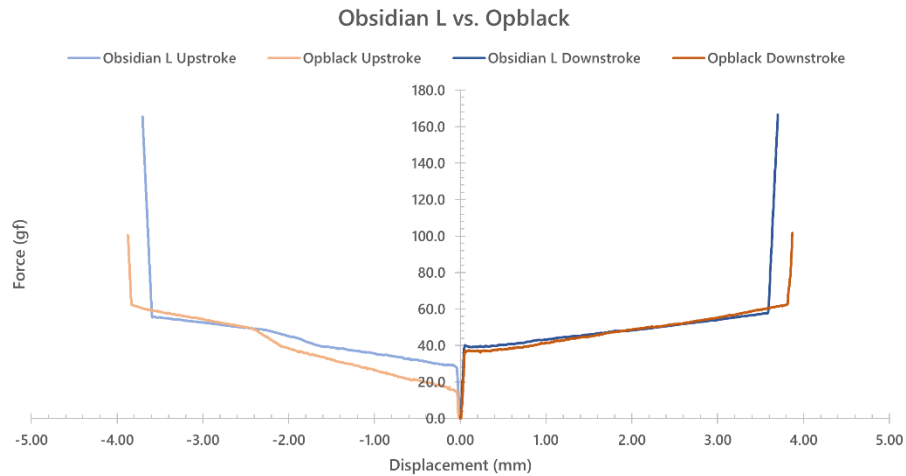


Figure 13: Switches for comparison. (L-R, Top-Bot: Opblack, Gateron Oil King, Cherry MX 'New Nixie', Novelkeys Cream, Zepsody Bluebonnet, and TTC Wild (42g))

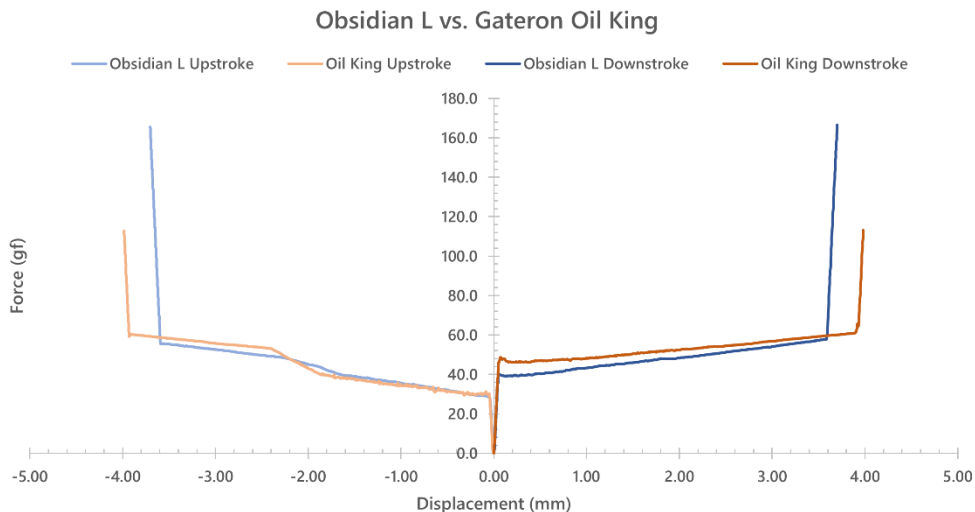
Opblack

- While these two switches carry a fairly similar overall volume to them, the Obsidian L switches are a bit more distinctively pointed and sharp in their housing collisions than the Opblacks.
- With respect to stem wobble, even though the Obsidian L switches were designed and released quite a bit of time after the original Opblack switches, they do have a bit more wobble to them in both stem directions.
- The Opblack and Obsidian L switches are both fairly similar to each other in terms of stock, unlubed smoothness.



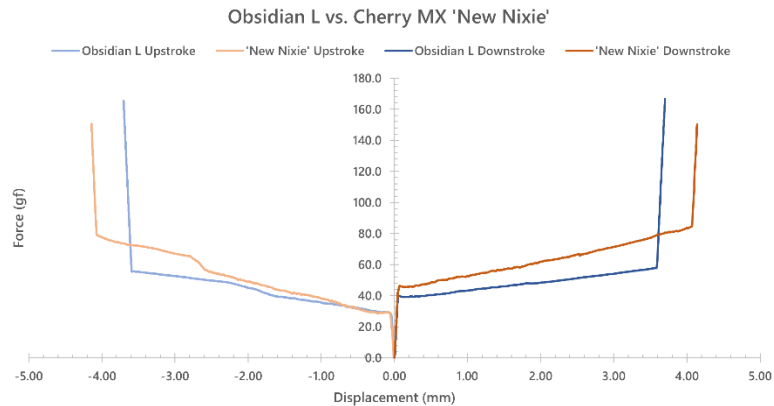
Gateron Oil King

- To the surprise of nobody who has tried the Gateron Oil Kings before, the more recent premium lubrication job present in them makes them significantly more smooth than that of the stock Obsidian L switches.
- Given the 'long pole' nature of the Obsidian L's design, the bottom out in these switches is a bit more thin, sharp, and pointed than the bottoming out of the Gateron Oil King switches.
- The Gateron Oil Kings, both in terms of single switch performance as well as batch wide variability, are much better in stem wobble than that of the Obsidian L switches.



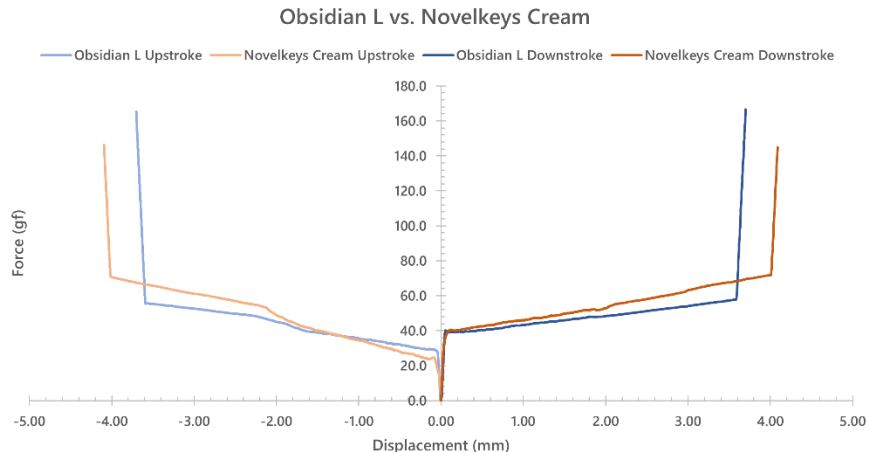
Cherry MX 'New Nixie'

- The sheer volume difference between these two switches is striking. The general loudness in housing collisions of the Obsidian L switches nearly makes the 'New Nixies' look like silent linears by comparison.
- As well, given the updated mold designs made by Cherry for this early 2023 switch release, the New Nixie switches are much better off with respect to stem wobble than that of the Obsidian L switches.
- While the grain of the scratch between these two switches is seemingly comparable, the overall feeling of the New Nixies is much more thick and substantial than that of the Obsidian L switches. While I'm not entirely sure why this is the case, I suspect that it has something to do with the housing material differences between the two.



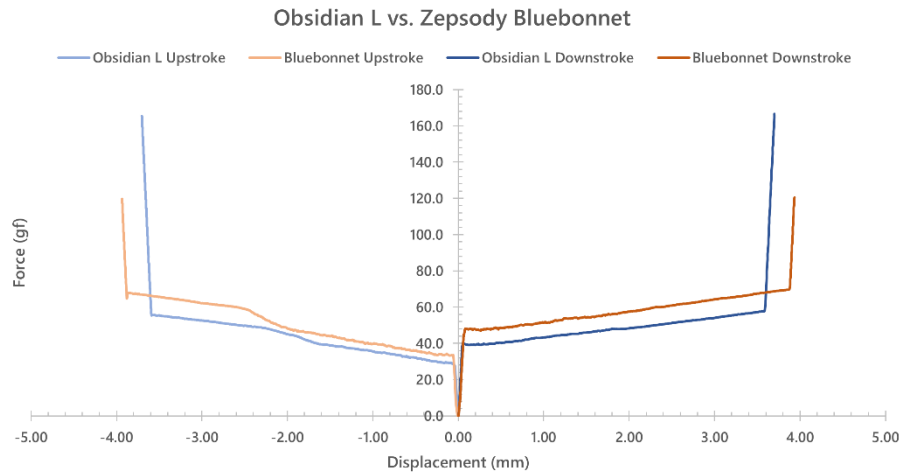
Novelkeys Cream

- In a straight up head-to-head comparison of the scratch between these two switches, the Novelkeys Creams take yet another victim by showing their unmatched, scratchy superiority over all other linears.
- With respect to stem wobble in both the N/S and E/W directions, it was a bit surprising to me to find that the Obsidian L switches were more wobbly than the very first runs of the Novelkeys Cream switches.
- Whereas the bottoming out of the Obsidian L switches is more pointed and distinctive than that of the Novelkeys Creams, the opposite is true for the topping out when comparing these two switches.



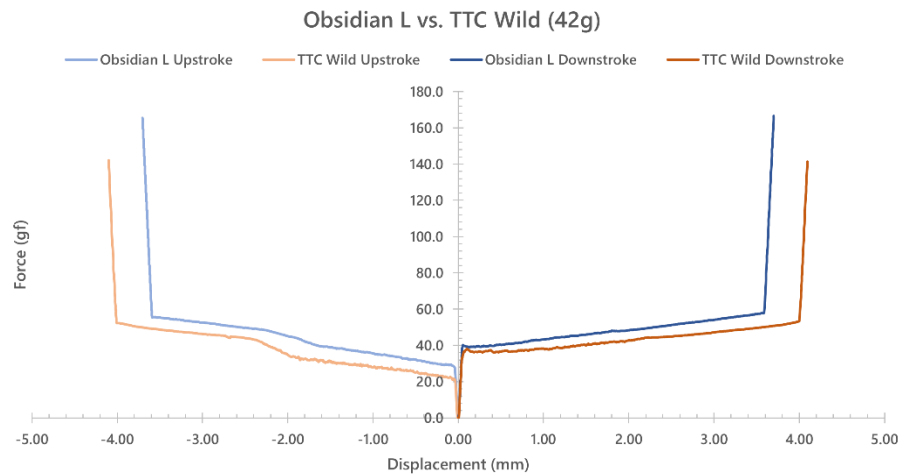
Zepsody Bluebonnet

- In a similar vein to the overall sound comparison made with the Cherry MX 'New Nixie' switches above, the Bluebonnets are nearly silent linears when compared to the Obsidian L switches.
- Whereas the topping out feeling of these two switches is similar in terms of overall impact, I'm assuming that the material differences between the two top housings here causes the Obsidian Ls to feel much more thin and plasticky than that of the Bluebonnets.
- These two switches are fairly comparable in terms of overall smoothness, though their scratch feeling is basically on opposite ends of the spectrum. The Zepsody Bluebonnets have a large grain scratch feeling whereas the Obsidian Ls is much more fine.



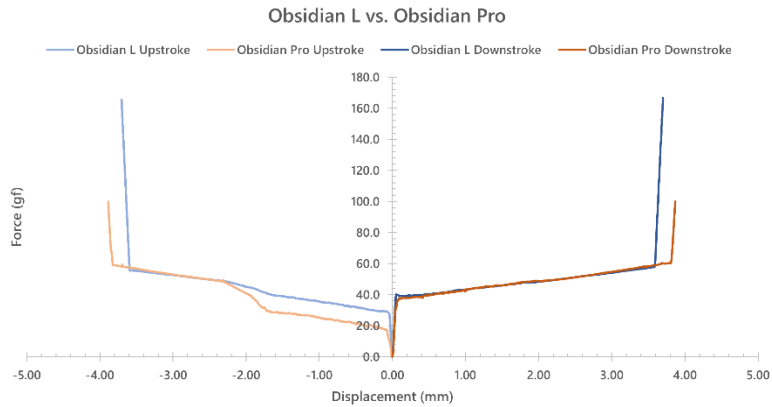
TTC Wild (42g)

- For not necessarily being marketed on their long pole aesthetic, the TTC Wild switches pack a surprisingly stronger punch at bottoming out than that of the Obsidian L switches.
- In terms of both N/S and E/W direction stem wobble, the TTC Wild switches beat out the Obsidian L switches by a fairly sizeable margin.
- The overall smoothness of the TTC Wild switches is much more palatable out of the box and in line with modern linear switch releases than that of the Obsidian L switches.



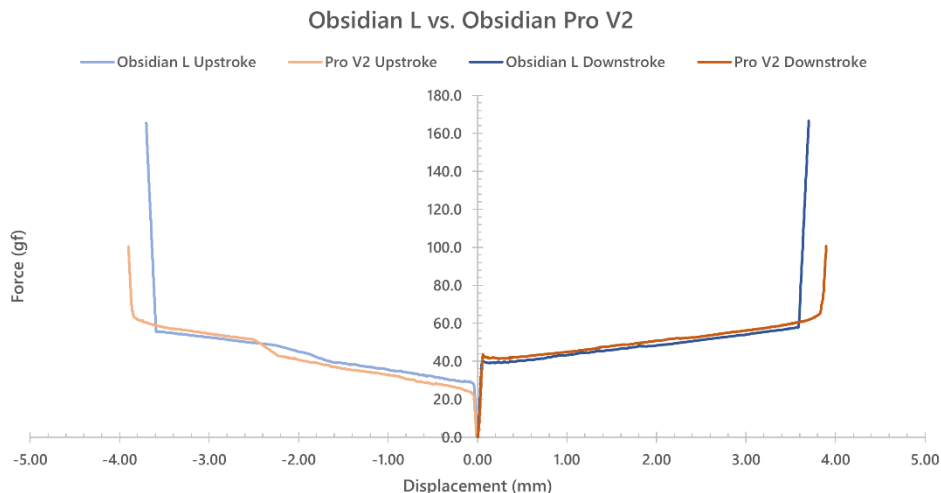
Obsidian Pro

- For the Obsidian Pros not exactly having the best overall stem wobble performance, the Obsidian L switches do seem to have somehow made this situation worse than before. I suspect that this is in some part due to the differences in stem materials for the L switches not having been compensated for in housing mold tweaks.
- The Obsidian Pro switches are a bit more smooth than that of the Obsidian L switches and carry a slightly more lubed feeling to them even though they don't come with any factory lube.
- In terms of housing collisions and overall sound, the Obsidian L switches come across significantly more cheap and plasticky than that of the first iteration of Pro switches.



Obsidian Pro V2

- While I wouldn't claim that the differences in factory lubrication and smoothness would be all that noticeable when comparing the Pro V1 to Pro V2 switches, when comparing the Pro V2s to Obsidian Ls it becomes much more obvious. The Pro V2 switches are quite substantially smoother in their design than that of the Obsidian L switches.
- In addition to improving smoothness in the latest Obsidian Pro switches, the Pro V2s also have much less stem wobble which only further puts them out of the league of that of the Obsidian L switches.
- On a similar note to quite a few of the comparisons made in the list above, when comparing the sound of the Pro V2s to the Ls, the Obsidian Ls come across much more thin, plasticky, and almost cheap sounding in head-to-head testing.



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.

Obsidian L		
<i>Switch Type: Linear</i>		<i>Durock/JWK</i>
20	/35	Push Feel
14	/25	Wobble
5	/10	Sound
11	/20	Context
6	/10	Other
56	/100	Total

Push Feel

On the upside, these switches only have a minor amount of small grain scratch and a relatively subtle stem-pole bottoming out to help ease people into that marketing rabbit hole with switches. On the much larger downside, the P3 stem material combines with the PC-Nylon mix over Nylon housing design to produce a seemingly flimsy, thin, and plasticky like feeling set of housing collisions that make these switches feel uncharacteristically toy-like for 43 Studios.

Wobble

The wobble is the most egregious of issues with these switches, coming not only with quite a substantial amount of both N/S and E/W stem wobble that would bother many a user, but also a pretty wide swing in batch wide variability that almost dictates the need for cherry picking in builds.

Sound

I'm not going to lie here; I've probably given too much benefit of the doubt to this category. While the obvious thinness and plasticky like nature noted above comes out in the sound of these switches in the worst way possible, I am taking the high road and assuming these switches were intending to come out on the higher pitched side, even if they did poorly at that.

Context

While the availability and designer recognizability from 43 Studio makes these switches fairly accessible to those in the west (and almost certainly so to those in the east), the price per performance just simply isn't there with these. While 43 has had their share of ups and downs with respect to switch design throughout the years, these have me wanting for something else.

Other

To give 43 Studios some credit where credit is due, I appreciate their willingness to go back and attempt to offer subtle variations on previous switches to meet current market requests and/or trends. That being said, though, the execution definitely needs to be better for this in the future.

Statistics

Average Score			Obsidian L		
26.4	/35	Push Feel	20	/35	Push Feel
17.0	/25	Wobble	14	/25	Wobble
5.6	/10	Sound	5	/10	Sound
12.7	/20	Context	11	/20	Context
6.1	/10	Other	6	/10	Other
67.8	/100	Total	56	/100	Total
Obsidian L Overall Rank			T-#190/211 (56/100)		
Obsidian L 'Hard' Rank			T-#198/211 (39/70)		
Obsidian L 'Soft' Rank			T-#137/211 (17/30)		

If you are looking at this statistics section for the first time and wondering where the hell are the other 210 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

All things considered, I'm honestly rather surprised at how this review turned out. Unfortunately, this is not like most of the times in which I've kicked off a 'Final Conclusions' section by stating how much a switch's performance blew past my expectations. While the Obsidian Ls certainly did not fall in line with my expectations, its because they severely underperformed versus the expectations that 43 Studio has set for themselves and their Obsidian line of switches. These were a complete step back from the original Pro and Pro V2 Obsidians, bringing on a scratchier, wobblier, and altogether more thrown-together feeling switch that more or less is a great representation of what I mean when I describe 'plasticky' feeling switches. As well, on top of these issues with increased wobble and incredibly thin and fragile housing collisions, the Obsidian Ls aren't all that noticeable as truly stem pole-bottoming out linears. Typically when those types of linears perform poorly it is because they completely appear to ignore all other aspects of the switch design in order to maximize the sharp pointedness of the bottoming out. The Obsidian Ls, however, are left subtle at best in their namesake trait.

I tried out these switches because I've become quite enamored with 43 Studio's history of switches and their dedication to continuing to design and improve upon releases moving forward. Sure, they've had their hiccups here and there with things like the Popu switches, but in my opinion their dedication to releases in both the east and the west is why I've put up long form reviews for so many of

their releases throughout the years. Unfortunately, I just do not think that these hit the mark and it leaves me a bit disappointed with the Obsidian L's overall performance. (And no, you won't get a "taking the L" joke out of me in these closing remarks.) I can only hope that 2023 has some further advances on 43 Studio's Obsidian Pro line or even new iterations that appear to have been more thoroughly constructed.

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

Divinikey's Obsidian L Sales Page

Link: <https://divinikey.com/products/43-studio-obsidian-long-linear-switches>

Wayback: <https://web.archive.org/web/20221217032426/https://divinikey.com/products/43-studio-obsidian-long-linear-switches>

KeebCats UK Obsidian L Sales Page

Link: <https://keebcats.com/products/obsidian-l-long-stem-linear-switches>

Wayback: <https://web.archive.org/web/20221217032349/https://keebcats.com/products/obsidian-l-long-stem-linear-switches>

Mekibo Obsidian L Sales Page

Link: <https://mekibo.com/products/obsidian-v2-long-pole-switches>

Wayback: <https://web.archive.org/web/20221217064247/https://mekibo.com/products/obsidian-v2-long-pole-switches>

KeebCats' Obsidian L Switch Typing Test

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mI0QBSzbxBM&ab_channel=KeebCats