Please read carefully before place an order.

Scalloped fretboards are not very common these days, but have been around for hundreds of years.

So what exactly are scalloped frets? Scalloping a fretboard is when you remove wood from the fretboard so that when the guitar is played, the fingers only contact the string, not the wood underneath, eliminating massive amounts of friction. It is much easier to bend strings with a scalloped guitar, and many guitarists do claim that scalloped fretboards allow you to play faster, as minimal contact with the string is needed.

Scalloped fingerboards are most commonly used by shred guitarists, most notably, Yngwie Malmsteen, who, like Ritchie Blackmore (of Deep Purple) uses scalloped fret boards, and had a signature model of Yngwie Malmsteen Stratocaster developed with Fender. Ibanez JEM series guitars, designed and played by Steve Vai, come standard with the last 4 frets scalloped. In 2008 Ibanez made available their E-Gen model, a Herman Li signature, which includes four scalloped frets (21st to 24th). Karl Sanders of the death metal band Nile also uses several guitars with scalloped frets, including several Deans, and KxK Guitars.

In the 1970s, English guitarist John McLaughlin played with Shakti (band), along with Indian violinist L. Shankar, using an acoustic guitar with a fully scalloped fretboard. McLaughlin explained that this feature increased the ease and range of string bends by eliminating friction between finger and fretboard. The scalloped fretboard also made possible the use of rapid, microtonal variation which is so important in Indian music, as exemplified by classical Indian Sitar music.

Experimental luthier Yuri Landman made an electric guitar for John Schmersal of Enon called the Twister with a partial scalloped neck for only the thin strings, (like little playground slides).

Other examples of lutes with scalloped fretboards include the South Indian veena and Vietnamized guitar (called đàn ghi-ta, lục huyền cầm, or ghi-ta phím lõm).The Japanese multi-instrumentalist and experimental musical instrument builder Yuichi Onoue made a deeply scalloped electric guitar for Vietnamese microtonal playing techniques.

Scalloping can be:

• Full, i.e. all frets from the first to the last are scalloped

• Partial, when some of the top frets are scalloped for fast soloing. Popular examples include half scalloping (12th to the last fret, used by Kiko Loureiro of Angra, among others) or few top frets scalloping (19–24, 17–22, etc.), utilized by such guitarists as Steve Vai. When done by hand, sometimes fretboards can be scalloped half below D or G string, as in the case for Turkish luthier Kenan Turgut.

• Malmsteen style (full or partial)

• Blackmore style (full or partial)

The process of "scalloping" a fingerboard well, if done by hand, is tedious work, usually done by careful filing of wood between the frets, and requires a large investment of time. Consequently, it is relatively expensive to have done. Generally scalloping of fingerboards is done by a special milling

machine which has 22 or 24 (according to the neck dimensions and number of frets) wood cutting tools. This equipment saves time to the process and dimensional stability like scalloping the wood in the neck's radius same in all fret spaces.

Scalloping offers a number of advantages and also some disadvantages which affects both the tone and the playing style.

ADVANTAGES:

On a scalloped neck fingertips can more easily grip the strings and this highly facilitate some of the guitar playing techniques like bendings, pull offs, tapping, etc. Scalloping also have some impact on the whole guitar tone due to the increased space between the string and the fretboard which enhances volume.

The use of scalloped fretboards may contribute to upgrade your playing speed and technique due to the lighter touch you have to apply on the frets to avoid downward pressure and unpleasant drops in tunings.

DISADVANTAGES

You will have to be very light at touch to play on scalloped fretboards, especially in the first positions of the neck toward the nut, where the space between the frets is larger and too much pressure would cause unpleasant drops in tunings introduced due to vertical pressure.

Scalloping is an irreversible modification.

Note that filing the wood while scalloping also touches inlays, thus fingerboards with complex and intricate inlays usually aren't conducive to scalloping, as it would damage the artwork. Simple dot or block markers survive the procedure well.

If you're after a scalloped fretboard but you’re doubtful on applying such an important modification on your instrument, you should consider installing very high types of frets like for example Dunlop 6000 (the biggest one ever) which playing really feels close to a scalloped fretboard.

Are you ready to unlock the secrets of the Scalloped Fret Board?

Let NXK Custom Guitars Scallop YOUR fret board!

Send in your existing guitar neck today!