dick boak's
Musical Chord Wheel For The Guitarist

Basic Assembly
As I immersed myself in guitar construction and playing, I learned a lot about noting, chording and harmonics. Through seven evolving versions of chord wheels, I arrived at a version that I felt was marketable to the broader guitar playing public.

I had seen circular slide rules that were laminated in stiff plastic which a much more sophisticated center hub. These were manufactured by a small company in New Jersey. I visited them with a prototype of my latest variation. They gave me price quotes that were pretty sobering. My cost on the laminated version was approaching twenty dollars making it virtually impossible to offer the product at typical market discounts and still make a profit.

So instead, I published the *dick boak's Musical Chord Wheel For The Guitarist* in poster form, some assembly required. Because assembly was a bit daunting, the wheel never really achieved any commercial success. About a thousand were sold. The people that actually went to the trouble to cut the windows out and put the contraption together were enthralled with the idea. A few guitar fanatics took the idea even further, but invariably failed when it came to sales. Nevertheless, the idea once again presents itself on the next several pages for further scrutiny or abandonment. The format allows for the four independant wheels to be printed to scale from this PDF file. With scissors, carefully cut out all four wheels on their outermost lines. You will have two small wheels and two larger wheels. The large wheels need to be adhered back to back to make one large center wheel printed on both sides. Spray adhesive works well for this purpose, but be sure to align the wheels perfectly with a pin through the exact center crosshairs before final glueup. On the two smaller wheels, carefully cut out all grey windows marked “cut” using a single edged razor blade or Exacto’ knife. Using a sharp pencil, poke a small hole through the center of each wheel. Be precise to insure correct alignment. Using a standard brass fastener, assemble the wheels as shown in the diagram on the first page of this PDF.
Uses:

A. Chord Fingering Chart

Looking through the small windows marked “ROOT,” find the letter of the chord you wish to play. (A, A#, B, C, etc.) In the larger windows shown as guitar necks, find the fingering pattern for the type of chord you wish to play, i.e. major, minor, augmented, etc. Use both sides of the wheel for a total of 168 different chord diagrams.

B. Transposing or Changing Keys

If you wish to change the key of a song, use the transposer on Side B. Assume that you are changing from the key of C to the key of G. Align these two chords on the large and small wheels. Chords change accordingly: C becomes G, D becomes A, E becomes B, etc. Chord types like major, minor, seventh, etc. stay the same in transposition, i.e. C-major becomes G-major, C-7th becomes G-7th, etc.

C. Chord Structure Analyzer

To find the notes that comprise any given chord, use Side A. Assume that you want to find the notes in a C major chord. Look for major on the chord structure chart. Major reads 1, 3, 5. Set C on the small wheel in alignment with “1-Set Chord” on the large wheel. Read the notes off as follows: 1=C, 3=E, 5=G. Therefore, the notes that make up a C major chord are C, E and G. Follow this procedure for any chord name and type. For example: For E flat 13th suspended 11th, set E flat on 1 and read off the corresponding notes: 1=E, 4=A flat, 5=B flat, 5 flat=D flat, 9=E, 11=A flat, 13=C. Therefore, an E flat 13th suspended 11th chord contains the notes E flat, A flat, B flat, D flat, F, A flat (one octave above), and C.

Note: Chord patterns given are the most common, selected for simplicity and for the most part, full chord strumming. For five, four, or three note chords, omit appropriate fingers. When open strings are in harmony with a particular fingered chord.
pattern, you have a power chord. Power chords are movable on many positions of the neck. Let your fingers assume the maximum comfortable position when forming a chord.

D. Neck Note Finder
The neck note finder can be used to locate particular notes of a given chord on a guitar neck. The note finder is located on Side A. It will be helpful to memorize the locations of these notes. Sharps (#) - and flats (b) - are not labeled; sharps are one note above, flats are one note below.

E. Fractional Harmonic Key
Harmonics are shown as fractions of the entire string length. Arrows mark the locations of major harmonics on the guitar neck. The strongest tones come from the lowest fractional denominator. Notes yielded by touching the harmonics are labeled.

F. Open Tunings
Open tunings can expand one’s technical capability and can open up the areas of bottleneck slide and Hawaiian guitar. Charts for ten different open tunings are found on side A and refer to tuning at the nut from lowest to highest string. For virtually unlimited open tunings, use the transposer to change the string sequence into different keys.

G. Principle Chords in Major and Relative Minor Keys
These charts are located on side B and are used to find or learn the relative tonic, sub-dominant, or dominant chords for any of sixteen commonly used keys. These are chord groups that typically work well together. Try them all.

H. Music Theory
This chord wheel is an instructional device. Although the wheel does not conform to strict music theory, use of the wheel will greatly aid in the understanding of how the guitar works. Students of other instruments (piano, harp, banjo, flute,
autoharp, basses, etc.) will also find particular aspects of the chord wheel useful, not only as an aid to the understanding of their own instrument, but also as a means of understanding guitar theory for duet purposes.

This particular effort represents the seventh refinement in the gradual development of my chord wheel concept. Each new design incorporated new features and in the same breath revealed weaknesses that I had planned to address in future designs.

This however is most likely the last of my chord wheels. They served their purpose for me. During the tedious process of inking and illustrating the wheels, I learned my guitar chords and fabricated my rather twisted premise as to how music works. Piano instructors shriek in horror at the gross simplification of what they cherish as true, but the whole system remains quite workable for the odd breed of musically challenged guitarists of which I am a part.

One of the most clever aspects of this project was the emergence of the Guilt-arts™ brand. I was so proud of myself for inventing this ingenious trademark, though as of yet it has never been lent to any other project.

Occasionally, I meet young inventors that have created their own incredibly anal stabs at unraveling the musical DNA. In fact many of them actually seek me out as a sage or advisor. I always try to explain that their passion for the analysis of musical structures may never reap the big payoff. They all seem so surprised at this, but the sad reality is that guitar music can survive and prosper quite well without the use or need of any of these contraptions. Nonetheless, there are long lines of self-deluded enthusiasts at the patent offices waiting to offer their $10,000 checks to the mother of invention.

Just in case I’m wrong, I hereby copyright this Musical Chord Wheel: ©2005 Guilt-Arts™ Designs by dick boak. All rights reserved. No portion of this design may be copied without permission in writing from the designer..... ad nauseum!