

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A wafer boat for supporting a plurality of semiconductor wafers in a furnace comprising:
 - a vertical rod;
 - a set of fingers that extend radially inward from the vertical rod, each finger of the set comprising:
 - an elongated segment that extends from the vertical rod; and
 - a contact protuberance disposed on the elongated segment toward a distal end of the finger for contacting and supporting a semiconductor wafer, at least a portion of the contact protuberance being raised with respect to the elongated segment.
2. The wafer boat as set forth in claim 1 wherein the contact protuberance is rounded.
3. The wafer boat as set forth in claim 2 wherein the contact protuberance has a width of 3 mm to 20 mm, a length of 10 mm to 50 mm, and the distance from the contact protuberance to a longitudinal central axis of the wafer boat is from 75 mm to 125 mm.
4. The wafer boat as set forth in claim 2 wherein the contact protuberance has a width of 8 mm, a length of 30 mm, and the distance from the contact protuberance to a longitudinal central axis of the wafer boat is 100 mm.
5. The wafer boat as set forth in claim 1 wherein the contact protuberance is flat.
6. The wafer boat as set forth in claim 5 wherein the contact protuberance has a width of 3 mm to 20 mm, a length of 10 mm to 50 mm, and

the distance from the contact protuberance to a longitudinal central axis of the wafer boat is from 75 mm to 125 mm.

7. The wafer boat as set forth in claim 5 wherein the contact protuberance has a width of 8 mm, a length of 25 mm, and the distance from the contact protuberance to a longitudinal central axis of the wafer boat is 100 mm.

8. The wafer boat as set forth in any one of claims 1 to 7 wherein the finger axis extends over a chord of a circle centered about the longitudinal central axis, the chord not intersecting the longitudinal central axis of the wafer boat.

9. The wafer boat as set forth in any one of claims 1 to 8 wherein the vertical rod is a first rod and the set of fingers is a first set of fingers, the wafer boat comprising:

a second vertical rod;

a second set of fingers that extend radially inward from the second vertical rod along a finger axis, the finger axis extending over a chord of the circle, the chord not intersecting a longitudinal central axis of the wafer boat, each finger of the second set comprising:

an elongated segment that extends from the second vertical rod; and

a contact protuberance disposed on the elongated segment toward a distal end of the finger for contacting and supporting a semiconductor wafer, at least a portion of the contact protuberance being raised with respect to the elongated segment.

10. The wafer boat as set forth in claim 9 further comprising:

a third rod;

a third set of fingers that extend radially inward from the third vertical rod along a finger axis, the finger axis extending over a chord of the circle, the chord intersecting a longitudinal central axis of the wafer boat, each finger of the third set comprising:

an elongated segment that extends from the second vertical rod; and

a contact protuberance disposed on the elongated segment toward a distal end of the finger for contacting and supporting a semiconductor wafer, at least a portion of the contact protuberance being raised with respect to the elongated segment.

11. The wafer boat as set forth in claim 10 wherein the distal end of each finger is spaced about 120° about the wafer boat.

12. The wafer boat as set forth in claim 10 wherein each of the first, second, and third contact protuberances are spaced 120° about the wafer boat.