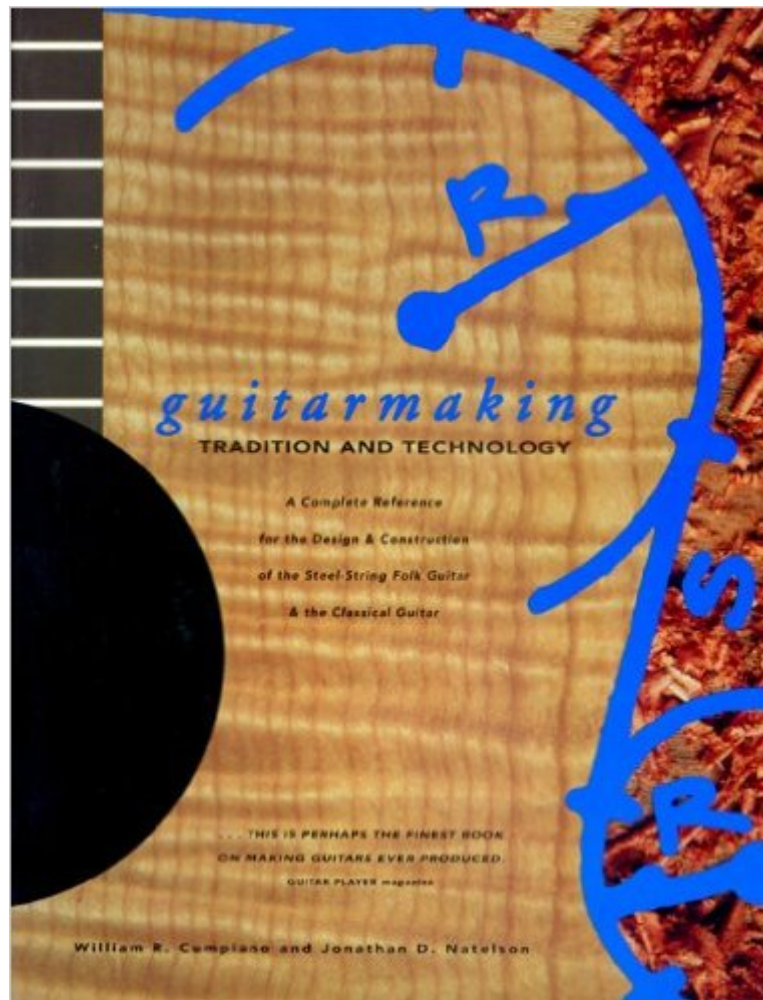


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# GUITARMAKING (Guitar Reference)



## Synopsis

(Music Sales America). A complete reference for the design and construction of the steel-string folk guitar and the classical guitar.

## Book Information

Series: Guitar Reference

Paperback: 388 pages

Publisher: CHRONICAL BOOKS; First edition (August 1, 1994)

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (137 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

In the research stage of my luthier career I bought quite a few books. Without a doubt my favorites would be this book and Robert Benedetto's "Building an Archtop Guitar". What makes this book so outstanding is that it actually breaks the process down into unique steps. Most books will tell you to "Plane the top plate to the correct thickness". This book tells you how to do it, not just what to do.

This is also the only book on guitar building where the author anticipates the areas where the beginning luthier might have problems. There are several areas where you're told to do such and such a step (which may not be obvious) in order to avoid such -and-such a problem. There's also several times when the author tells you how to escape from common mistakes. I own a lot of guitar building books but this is the one that sits in the top of my tool chest.

This book is worthy of placing on your coffee table as well as on the workbench! It will carefully guide you through the entire, daunting process of building a guitar. I am half-way through building my first and so far, so good. I have found that, for myself, some of the cautions and warnings in carrying out some of the operations in the book were a little overstated - but better safe than sorry.

However, there is an IMMENSE amount of detail presented in each procedure and it MUST be read and re-read very carefully (especially the section on neck construction). Also, pay attention to size of the material ordered from places like LMI (Luthiers Mercantile Incorporated). The neck blank comes thicker than needed and you need to thin it down. I found myself thinking information was left out of several sections, but discovered that I had overlooked it in my haste. Several parts used in the process are hard to find, such as the truss-rod nut. You need to be resourceful in locating things (at times, it feels like I'm on a scavenger hunt driving around town for stuff). Finally, I recommend also purchasing Irving Sloane's book on steel-string construction. It will help you clarify some aspects of building by approaching things from a slightly different angle. It is not as detailed, but it gives a slightly better overview of the process than the subject book. It shows how to make some tools - fun! Good luck!

All woodworkers are perfectionists, but those who make musical instruments live in a special place in hell. For them, each step, no matter how small can have a huge, and unexpected effect on the final result. Even if they follow the same plans and use the same materials, two guitarmakers can have significantly different results. Developing the techniques that will give the craftsman both consistency and control over the final result can often take a lifetime of experimentation. This excellent book, by Cumpiano and Natelson, helps to bridge the gap between novice and journeyman. It will enable most aspiring luthiers to produce something special. The writers focus on the practicalities of guitarmaking - the tools and techniques used. The arrangement is functional and step-wise, the explanations clear, with a sufficiency of illustrations and photographs. Little attention is paid to the more exotic equipment that appears in professional workshops. This is a book for the hand-craftsman, not someone intent on starting a business. I confess that I did not buy the book with the intent of making a guitar. Instead, I was on the verge of having one made for me, and I wanted to understand the process enough to talk intelligently with the makers (in my case, the luthier, the tuning machine maker, and the inlayer). As such, this book bridged an important gap. What is missing from the book is any detailed discussion about material choice and the effect of certain design decisions (materials, bracing, etc.). Since these are the things that can make the difference between an OK instrument and a work of the luthier's art, I would have liked to see much more information. For that, unfortunately, one must seek elsewhere. But for everything else, this volume will do.

Yes, they call them "Luthiers," and this is one of the books that will get you started in learning the

trade. But, you need not have building guitars for a living as your goal to enjoy and value this book. Anyone who has a broken or damaged instrument, should know when it is time to take it to a Luthier for the needed repair, or when it is something he might tackle himself. In the latter case, it would be well to have this book, and one written by Hideo Kamimoto, called Complete Guitar Repair. Of the two books, this one is by far the most complete, as you might expect. Kamimoto's book is more specifically aimed at repairs, as the title suggests. Any guitar player, after he or she learns the scales and how to place their hands and fingers on the instrument and to tune it, will sooner or later develop a respect and curiosity for their instrument. They will want to know what makes one instrument sound better than another, or why the action is harder on the fingers on one, and relatively soft and quick on another. What is the difference in strings, what wood gives the best resonance in a sound board, why the differences in sizes and shapes? Gradually, as your interest widens, you will come to this kind of book. This is one of the best. From it, you will learn all of the above, and more. If you are willing to invest years, and acquire the tools and the skills, perhaps you will eventually build your own guitar. But, whether you do or not, this is a valuable book for any guitar aficionado. Joseph Pierre

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