WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A holding table for holding a wafer having a device area where a plurality of devices are formed and a peripheral marginal area surrounding said device area on a front side of said wafer, said wafer further having an annular reinforcing portion formed on a back side of said peripheral marginal area;

said holding table having an upper surface formed with an annular escape groove for allowing the escape of a laser beam, said annular escape groove being formed so as to correspond to a boundary portion between the device area and the annular reinforcing portion of said wafer held on the upper surface of said holding table, a bottom of said escape groove being tapered and formed with fine asperities for scattering said laser beam.

2. The holding table according to claim 1, wherein said laser beam has an absorption wavelength to said wafer and is directed toward said boundary portion to delete said annular reinforcing portion.