

Nike SB Salazar LR

„It’s finally the way that it needs to perform.“

The above sentence is a quotation from Omar Salazar’s recent Chrome Ball Incident interview (www.chromeballincident.blogspot.com) regarding the updated version of his Nike SB Pro model. The original Salazar, which came out in spring 2010, wasn’t a bad shoe. In some areas, it performed very well, but the vulc craze, a lack of flick and grip and the slight suspicion of new technologies like Nike’s Flywire amongst skateboarders meant it was given a hard time. While the basic lines are still there, a closer look at the LR reveals many changes that make it a whole different shoe. The Salazar LR fits a bit smaller than usual, it is recommended to try them on in your local skate shop.

The updated version of the original Salazar pro model, the LR, has been radically altered. The most obvious changes happened to the silhouette and the overall shape. The toebox area of the Salazar LR is pointier and not as dull as the original version. Furthermore, most of the padding, and therefore bulkiness, has been removed. The shoe fits closer to the foot and features a more direct feel.



Another obvious change happened in the heel area. The flywire material, that was introduced to skateshoes with the original Salazar, is gone. Nike went a step back here and used a classic, normal-sized plastic reinforcement piece to provide heel support. Furthermore, the collar opening has been reduced compared with the first release, which causes the Salazar LR to feature improved ankle stability and support.

The original Salazar design featured a few fresh ideas regarding comfort and convenience. The bottom edge of the collar panel wasn’t stitched; it could be used as a heel pull and made it easier to put the mid-top on. Furthermore, there was a zipper along the top tongue that allowed access to removable cushioning. Neither features have been incorporated into the updated design, but they are not greatly missed. Apart from that, the simplified LR design focuses on the essentials regarding comfort, like minimal and flat stitching of the inner lining, and the less sturdy and rigid vulcanized sole doesn’t require as much time to break in. The thinner collar on the other hand needs to be worn in a little, – it’s a bit rigid to begin with but quickly becomes comfortable.

A weakness of the original Salazar was the thick-walled cupsole. It featured average grip and flick, but was very sturdy and needed a long time to break in. The new Salazar LR features a vulcanized construction similar to the Nike SB Janoski, with a classic herringbone pattern, thinner sidewalls and second layer in the front area. The durability won’t be as “tank-like” as the original, but the change of sole units improves both the grip and the flick in a major way. After the introduction of a Lunarlon insole with the Koston 1, it is now also featured in the Salazar LR. This technology, which was originally developed and used for running footwear, is a good compromise between cushioning abilities and direct contact to the board. It fits well with the new slimmed-down, basic design of the Salazar LR and turns the vulcanized construction into a comfortable and reasonably cushioned sole unit.



To summarise: Comparing the Salazar LR with its ancestor is like comparing apples with oranges. It is safe to say, though, that the upgrade eliminated some of the flaws, as any proper revision should do. The LR features better flick, grip and boardfeel, as well as a more up-to-date cushioning system with the Lunarlon insole.

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