



## COLUMNISTS

## Checkpoint

Carsten Hansen



## Rating Chart

♦ – A poor book.

♦♦ – Not very good.

♦♦♦ – A useful book.

♦♦♦♦ – A good book.

♦♦♦♦♦ – An excellent book.

## Reviewed this month:

*New in Chess Yearbook Vol. 85*  
by Genna Sosonko

*Gambiteer II*  
by Nigel Davies

*Challenging the Nimzo-Indian*  
by David Vigorito

*Chesspublishing.com: 1 d4 d5*  
by Ruslan Scherbakov

## En Passant

*My Best Games in the Grünfeld (DVD)*  
by Alexei Shirov

*My Best Games in the Spanish Vol. 2 (DVD)*  
by Alexei Shirov

## This and That

This month we have a nice mix of materials and formats: the latest Yearbook from *New In Chess*, a repertoire book for Black, a dedicated opening monograph, two DVDs by Shirov, and a look at one of the sections offered at chesspublishing.com.

*New in Chess Yearbook Vol. 85*, by Genna Sosonko, Interchess BV 2007, Softcover, 247pp., \$28.95

In the newest volume of this popular series, World Champion Anand smilingly graces the cover with the caption: "A Knight in Shining Armour: Anand's Anti-Moscow Slav Holds Firm." This refers to Anand's success as black in the Anti-Moscow Gambit during the world championship tournament in Mexico City last year.

Other featured articles are:

- Alexander Grischuk enjoys a Scotch – black label
- Viktor Bologan on his teacher's pet move – the Chebanenko Slav
- Ivan Cheparinov tames a rebel in the Rauzer
- The Volga is plain sailing for Pavel Tregubov



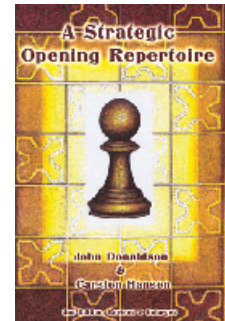
The material is divided as follows:

- Opening Highlights (2 pages)
- Your Variations (2 pages)
- Forum (13 pages)
- Sosonko's Corner (6 pages)
- Surveys – 31 Opening Variations (212 pages)
- Book Reviews (6 pages)
- New In Chess Code System (1 page)

One fascinating inclusion in this volume is a survey by Dutch IM Boersma, where Topalov annotates the game Kramnik-Anand! Topalov very rarely annotates his own games, let alone those of others. While the opening surveys are at the heart of each volume, I'm taking a greater liking to some of the other features. The Forum section, where anyone can write in with items of interest, offers some exceptional contributions regarding the Slav, French Winawer, Anti-Moscow Gambit, Ruy Lopez Zaitsev Variation, and the Sicilian Najdorf.

In Sosonko's Corner, the esteemed editor discusses "The Impact of a Novelty," using several examples from Mexico City, including three games by Kramnik as well as several other theoretically important games from the past. Finally, Glenn Flear's book reviews are one of the first things I turn

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[A Strategic Opening  
Repertoire](#)

by John Donaldson &  
Carsten Hansen

Read an excerpt [here](#).



[Danish Dynamite](#)

by Karsten Mueller &  
Martin Voigt



[Scandinavian Defense:  
The Dynamic 3...Qd6](#)

by Michael Melts

to; they always make for great reading. His observations on double king pawn openings are particularly noteworthy.

The surveys in this volume seem to concentrate on fewer openings than usual. For example, there are four surveys on the Grünfeld Indian Defense, three on the Slav, two on the King's Indian, two on the Nimzo-Indian, two on the Ruy Lopez, two on the Caro-Kann and two on the Sicilian Rauzer (six in total on the Sicilian). There are also surveys on many minor lines, such as the Moscow Variation, 3 Bb5+ in the Sicilian, 4 Bc4 and 5 d3 against the Scandinavian, the Riga Variation in the Ruy Lopez, Bishop's Opening, Nimzo-Indian 4 f3, Grünfeld Indian Defence: 4 h4, Dutch Defence: 2 g4, 2 e4 and 2 Nc3. While you may not have an immediate interest in all the lines in a given volume, you should be able to use a couple of the ideas as surprise weapons, or at least be inspired to expand your repertoire.

This series of yearbooks is one of the main sources of contemporary opening theory in print today. Ambitious tournament players and keen enthusiasts will find it an excellent source of study material.

**My assessment of this book:** ♦♦♦♦♦

*New in Chess Yearbook Vol. 85*  
by Genna Sosonko

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*Gambiteer II*, by Nigel Davies, Everyman Chess 2007, Softcover, 192pp., \$24.95

In this volume, Davies focuses primarily on two openings: the Schliemann Gambit against the Ruy Lopez and the Albin Counter-Gambit. The former emerged in the repertoire of Azerbaijani GM Teimur Radjabov, who used it to gain an effortless draw against Judit Polgar in the recent Wijk aan Zee tournament, while the latter has been used on occasion by Alexander Morozevich. Both of these openings are underrated and few players are prepared to meet them, and even when White is well prepared, he may only obtain a slight advantage.



The material is divided as follows:

- Bibliography (1 page)
- Introduction (2 pages)
- 1 Schliemann Gambit: 4 Nc3 fxe4 5 Nxe4 Nf6 6 Qe2 (35 pages)
- 2 Schliemann Gambit: 4 Nc3 fxe4 5 Nxe4 Nf6 6 Nxf6+ & 4... Bb4!? (16 pages)
- 3 Schliemann Gambit: 4 d4 (18 pages)
- 4 Schliemann Gambit: 4 d3 (10 pages)
- 5 Schliemann Gambit: 4 Bxc6, 4 Qe2 and 4 exf5 (11 pages)
- 6 Albin Counter-Gambit: 5 g3 Nge7 (16 pages)
- 7 Albin Counter-Gambit: 5 Nbd2, 5 a3 and Others (17 pages)
- 8 Albin Counter-Gambit: 4 e4, 4 a3 and 4 e3 (11 pages)
- 9 Albin Counter-Gambit: 3 e3 and 3 cxd5 (7 pages)
- 10 White Avoids the Albin with 2 Nf3 (16 pages)
- 11 Fight the Stodge (27 pages)
- Index of Complete Games (2 pages)

As you can see there is very little coverage of other openings. For instance, what will Black do against 3 Bc4, the Four Knights, the Bishop's Opening, the Vienna, the King's Gambit, etc? In the "Fight the Stodge" chapter, Davies spends a considerable amount of space on the English Opening. He recommends a sharp approach for Black, and then covers 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Nf6 4 d3, but makes no mention of the fact that White can sharpen the game with 4 d4 or 4 Ng5. No recommendations are made against these lines, or against the others mentioned above.

The target audience (players rated 1500-2000) will receive a solid introduction to the Schliemann and Albin, although Davies is a bit optimistic on Black's behalf, which seems to be the norm for books of this type. Yet, as a repertoire book, there are too many important variations that go unmentioned.

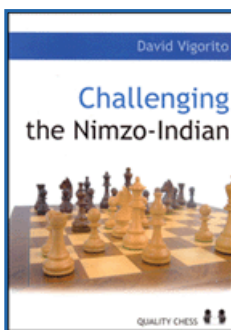
**My assessment of this book:** ♦♦♦♦♦

[Order Gambiteer II](#)  
by Nigel Davies

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*Challenging the Nimzo-Indian*, by David Vigorito, Quality Chess 2007, Softcover, 325pp., \$26.95

It is absolutely astounding how much relevant material American IM David Vigorito has managed to present in this volume, especially because he exclusively discusses the merits of the Classical Variation of the Nimzo-Indian. This arises after 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 Qc2, and it has been in need of a good monograph for a long time.



The material is divided as follows:

- List of Symbols (1 page)
- Bibliography (1 page)
- How this book came to be (2 pages)
- Chapter overview and recommendations (4 pages)
- 1 Endgame Variation (12 pages)
- 2 Avoiding the Endgame (12 pages)
- 3 The Old Variation (12 pages)
- 4 Bareev Variation (12 pages)
- 5 Sokolov Variation (12 pages)
- 6 Rozentalis and 7...c5 (16 pages)
- 7 Dutch and Vitolinsh Variations (22 pages)
- 8 Central Variation: Main Line (18 pages)
- 9 Central Variation: Deviation (20 pages)
- 10 Zurich Variation and Black's rare 4th moves (12 pages)
- 11 Romanishin: 6 e3 (10 pages)
- 12 Romanishin: 6 Nf3 (18 pages)
- 13 Accelerated PCA Variation (10 pages)
- 14 Exchange Variation (6 pages)
- 15 PCA Variation (14 pages)
- 16 Romanishin Gambit and Short Variation (8 pages)
- 17 Adams Variation (16 pages)
- 18 Modern Variation (22 pages)
- 19 Knight Hop (20 pages)
- 20 Macieja Variation (16 pages)
- 21 Deviations after 4...c5 (13 pages)
- Index of Main Lines (16 pages)

It is amazing how many different lines Vigorito discusses in this volume. Aside from the theory, there is a lengthy narrative discussion of the typical ideas, tactics, and explanations of plans, etc. Vigorito has carefully sifted through the material to focus on what is most important and added plenty of his own analysis, including numerous improvements over existing theory, as well as supporting analysis as to why certain lines are preferred over others.

Vigorito seems very objective in his presentation. While his sympathy may be with White, he recommends variations for both sides, leaving Black with plenty of lines to consider. If you play 4 Qc2 as white or the Nimzo-Indian as black, you simply must have this book. It is one of the finest opening books of 2007. It may be a little too advanced for some lower-rated players, but those who study this book will undoubtedly improve their game and their understanding of this variation.

**My assessment of this book:** 

[Order \*Challenging the Nimzo-Indian\*](#)  
by David Vigorito

*Chesspublishing.com: 1 d4 d5*, by Ruslan Scherbakov, Chesspublishing.com 2008, Subscription \$19.50-\$99.00 per year.

Beginning with this column and continuing through the rest of the year, I will examine a different section of the chesspublishing.com subscription service. The site is divided into twelve sections, each hosted by a strong player:

- 1 e4 e5 (GM Tony Kosten)
- French (GM Neil McDonald)
- Dragons (Chris Ward)
- Open Sicilians (IM Richard Palliser/GM Tony Kosten)
- Anti-Sicilians (GM John Shaw)
- 1 e4 ... (IM John Watson)
- 1 d4 d5 (GM Ruslan Scherbakov)
- d-pawn Specialties (GM Eric Prie)
- King's Indian (GM Viktor Mikhalevcki)
- Nimzo & Benoni (GM John Emms)

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- Daring Defences (GM Glenn Flear)
- Flank Openings (FM Carsten Hansen)

Subscribers are provided with twelve updates per year, which usually contain up to ten important games from the previous month's tournament practice. However, in some cases the authors of the individual sections can choose a different approach, if it is deemed useful and interesting for the subscribers.

An added subscription benefit is that one can access the archives dating back to October 1999, providing an immense volume of material in PGN, PDF and CBV formats. The authors of each section sometimes change over the years, but it is always from one specialist to the next. Finally there is a forum for each section in which subscribers can participate in the often lively and quite engaging debate over any number of topics.

The annual subscription costs are as follows:

- One section: \$19.50
- Three sections: \$39.00
- Six sections: \$69.00
- Twelve sections: \$99.00

The selected games are almost always thoroughly annotated and often provide something no printed book can offer. This month I will examine the 1 d4 d5 section, which is managed by Russian GM Ruslan Scherbakov. It covers the Catalan Opening, the Queen's Gambit, the Slav main lines, the Chebanenko Slav (with an early ...a6), the Meran, the Bovinnik, the Anti-Moscow Variation, and several other highly topical lines.

With so many important games being played every month, I don't envy Scherbakov's task in finding the relevant games to present. Given the pace of developments in these lines, I don't think there is a better source to stay abreast of current theory. Scherbakov even takes the time to highlight lesser lines when there is something of interest.

Of all the sections on Chesspublishing.com, this is one of my favorites. If you play 1 d4 as white or answer it with 1...d5, you will do yourself a good turn by subscribing to this service.

**My assessment of this site:** ♦♦♦♦♦

*Chesspublishing.com: 1 d4 d5*  
by Ruslan Scherbakov

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*My Best Games in the Grünfeld* (DVD), by Alexei Shirov, ChessBase GmbH 2007, Running Time: 5 hours 25 minutes, \$39.95

Shirov begins this DVD by relating that before 1997 he rarely played the Grünfeld, but he was inspired to adopt it because of Kasparov. The material is divided into sixteen segments, with Shirov playing black in each game. This itself is unusual since his other DVDs all feature him on both sides of an opening. Five of the games are from his match against Kramnik in Cazorla.

Shirov readily admits that some of the games are not necessarily his best. However, they are interesting either from a theoretical perspective (according to theory at the time) or in the context of his career. Also, Shirov finally looks as though he is becoming comfortable in front of the camera and once the games start he speaks freely and the presentation flows.



**My assessment of this DVD:** ♦♦♦♦♦

*My Best Games in the Grünfeld* (DVD)  
by Alexei Shirov

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*My Best Games in the Spanish vol 2* (DVD), by Alexei Shirov, ChessBase GmbH 2007, Running Time: Approx 6 hours, \$39.95

Shirov begins this DVD with the observation that every time he records a new presentation he plays quite well in the tournament that follows. It seems the process of working on his own games helps him think more clearly and improves his results. The games on this volume were all played in 2007. The five that feature Shirov as black are all from the Arkchangel'sk Variation, but there is a greater variety of variations when he plays as white. Shirov admits that the games are not perfect, but they all have instructive qualities.



Perhaps because the games are so recent, Shirov seems reticent about revealing certain lines and alternative variations. In one case, at about move seventeen, Shirov notes that his home analysis runs until move thirty or thirty-five! The narration and the analysis are given in just the right doses and are enlightening, informative and useful.



My assessment of this DVD: 

*My Best Games in the Spanish*

*Vol. 2 (DVD)*

by Alexei Shirov

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