

Zealio V1 Redux Switch Review

-ThereminGoat, 11/28/2021

One of the more interesting things about forcing yourself to sit down and produce content at a regular, incredibly rigid schedule for a long period of time is that you start to segment your life around that content regardless of what it is. For example, I find myself starting out these reviews thinking about ‘since this last review I’ve done x, y, and z’ or ‘I can’t wait to show off these switches later this week that I picked up in the middle of writing of this review’. As a consequence of this, though, the content does tend to bleed together over a long enough stretch of time, and I do really kind of lose sight of just *how long* I’ve been writing for and just *how much* I’ve written in that span of time. In grand perspective, my first review was dated for 11/26/2019 and since this is being published on 11/28, this officially means that I’ve been writing and sharing my opinions about switches for *two entire years*. While the website has been around an even shorter length of time than that two-year-old birthday, when I step back and really look of it, I am shocked to find that it is almost 2 years old, itself.

Within that span of time being pretty regularly updated with my verbose, completely overly detailed, and some would say mildly obsessive set of reviews, there is quite a substantial amount of opinions of mine that I’ve thrown around. After 60 full length articles and over a 130 scorecards, I’ve amassed what feels like an insane number of readers and it’s a pretty solid chance that you reading this here, right now, have likely been to my website at least once before to look at reviews or to gawk at the insanity. Regardless of what brings you here now or maybe has brought you here prior, I do want to take the beginning of this review to really stress a few key points about my switch reviews, my content, etc. The first and foremost thing that I want to clear up, though, is:

I am *not* the ultimate authority on switches.

Please, dear readers, hold back your gasps and try and collect the many pieces of your mind I’ve just shattered with that revelation. Even though melodramatics were never quite my type of humor, I think it is a really good way to remind you all that I am just one goat who has tried a lot of switches and feels inclined to share his opinions with you about them. Way too often (and especially as of late) I have seen people in servers saying things to the effect of “well Goat says x,y,z are better” or “Goat doesn’t like them so I don’t”, and these types of phrases are one of the things I genuinely dislike about content creation as a whole. I am a singular opinion in a pretty vast ocean of opinions that is the mechanical keyboard community. My opinion, in the grand scheme of it all, is still just an opinion and equally as valid as your own personal feelings. While I do genuinely strive to be a much more informed opinion, and like to validate my claims, thoughts, feelings, etc. whenever I can with physical switches in hand, at the end of the day I am ultimately still as fallible as any content creator out there and I’ve taken the last three sentences to try and drive that into your mind. So, to that end, please do keep in mind when reading all of these reviews that I am not going to be using *your* keyboard, and thus whatever *you* want to build with at the end of the day will always be the best switch for you.

Further building off of that momentum, I tend to personally think that the best way to use my switch reviews is as a set of ‘guided notes’ more than a ‘definitive set of facts.’ Given that reviews are always subjective, regardless of the polish that they have put on them or overall “objectivity” that they tout, one of the best things that I can do, and strive to do as a reviewer is to maintain a consistent, coherent, and constant stream of content for you all to pick from. By putting out as consistent of content as I can in ever sense of the word, you can line up your own experiences, feelings, and opinions next to

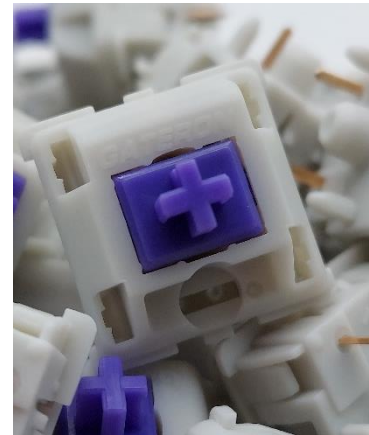


Figure 1: In addition to the review count, the switches are also piling up too!

mine and eventually grow an understanding of how our two opinions interact. Say for example that you 100% categorically disagree with me on every single point I make for tactile switch reviews. While that may make this review in particular a bit awkward, you can still read it in order to generate an initial guess as to whether or not you may like or dislike these switches. And while you may choose to buy or not buy based on my review or your understanding of how our opinions line up, I will still 100% push for you to consume other reviews, talk to other people in the community, and above all else find a way to try them out for yourself. Even after having tried over 1300 different switches, even I can still be surprised with how good or bad switches are based on the opinions, information, and details I gather about them before getting them into my hands and into a board. (Hint: This switch is one of those too!)

So, in order to summarize this all up, I want to really stress that my reviews at the end of the day are just a singular set of opinions. I'm honored that a lot of you trust my word and believe in my content enough to have supported me over these last two years of writing, but I think some of you may hold just a little bit too strong of faith in my opinion sometimes. Be skeptical, consume other content, buy and test out switches for yourself. Do all of these things not only because it will help you better interface with my content, but because it will also teach you more about the coolest damn part of keyboards, and above all help you find the switches that *you* like most.

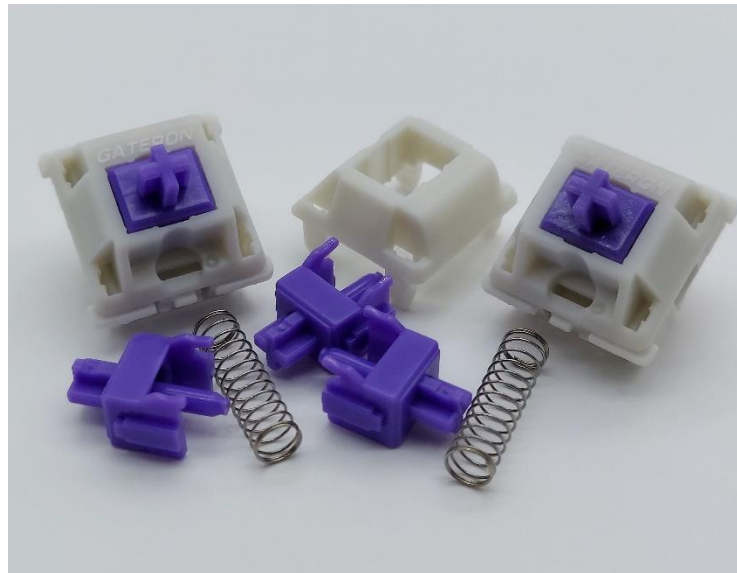


Figure 2: But do please wait until after you're done with this review before going to find others...

Switch Background

Contrary to what the name of 'Zealios V1 Redux' might imply, these switches actually come at the most recent end of Zealios switch history and *not* at the gap between the V1 and V2 Zealios switches we've all become accustomed to over the last handful of years. While previously I've touched on the history of V1 Zealios (specifically that of R1 through R3) in my Winkeyless.KR Fake 'Zeal' Clear Switch Review, I unfortunately do not have the time nor word budget to cover the rest of the history up through V2 Zealios here in this review. One thing I will leave of note, though, is that one of the last Zeal Geekhack threads which garnered a decent amount of crowd participation came about in January of 2019 with the announcement of a 'pink, Valentine's Day Healion recolor' with further details to be determined. Aside announcing the details of these switches, later to be named Sakurios and Roselios, the threads surrounding these were decently populated with suggestions for names of these switches as Zeal had requested for suggestions on such.



Figure 3: I'm not saying that my name suggestion was leaps and bounds better than 'Sakurios' and 'Roselios', but I'll leave you to decide that for yourself.

However, the overall decrease in Geekhack thread participation with Zeal's posts about switches over time was not a phenomenon isolated to that of just his posts specifically. In fact, the mechanical keyboard scene, as well as its commonly used means of interaction, have changed quite a bit over recent years. Various platforms which used to be more central to the posting and information sharing of this hobby have all changed differently as a function of their location and general accessibility. Geekhack, for instance, has seemingly seen a decline in interactions outside of the 'Marketplace' section which houses Interest Checks and Groupbuys for new keyboards and keycap sets. While I don't necessarily have hard and fast data to back up this claim, the growing pile of old threads from vendors, artisan makers, and general enthusiasts from several years prior lying abandoned (and full of interesting information, for that matter) seem to speak to that point well. Reddit, on the other hand, has seen a noticeable uptick in users and posts, though with a general decline in quality of posts proportional to that of the audience count in my opinion. While there are also several other platforms which could easily be mentioned here in the discussion of change such as Deskthority and Keebtalk, which are all still around and active to some degree, one of the biggest up and coming platforms of the past few years has been Discord. And with this rise of such as a mainstay of the keyboard community, starting in December of 2018, the majority of Zeal's teasers, announcements, and details about switches have come primarily through Discord.

First appearing in mid-December of 2018, the Zeal Discord server has been one of the primary means of both interaction with Zeal as well as announcement of Zeal based products since its opening. While there is obviously a slew of information and product announcements that could be parsed through in a discussion of the Zeal Discord server, I'll save the discussion of non-switch related things (like switch openers and keyboards) to some other content creator with too much free time. The first of the interesting switches teased in the Zeal Discord era also came by way of announcement on Zeal's Instagram on January 6th of 2021. This clear housing, orange stem-colored switch later went on to be discussed as one of the first prototypes of Zeal's "3-in-1 switch." Aside from being the "world's first transformer switch that can be clicky, tactile or linear" according to the advertisements, these represented the first substantial product innovation by Zeal in several year's time with the Zilent V2 switches being the last major technology change present within the Zeal switch lineup.

Subsequent announcements about the 3-in-1 switches were rather sparse, with the next coming on March 20th of 2020 in the form of a color poll for the 3-in-1 'Clickiez' switch, which featured



Figure 4: 1st Zeal 3-in-1 switch prototype photo featuring orange stem.

prototypes with Minty Green and Highlighter Yellow colored stems in clear housings. While the results of the Instagram story with this stem color poll was initially posted can no longer be found, Discord emotes appear to stress that Minty Green was the clear winner amongst the community. A final, and most recent announcement as of the time of writing this, was made about the ‘Clickiez’ switch on September 11th of 2020, simply showing off the Minty Green prototype featuring the brand new Gateron top housing which also features, for the first time, a Zeal nameplate stamped on it as well. This would thus mark not only the second Gateron switch in history to feature a name other than Gateron (with Rantopad being the first), but would also be one of very few times in which a double nameplate has been used on a switch, with the others being TTC x Helix Lab Skylars, TTC Ace, and the first run of Kailh Razer Greens.



Figure 5: Zeal 3-in-1 "Clickiez" switch prototyping poll asking fans to vote on stem color for future release.

The next pairing of switch-related news discussed via the Zeal Discord server came much more spread out over the course of several months following the 3-in-1 switch announcements. Announced via a Black Friday/Cyber Monday sales post on November 26th of 2020, a special 30% off “mistake” batch of softer and less tactile 62g. Aqua Zilent switches were put up for sale in limited quantity. Conversations that I’ve had with Zeal about such have confirmed that these were in fact an accidental batch in which the wrong leaves were used in the switches rather than these being a secret, unannounced prototyping batch. The next announcement came via a detail-less Instagram link on February 25th, 2021 pointing to the date ‘3/1’. This announcement later went on to be in regards to the Ducky X ONEofZERO Iodine LTD Edition 65%

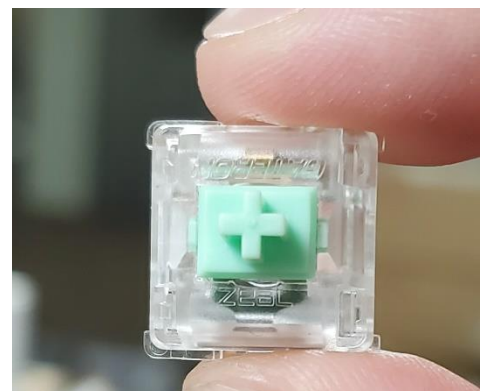


Figure 6: Latest Zeal 3-in-1 "Clickiez" switch prototype photo showing new dual nameplate top housing design.

Keyboards, which are the latest prebuilt keyboard to offer Zealios switches with them. (The previous prebuilts being the WASD V2 from 2017, which featured plate mount, milky-bottomed 65g. Zealios V1s, and the CODE keyboard from 2019, which featured 67g Zealio V2s.) Options of Tealios, Roselios, Zealios V2, and Zilent V2 switches (all in 67g) were available with white, opaque bottoms making them effectively limited edition releases akin to the themed Novelkeys Silk recolors. (And I still don't have any of these special Zealios for my collection, so please reach out to me if you want to sell me some.)

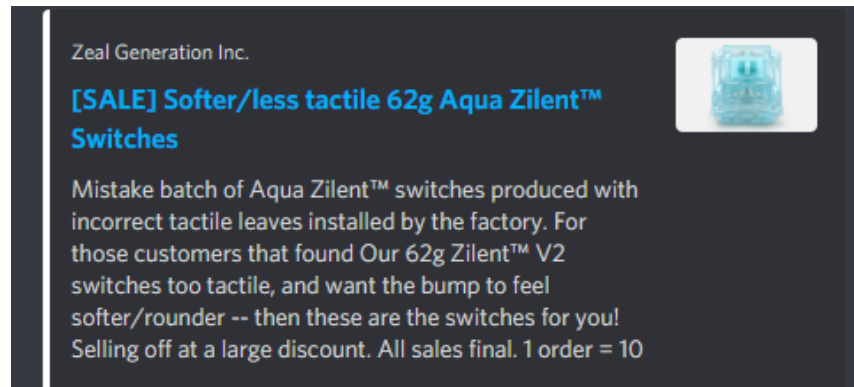


Figure 7: 'Mistake' Aqua Zilent sales announcement on Zeal Discord. (Sales page unfortunately no longer exists except for a singular Wayback archive.)

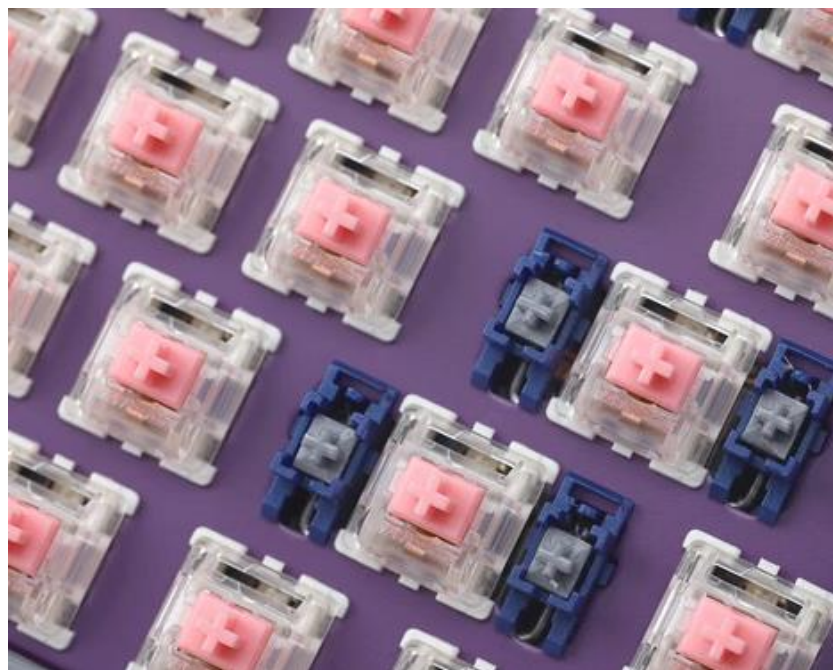
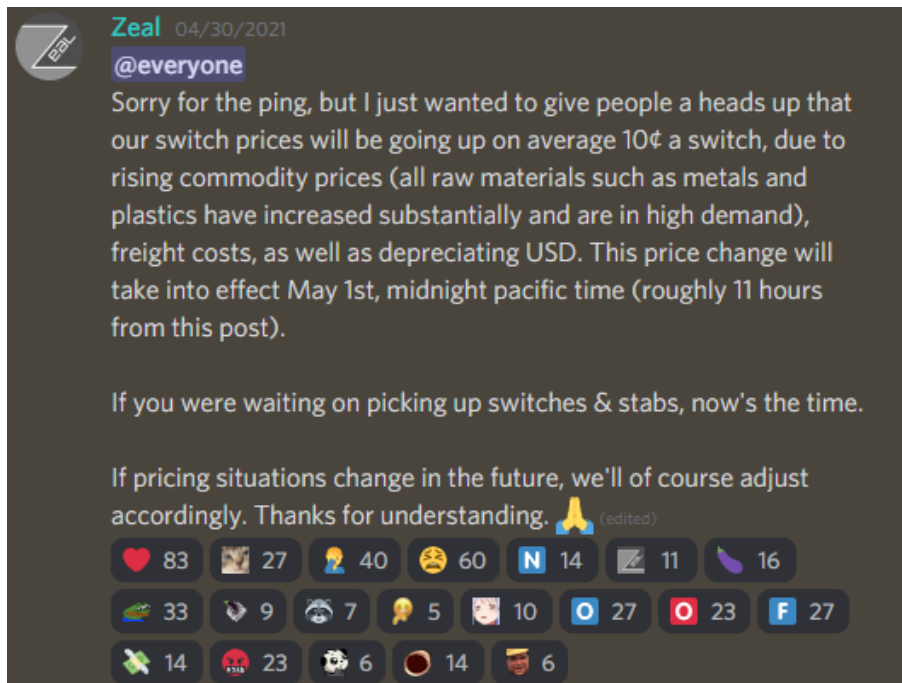


Figure 8: Sales image from Ducky showing the custom, white bottomed Zeal switches in a Ducky x ONEofZERO Iodine Keyboard.

The final switch related announcement of note before that of the Zealios Redux V1 switches came about on April 30th of 2021, and was related to the pricing of Zealios switches in general. In this announcement, Zeal stated that switch prices would be increasing by an average of \$0.10 USD per switch “due to rising commodity prices (all raw materials such as metals and plastics have increased substantially and are in high demand), freight costs, as well as depreciating USD.” With the price hike effective on May 1st of 2021, this firmly pushed Zealios switches to the highest per-switch cost of any switches in the modern, currently produced scene at the time of announcement. The more recent

announcement and sales of the Tecsee metal coated switches have varied in price depending on the vendor and quantity bought, but were also roughly within this ballpark of pricing per switch as well.



First being teased via an '@everyone' ping in on September 9th, 2021, Zealio V1 Redux switches

Figure 7: April 30th announcement of across-the-board price increases for Zealios switches with some rationale provided.

were first marketed as being a “re-run of Zealio V1 switches with... a retrieval of the old v1 molds.” Subsequent discussion in the #zealio-v1-redux channel belayed that not only would the Zealio switches be using the same V1 stem molds as the original V1 Zealios switches, but that the housings would also be opaque as to not only provide a different sound profile, but in order to drive down material costs such that the final prices would be cheaper. Very shortly thereafter on October 9th, preorders for the Zealio V1 Redux switches were announced at \$0.70 per switch for the pre-order price. Jumping to a \$0.85 per switch in stock price after the roughly two week long pre-order phase, the Zealio V1 Redux switches came in 62g. (light purple) and 67g. (dark purple) weightings, color matched to the original Zealios V1 stems. Further details of note from this initial sales page included that the opaque housings of these switches were made with nylon and that the stems would be made of POM (as they normally are), using the OG Zealio V1 stem molds. The first batches of switches to arrive to Zeal were teased via a photo on November 9th and began being shipped out to customers in mid November of 2021. Currently, as of the time of writing, these switches are available on Zeal’s website at \$0.85 per switch with no other changed details since their release.

Zealio V1 Redux Switch Performance

Note: While there are 62g and 67g variants of the Zealio V1 Redux switches, this review will primarily be based on the 62g variant. Discussion of the 67g variant, when it does occur, will be explicitly stated.

Appearance

At the highest level, both of the Zealio V1 Redux switches come in opaque, white colored Gateron top and bottom housings with purple, tactile stems and a normal length and thread style silver spring. While not truly a pure white in the same sense as some OEM Gateron housings, these housings are more in line with an ‘off-white’ color and sit somewhere between those OEM housings and Moyu Black switches in color. As for the stems, in addition to both stems purportedly using the same stem molds as the V1 Zealios switches, they also both feature purple-colored stems in line with that of the original V1 R2+ Zealios with 62g variants being a lighter purple shade and the 67g variants being a darker purple shade.



Figure 9: White and white-adjacent colored switch comparisons to Zealio V1 Redux (front). (L-R: Gateron Black, Novelkeys Cream, Moyu Black)



Figure 8: Stem color comparisons between Zealios V1 62g and 67g (back) and Zealios V1 Redux 62g and 67g switches (front).

Moving onto the more detailed aspects of the each of the switch components, the top housings are fairly plain and in line with classic, but not the most recent Gateron features. On the outside, the off-white top housings feature a normal orientation Gateron nameplate as well as a strongly filled in LED slot, with only a minor slit within the circular LED stabilizing slot allowing for LEDs to be put through it. While neither of these features have been present in the newest iterations of Gateron switches with the specific and targeted factory improvement to molds and lubing, this isn't entirely all that surprising as Zeal has had a fairly strong working relationship with them for several years now and demonstrably has more access to mold-based design choices than most. Internally, the top housings again are fairly in line with other Gateron switches which I've documented here previously. The one thing worth noting is that the mold marks are in the same position as normal in the upper corners of the inside underneath the nameplate, but that these switches feature two, single letter mold markings on either side rather than just a single one in either corner.

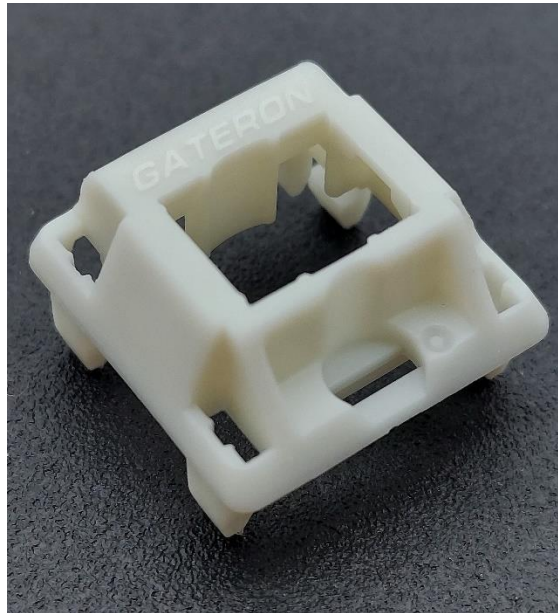


Figure 12: Zealio V1 Redux top housing external showing restricted LED slot and classic 'GATERON' nameplate.

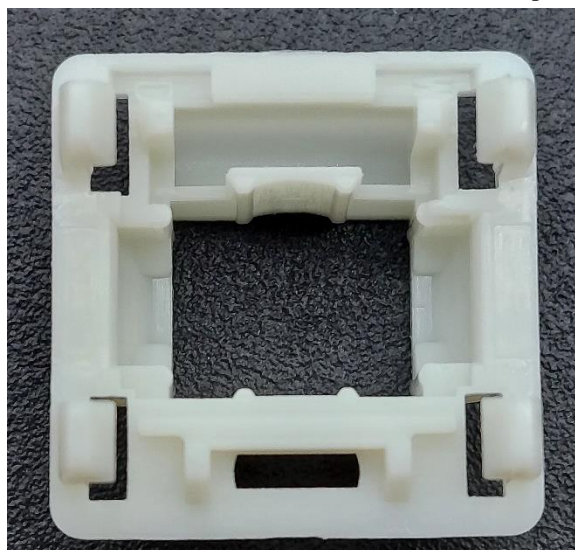


Figure 10: Zealio V1 Redux top housing internals showing mold markings in upper corners underneath the nameplate region.

Moving onto the stems of the Zealios V1 Redux switches, its worth noting again that these are purported to have been made with the same stem molds as the OG, V1 Zealios switches. At this level of inspection, this seems to hold completely true to marketing. In addition to non-tapered slider rails at the bottom of each side of the stem, the central pole has a modest taper and bottom out, and there is still an injection molding mark towards the top of the front side keycap stem mount. All of these features are minor details which often get shuffled around and modified ever so slightly with revisions of switches, and thus seeing these as spot on math to the original stems definitely leads me to believe that this claim is true. As for other mold markings, the backplate has a pair of high set, upper corner mold circles and a single letter mold marking on the back left side of the keycap stem mount. As for the tactile bump of the switches, they yet again appear spot on in line with photos taken by Zeal of V1 Zealios switch stems from that time as can be seen below.



Figure 12: Zealio V1 Redux 62g stem backside shot showing distinctive features such as non-tapered slider rails, high set mold ejector marks on backplate, and slightly tapered center pole.



Figure 11: Side profile shot of Zealio V1 Redux 62g stem showing tactile bump profile.



Figure 14: Zealios V1 (left) and Cherry MX Brown (right) stem comparison photo taken by Zeal prior to the R1 groupbuy thread on Geekhack.

Finally stopping into the bottom housing of the Zealios V1 Redux switches, much like with the top housings these feature many different details that have been seen previously in other Gateron switches but not necessarily all in combination nor most recently. Internally, the bottom housings feature a set of padded bottom out regions at the bottom of the slider rails as well as a north side and south side spring collar. Along the upper rim they have a slight edge where the two housings meet as well as four ejector marks, one in each corner. It is worth noting here for posterity that according to a conversation that I've had with Zeal, the leaves in these housings are that of V2 Zealios and *not* V1 Zealios. While a rationale wasn't asked for, my personal best guess is that this has to do with the fact that V1 Zealios had leaf improvements made between R1 and R2 due to chattering issues and that this modification to the angle of the leaf was likely carried through into V2 directly or implicitly. As for the underside of the bottom housings, they feature a closed off LED slot with only the four pins for LEDs and diodes. As for the mold markings, there is the large single number mold marking between the leaf pins as well as only a single letter mold marking to near the right-hand side PCB mount pins. It is worth noting that other models of Gateron switches have previously either featured anticounterfeit measures such as "GATERON" written sideways between the pins (ala the most recent Zealios V2 switches) or a single letter mold marking between the leaf pins and a pair of symmetric, single letter mold markings near either one of the PCB mount pins. For this reason, alone, these definitely do appear to be unique molds, or at least ones that have been specifically designated for the Zealios V1 Redux switch bottom housings.

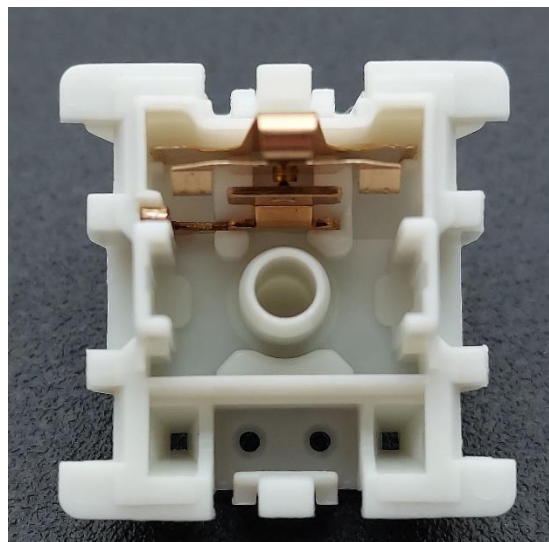


Figure 13: Zealio V1 Redux bottom housing internals showing padded bottoming out regions as well as north and south side spring collars.

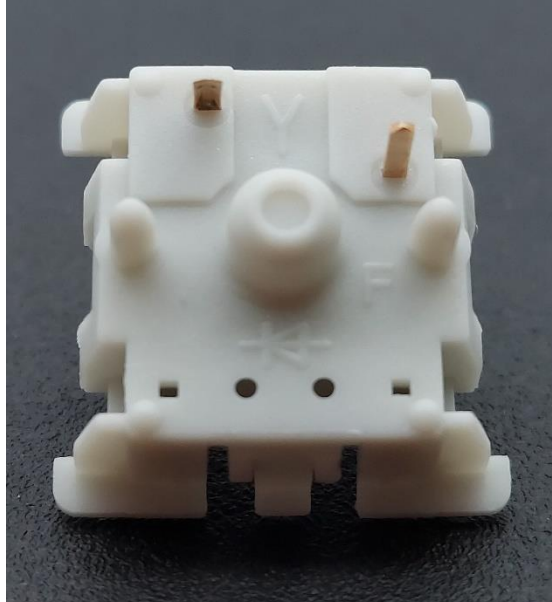


Figure 15: Zealio V1 Redux bottom housing external showing unique pairing of mold markings as well as restricted LED/Diode pin out region.

Push Feel

Regarding the push feel of these switches, there are a couple of details that are definitely in line with the true, Zealios V1 experience and a couple of details that truly separate these apart from the old ones. With respect to the “most important” part of the push feeling in these switches in the tactile bump, they do in fact feel extremely close to that of Zealios V1 tactile bumps. With a slight pretravel to them that takes up the first 25-30% of the downstroke, the following bump has a decently wide, but still medium to light strength tactile bump fairly in line with traditional ergo-clear style frankenswitches. At the time of the original Zealios V1 switch release, these would have been classified as a medium-strength tactile though with the release of more hyper-tactility focused switches over the past few years, the V1 Zealios, and thus by extension these Redux switches, have shifted more into a medium to light tactile in strength range. (A strong benchmark for medium-strength tactile switches by today’s standards would be that of KBDfans T1s or C3 Equalz Kiwi switches.) Looking at the force curve of the 67g variant as completed by community member Nebulant, the results of his force curves he collected definitely do seem to fall in line with both my aforementioned experiences and the marketing of the Zealios V1 Redux switches.

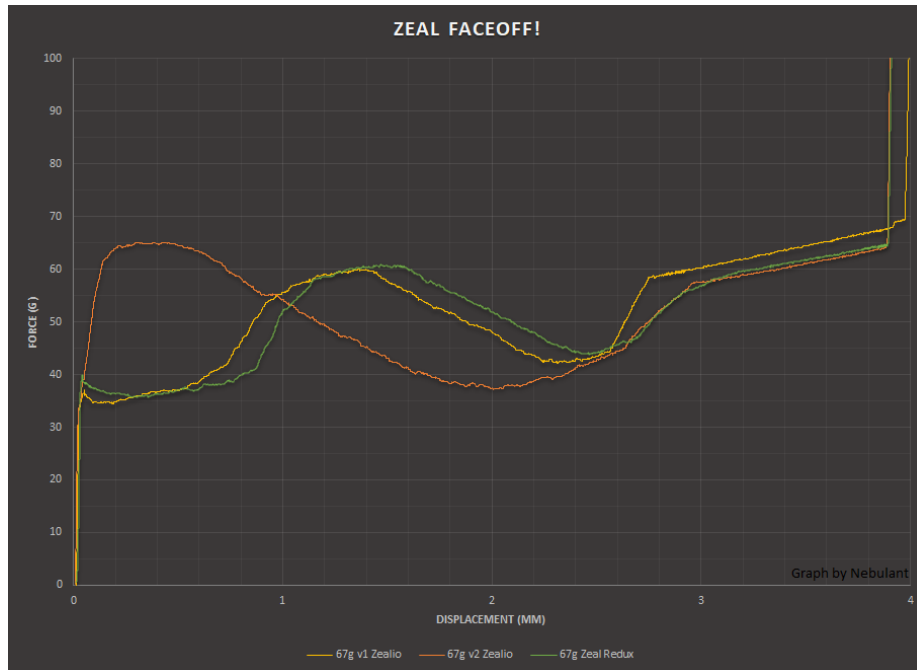


Figure 16: Zealio V1, V2, and V1 Redux (67g) force curve comparison completed by Nebulant.

It is worth pointing out, here, that yes, this force curve above does imply that even though the Zealios V1 Redux switches have Zealios V2 leaves, they also do look more like that of the V1 Zealios in terms of their force curve. Again referencing the aforementioned changes to the leaves of the Zealios switches that occurred over R1 to R3 of the sales, it is likely that this comparison was made to one of those later V1 switches rather than the earliest ones, as one would expect slightly more noticeable differences from the true earliest attempts at the Zealios V1 leaves. Additionally worth pointing out is that force curves are not generated purely based on the leaves of a switch, and thus the changes made to V2 stems almost certainly played a role in further differentiating the force curves of these switches rather than purely the changes made to the leaves alone.

As for the rest of the push feel metrics, this is where we get a little bit of differentiation from that of the classic Zealios V1 switches. With respect to smoothness, though, they are fairly similar in that there is some small grain, consistent through-stroke scratch in their unlubed stock form that does improve upon lubing. While this is a bit broadly subpar for Gateron made switches given the recent changes they've been demonstrating in switches that were likely manufactured before these, this scratch has truly been a consistent sticking point with Zealios switches throughout the years and thus in the name of 'authenticity', I'm not entirely surprised these Redux switches still have it. As for the biggest notable difference, though, the housing collisions on these switches are significantly more firm than what I recall of Zealios switches of the past due to the switching of top housing material from polycarbonate to nylon. This, alone, is an extremely welcomed change and one of the biggest reasons that I feel that Zeal should consider using nothing but opaque housings moving forward. The balance between the topping out and bottoming out feelings as well is significantly better than what I recall of the OG Zealios V1s.

Sound

Continuing along the theme built through each of the last two sections of 'a lot similar and yet still some subtle differences', the finer aspects of the Zealios V1 Redux switches' sound definitely falls into this trope as well. Similar to the old Zealios V1 switches, the subtle scratch present in the push feel section is somewhat noticeable and detracts from the overall sound quality of the switch. Additionally, the

classic ‘stock Zeal spring ping’ is present detracting a bit from the overall sound quality with a sharp and metallic sound that is especially noticeable at higher speeds. Rounding off the similarities between the V1 Reduxes and the OG Zealios V1 are the tactile bumps, which are not the loudest nor quietest component in the overall sound profile, but carry with them a decently sharp, mid-pitched, and still somewhat flat sounding tactile bump.

Specifically speaking to the housing collisions of the Zealios V1, though, this is where the real differences comes out to play. Specifically speaking to the sound of the housing collisions, these are definitely much more firm, solid, and significantly less plasticky of what I recall of older Zealios switches. While this is in no small part due to the use of nylon for the top housings rather than the classic polycarbonate used in Zealios V1 and V2 switches, I do have to wonder if there were slight mold tweaks or even perhaps non-explicit manufacturing upgrades which helped lend a hand in this change, as Gateron has improved a lot since the original pressing of Zealios V1 switches. As well, it should be noted that the bottoming and topping out of the V1 Reduxes are much more similar and well balanced in terms of sound and volume than that of previous Zealios switches.

Wobble

One of the biggest features of these switches which I was genuinely curious about as soon as they were announced was their stem wobble. Keeping well in mind that Zealios V1 switches were relatively groundbreaking for the time in which they were released, as I’ve previously pointed out in my Winkeyless.KR Fake ‘Zeal’ Clear switch review, V1s were “24/7 Wobble City”. Even without directly comparing them in my hand, the sheer wobble of the stems in the original runs of Zealios switches were one of their more defining features, aside the purple color and price, and many people still recall them by this stem wobble to date. However, that is not necessarily the case here. Even though there is still some stem wobble in both the N/S and E/W directions, it is markedly improved over that of the original Zealios V1s and is decently competitive even amongst the most modern, recent, and improved releases by Gateron. It’s also worth mentioning here that the V1 Redux switches are fairly consistent with respect to this ‘slightly problematic, but not likely a major problem to most users’ stem wobble across the entire batch that I received.

Measurements

<i>Zealio V1 Redux (62g) Measurements</i>			
	Component	Denotation	mm.
Stem	Front/Back Plate Length	A	7.17
	Stem Width	B	5.61
	Stem Length with Rails	C	8.60
	Rail Width	D	2.17
	Center Pole Width	E	1.90
	Rail Height	F	5.08
	Total Stem Height	G	12.32
Bottom Housing	Diagonal Between Rails	L	9.32
	Interior Length Across	M	9.66
	Rail Width	N	2.49
	Center Hole Diameter	O	2.19
Top Housing	Horizontal Stem Gap	X	7.60
	Vertical Stem Gap	Y	6.01
Methods	Number of Switches Used		3
	Replication Per Measurement		3

Other

In this modern day and age of switches in which newer brands are using quirky, innovative, and relatively over the top packaging to deliver their switches, Zeal never really had room to compete in this realm. That being said, though, I do want to point out that relative to the original Zealios V1 sales, the packaging is much more ‘fancy’ as can be seen in the photo below. While I do not have any original packaging from the Zealios V1 sales, my purchase of Sakurios and Roselios were still delivered in Ziploc bags marked with lot numbers in Sharpie, as was the Zeal tradition in sending switches for some time. So, while not really all that competitive with some of the packaging and gimmicks of more modern switches, it is interesting to point out this historical juxtaposition between the original Zealios V1 and the Zealios V1 Redux switch packaging.



Figure 21: Zealio V1 Redux pre-order packaging minus a Coffee Crisp that I ate immediately upon opening.

Comparison Notes to Other Notable Tactile 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 Zealios V1 Redux side by side.



Figure 17: Switches for comparison. (L-R, Top-Bot: Novelkeys Cream Tactile, TTC Blueish White, Gateron Azure Dragon, OG Invyr Holy Panda, Tecsee Sapphire V2, C3 Equalz Kiwi)

Novelkeys Cream Tactile

- Both in terms of tactile bump strength as well as tactile bump size, the Novelkeys Cream Tactiles are noticeably more tactile than the Zealios V1 Redux switches. In addition to the bump being longer throughout the stroke, as well, it also starts a lot earlier in the downstroke in the Cream Tactiles than in the Zealios.
- While these switches share some similarities in the more pingy aspects of their sound, the Cream Tactiles altogether have a much more noticeably ‘scratchier’ sound to them than the V1 Redux.
- Even though the housing collisions are fairly balanced in both of these switches, the Cream Tactiles overall feel a bit thinner and less firm at topping out and bottoming out than the Zealios V1 Redux switches.

TTC Blueish White

- While the tactile bump in the Zealios V1 Redux switches is ever so slightly more punchy than that of the TTC Blueish White, a better comparison would be to say that the Zealios feel more coherent and sharper. The TTCs, by comparison, feel a lot more muted and less clear in their tactile bump part of their stroke.
- At all activation speeds these switches have a fairly similar overall volume to each other, but the TTC Blueish Whites definitely have an ever so slightly higher pitched and thinner sound to them.
- With the shirking and improvement upon the Zealios V1 stigma of wobbly stems, the V1 Redux switches have noticeably less stem wobble in both directions than the TTC Blueish Whites.

Gateron Azure Dragon

- The tactile bump of the Azure Dragons is just a hair bit stronger and larger than that of the Zealios V1 Redux switches, though the biggest difference between them comes in the fact that the tactile bump starts towards the top of downstroke in the Azure Dragons rather than roughly a quarter of the way down in the Redux switches.
- At higher activation speeds, the Azure Dragons, and especially their topping out, become significantly louder and higher pitched than that of the Zealios V1 Redux switches.
- In terms of stem wobble, the Azure Dragons are ever so slightly more wobbly than that of the Zealios V1 Reduces in both the N/S and E/W directions.

OG Invyr Holy Panda

- The tactile bump of the Invyr Holy Panda is not only noticeably stronger than the Zealio V1 Redux switch, but also starts significantly earlier in the downstroke much like with the Gateron Azure Dragons.
- The overall sound of the Invyr Holy Pandas is one that is much deeper and bass centric whereas the Zealios take on a bit of a thinner sounding bump and housing collisions, and especially at higher activation speeds.
- Without question, the stem wobble on the Zealios V1 Redux switches is significantly better than that of the Invyr Pandas in both N/S and E/W directions.

Tecsee Sapphire V2

- The Zealio V1 Redux switches are a bit louder than the Tecsee Sapphire V2s in terms of overall volume. With respect to the type of sound, the Tecsee Sapphires though have much more of a contribution from scratch to the overall sound than the Zealios do.
- The stem wobble in both the N/S and E/W direction is much smaller in the Zealios V1 Redux switches than the Tecsee Sapphire V2s.
- The tactile bump between these two switches is rather close, with the Sapphires being perhaps an edge heavier than the Zealios V1 Reduces, but also located significantly higher up in the downstroke than the Zealios.

C3 Equalz Kiwi

- While the tactile bump in these switches is roughly the same size, the C3 Kiwis definitely do edge out the Zealios in terms of overall strength of the tactile bump. This feeds in well to my statement above that the Zealios V1 Reduces are more of a 'light-medium' strength tactile switch than a medium strength one.
- The stem wobble on the Zealios V1 switches is ever so slightly worse than that of the C3 Kiwis, but compared across the entirety of the batch that I received for them, the Zealios have much less variability in stem wobble.
- While slightly stronger and perhaps a tad less scratchier, the housing collisions in the Kiwis are pretty similar to that of the Zealios V1 Reduces.

Bonus Round

It's not every day you get to review something as groundbreaking as this, and I'm already on Thanksgiving break and procrastinating on studying, so why not add a few more comparisons for the hell of it?

Zealios V1 (62g.)

- The infamous stock Zeal spring ping is significantly more noticeable in the Zealios V1 switches than the V1 Redux, and to an extent that I'm rather surprised to be entirely honest.
- The topping out onto the polycarbonate top housings of the Zealios V1 switches is much thinner, and more plasticky feeling and sounding than that of the nylon top housings of the Zealios Reduxes.
- While the tactile bump of the V1 Redux switches might be just a hair stronger than that of the OG V1 switches, they are altogether remarkably similar in terms of tactile bump placement, strength, and overall size as well.

Zealios V2 (62g.)

- The tactile bump of the Zealios V2 switches is not only a slightly stronger tactile bump, but it is definitely located earlier on in the downstroke and has a much less substantial linear pre-travel region.
- The same notes made above regarding both spring ping as well as housing collisions for the Zealios V1 switches also applies here as well for the Zealios V2 switches when comparing them to the Zealios V1 Reduxes.
- Overall, the stem wobble in both the N/S and E/W directions is definitely noticeably better in the Zealios V1 Reduxes than the Zealios V2 switches, and the OG Zealios V1 switches 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.

Zealio V1 Redux (62g)		
<i>Switch Type: Tactile</i>		<i>Gateron</i>
29	/35	Push Feel
19	/25	Wobble
6	/10	Sound
15	/20	Context
6	/10	Other
75	/100	Total

Push Feel

By all push feel metrics, these Zeal V1 Redux switches are truly a slightly better Zealio V1 switch. While there is still a bit of scratch and weird sharpness in the tactile bump that are both a result of these switches coming factory unlubed, they pack in a classic, ergo-clear style Zealio V1 bump in between much more firm, solid, and less plasticky feeling and bottoming outs.

Wobble

Much to my surprise, as well, the stem wobble in these Zeal branded switches is actually quite consistent and solid. While not quite up to Gateron's most recent and best spec, there is a minor amount of wobble that E/W direction and slightly greater amount in the N/S direction that probably won't be problematic for most.

Sound

This was a hard category to score, and I can't lie to you there. On one hand, the thickness and firmness of the housing collisions is significantly better than that of their OG V1 predecessors, though they still couldn't outrun that classic, consistent-through-stroke scratch and slight spring ping that does detract from their overall stock quality more than a little bit.

Context

In terms of a not-entirely innovative switch release, these truly have the marketing, fulfillment, and availability behind them that will allow them to have some real staying power in the community. However, relevancy issues as a function of the high price of these switches is really the biggest sticking point with their acceptance and flourishing within the switch scene.

Other

The overall improved technology from Gateron has made the revival of these original ergo-clear style tactile switches a rather fun one, and I will be curious to see if this treatment can be afforded to other Zeal switches moving forward. All in all an interesting release with many subtle points that will satisfy not only Zeal fans but hopefully other hardcore enthusiasts.

Statistics

Average Score			Zealio V1 Redux (62g)		
26.3	/35	Push Feel	29	/35	Push Feel
16.5	/25	Wobble	19	/25	Wobble
5.7	/10	Sound	6	/10	Sound
12.7	/20	Context	15	/20	Context
6.0	/10	Other	6	/10	Other
67.2	/100	Total	75	/100	Total
V1 Redux Overall Rank			T-#27/136 (75/100)		
V1 Redux 'Hard' Rank			T-#22/136 (54/70)		
V1 Redux 'Soft' Rank			T-#33/136 (21/30)		

Final Conclusions

After having sat through the long, 7,000-word process of writing up the review for these Zealio V1 Redux switches, I've got to say that I'm rather surprised with how they have turned out. Effectively since the end of the heyday for Zealios V2 switches, Zeal hasn't really done much with the marketing prowess and switch line that he had built up for years. Sure, you could make arguments that Sakurios, Roselios, and even the Aqua Zilents were all "different" and by extension were him doing something, but to all fairness these didn't really change any existing technology. So, when promises were made in the marketing of 'reviving the old V1 Zealios tactile bump', it was a rather tall order to hit well on the mark. And with respect to that, I'd like to think I've made clear here that Zeal not only did such, but also managed to subtly improve on many key detracting points of the original Zealios V1 runs.

The Zealios V1 Redux switches really do mimic many of the good, worthwhile features that the original Zealios V1 switches had while improving on some of their less savory issues. Mind you, these switches are still far from perfect, and even with a revival of the ergo-clear-like tactile bump and an improvement on the overall stem wobble in this Redux, issues with spring ping and scratch have been proven to be fixable by Gateron recently, but somehow not yet for Zeal and his switches. As well, even though these are cheaper than their other Zeal counterparts, odd choices in price hikes that seem to only affect his switches as well as the already overall highest price per quality demand of any switch brand out there is something that many people will take into strong consideration when thinking about purchasing these switches. As a function of Zeal and the reputation that he has gained over his years of producing switches, I do think these will receive some minor attention out of the gate but the willingness of the broader community to pay top dollar for something that only has minor, unasked for improvements is really the question mark left to be answered that will drive their ultimate destiny. Don't mind me though, I'll buy any switch that I think is neat or has improvements worth writing a long review about, regardless of the price.

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!**

Further Reading

Zealio V1 Redux Sales Page

Link: https://zealpc.net/products/zealio_v1_redux?variant=39352365449280

Wayback:

https://web.archive.org/web/20211009180039/https://zealpc.net/products/zealio_v1_redux?variant=39352365449280

Zealio V1 Redux Instagram Announcement

Link: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CUzsjBELrpj/>

Zzamvvong's XO K80 Alu with Gateron Zealios V1 Redux Typing Test

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bi0uY7kfVQk&ab_channel=zzamvvong

Switch Sounds' Special Whale with Zealio V1 Redux Typing Test

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NUS36jxMpjg&ab_channel=SwitchSounds

'Mistake' Aqua Zilent 62g. Sales Batch from Nov. 2020

Wayback: <https://web.archive.org/web/20201130195915/https://zealpc.net/collections/black-friday-cyber-monday/products/sale-softer-less-tactile-62g-aqua-zilent-switches>

Zeal Pink Roselios (Silent Linear) Geekhack Thread

Link: <https://geekhack.org/index.php?topic=99104.0>

Wayback: <https://web.archive.org/web/20211127220653/https://geekhack.org/index.php?topic=99104.0>

Ducky x ONEofZERO Iodine LTD Edition Keyboard Sales Page

Link: <https://oneofzero.net/collections/mechanical-keyboards/products/ducky-x-oneofzero-iodine-ltd-edition-65-keyboard>

Wayback: <https://web.archive.org/web/20210309195302/https://oneofzero.net/collections/mechanical-keyboards/products/ducky-x-oneofzero-iodine-ltd-edition-65-keyboard>