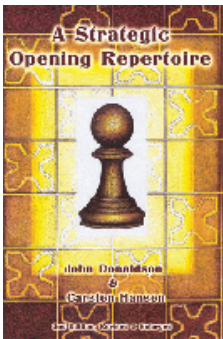




COLUMNISTS

Checkpoint

Carsten Hansen



Rating Chart

- ♦ – A poor book
- ♦♦ – Not very good
- ♦♦♦ – A useful book
- ♦♦♦♦ – A good book
- ♦♦♦♦♦ – An excellent book



Play through and download the games from [ChessCafe.com](#) in the [DGT Game Viewer](#).

[The Complete DGT Product Line](#)

Reviewed this month:

Beating Unusual Openings
by Richard Palliser

Play the English
by Craig Pritchett

Tactics in the Chess Openings 6
by Sipke Ernst & Geert van der Stricht

The King's Indian Attack (DVD)
by Nigel Davies

En Passant

Chesspublishing.com: Daring Defenses
by Glenn Flear

1.e4 for the Creative Attacker (DVD)
by Nigel Davies

My Best Games in the Sveshnikov (DVD)
by Alexei Shirov

The Flank Side of Life

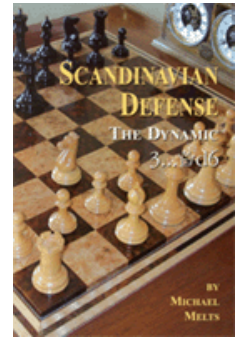
This month we'll look at a selection of books on flank openings. These tend to be less popular than the mainstream 1 e4 and 1 d4 openings, and they are rarely seen at the grandmaster level. However, this is because they don't offer the same amount of complexity and diversity in comparison with 1 e4 and 1 d4, nor do they offer White the same opportunities to gain an edge from the opening. It is not because they are unplayable. In fact, there is absolutely no reason why these openings cannot be played consistently and with good results. We will also have a brief look at a couple of new DVDs from ChessBase and take another passing look at chesspublishing.com. Enjoy!

Beating Unusual Openings by Richard Palliser, Everyman Chess 2006, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 223pp., \$23.95

The title of the present volume, from English international master Richard Palliser, rings a bit odd in my ears. Because, even though all the openings are flank openings, some are completely mainstream, such as 1 c4 and 1 Nf3; while others are decidedly unusual, e.g. The Sokolsky, The Grob, and The Dunst (or Der Linksspringer, as Palliser calls 1 Nc3). Nevertheless, the positive aspect of this for enthusiasts of these openings is that prospective opponents will likely have not picked up the book, and it is a very good one.



Check out these bestselling titles from [USCFSales.com](#):



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



[The Fearsome Four: Pawns Attack](#)
by Jerzy Konikowski & Marek Soszynski

Read an excerpt [here](#).



[The Modern Morra Gambit](#)
by Hannes Langrock

The material is divided as follows:

- Bibliography (2 pages)
- Preface (2 pages)
- Part 1: The Symmetrical English
 - 1 White Fianchettoes and Plays Nf3 (26 pages)
 - 2 White Fianchettoes without Nf3 (30 pages)
 - 3 The Three Knights Variation (20 pages)
 - 4 White Plays an Early d4 (23 pages)
- Part 2: Unusual First Moves
 - 5 Two Advances of the g-Pawn (8 pages)
 - 6 Bird's Opening (12 pages)
 - 7 The Nimzo-Larsen Attack (13 pages)
 - 8 Der Linksspringer: 1 Nc3 (17 pages)
 - 9 The Sokolsky (9 pages)
- Part 3: 1 Nf3
 - 10 The 1 Nf3 Problem and a Possible Solution (10 pages)
 - 11 Black meets 1 Nf3 with 1...d5 (22 pages)
 - 12 Black meets 1 Nf3 with 1...Nf6 (23 pages)
- Index of Variations (2 pages)

As you can see from the above, Palliser is keenly aware of the importance of both the English and the Reti, spending nearly 100 pages on the English and 55 pages on 1 Nf3.

It can be argued that he should also have covered truly unusual moves such as 1 d3, 1 e3, 1 Nh3, 1 Na3, 1 c3 and 1 a3, as most of these could have been sufficiently dismissed on a page or two. However, Palliser may have decided that such moves were either too unorthodox or simply irrelevant.

In his coverage of the English, Palliser has chosen a good setup for Black in the Swedish Variation (or Wedberg Variation as he calls it) where Black intends 1...c5, 2...Nc6, 3...g6, 4...Bg7, and 5...e5, usually followed by ...Nge7, ...0-0, ...d6, ...Be6. This variation is quite popular nowadays, even though Black commits himself to playing actively for a win by making some positional concessions. Aside from this setup for Black, Palliser has recommendations against all other setups for White, and he usually offers an alternative to his main recommendation. This is good in that it gives the player with the black pieces an extra option to work with.

Palliser is very objective in his assessments, which has always been one of his strengths as a writer. He tells when the position is even, and provides opportunities to play on with decent chances of success. He has taken care to present continuations that pose problems for White, even in the main lines. This puts the reader in a rather comfortable position, which is not at all a bad place to be.

My assessment of this book: ♦♦♦♦♦

[Order](#) *Beating Unusual Openings*

by Richard Palliser

Play the English by Craig Pritchett, Everyman Chess 2007, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 189pp., \$24.95

This repertoire book is written by the pleasant Scottish international master Craig Pritchett. The number of pages immediately raised a red flag, because there is a huge body of theory after both 1...e5 and 1...c5, and on top of that there are lines with 1...Nf6, 1...e6, 1..c6, 1...b6, 1...g6 and 1...f5. So, there are many lines to look at; usually many



more than can be covered in a relatively slim volume such as this. Yet looks can be deceiving, so let's see how the material is divided:



- Bibliography and Acknowledgements (2 pages)
- Introduction (3 pages)
- Black Plays 1...e5
 - 1 The Four Knights: 4 g3 Bb4 (34 pages)
 - 2 The Four Knights: 4 g3 without 4...Bb4 (37 pages)
 - 3 Black's Alternative Set-ups after 1...e5 (31 pages)
 - 1...c5 and Other Defences
 - 4 Symmetrical Four Knights, 3...d5 and Keres-Parma (37 pages)
 - 5 The Hedgehog (20 pages)
 - 6 English-Indians (19 pages)
- Index of Complete Games (2 pages)


Oddly enough, the contents page ignores the index of complete games, and an index of variations is missing altogether.

In the introduction, Pritchett makes it clear that certain variations, including the King's Indian, Dutch, Queen's Gambit and Slav setups are not covered, because meeting them is a matter of personal taste and most players prefer to transpose to 1 d4 main lines. This may well be true, but there are similar setups that don't transpose to proper main lines and these are not mentioned at all. Nor are moves like 1...g6 and 1...b6.

In the main lines, Pritchett does a very decent job by recommending continuations that promise White excellent chances of obtaining an edge. Although he has a tendency to quote lengthy series of moves without offering alternatives for either side, even when there are several that can be considered. Pritchett also occasionally ignores more recent games that feature better continuations for both Black and White.

Pritchett does a very good job in his discussion of the Reversed Dragon Variation (4 g3 d5), with an early d2-d4 for White. He offers new ideas and original improvements, and even makes some suggestions against Palliser's repertoire as featured above. Unfortunately, such diligence is lacking in some of the other lines.

Still, I find this book to be a very good introduction to the English Opening for White. It is a good starting point for building a reliable repertoire and it can also be useful for those who are trying to fill holes in their existing repertoire.

My assessment of this book: 

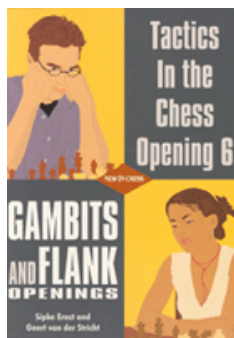
[Order Play the English](#)

by Craig Pritchett

Tactics in the Chess Openings 6: Gambits and Flank Openings by Sipke Ernst & Geert van der Stricht, New In Chess 2007, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 241pp., \$21.95

This is the final volume in the series of *Tactics in the Chess Opening*. The back cover tells us what this series is all about:

“Every chess player loves to win early in the game with a deadly combination or a cunning trap. On the other hand, nobody wants to be tricked by his opponent before the game has really started. The popular





series Tactics in the Chess Opening teaches how to recognize opportunities to attack early in the game. You will also learn how to avoid pitfalls in the opening. This book explains, in more than 200 carefully selected and annotated games, all the tactical themes and typical traps of the main lines in the English, the Dutch and the Reti Openings, as well as several interesting gambits. After studying these brilliant surprise attacks, or just enjoying them, the adventurous chess player will win more games.”

This sounds promising, but let’s first see what this volume includes:

- Dutch Defence (38 pages)
- English Opening with 1...e5 (24 pages)
- English Opening with 1...c5 (26 pages)
- English Opening - Various Systems (10 pages)
- Reti Opening (26 pages)
- Nimzowitsch and Basman (10 pages)
- Chigorin, Albin and Blackmar Diemer (46 pages)
- Budapest and Englund Gambit (20 pages)
- Bird, Van Geet and Sokolsky (14 pages)
- Index of Players (4 pages)
- NIC-Key Gambits and Flank Openings (4 pages)
- The NIC-Key at NICBase Online (1 page)

From the above, I have to profess confusion as to how the authors have decided to distribute the material. The chapter covering the Chigorin, Albin and the Blackmar-Diemer gets almost as much space as the two chapters on the English Opening on 1...e5 and 1...c5 combined, though the two latter openings are much more popular. Also, the fact that the chapter on the Budapest and Englund gets so much space is beyond my comprehension. The problem for the authors is that there are probably far more traps in some of these rarer, sharper gambits than in the “solid” English Opening. That being said, not all of the games pertain to early opening tricks, some only feature tactics that occur between move fifteen and twenty, sometimes even later.

However, what concerns me most is the terribly inconsistent annotations. There are games decided very quickly where the losing side, at least according to the punctuation, didn’t play a bad or dubious move, yet was thoroughly bashed to pieces. In other games Black wins several quick games in a variation, but no improvement is suggested for White. So maybe it would have been prudent to tell the reader where he went wrong. In other cases, a move is given as dubious, even though it is considered critical for the variation. Furthermore, they don’t offer any documentation for why it is bad move.

Here’s an example. The game can be found in chapter two on page sixty-six. The annotations are as they appear in the book:

Wang Yue – Smirin

Khanty Mansyisk 2005

1 c4 e5 2 Nc3 d6!? 3 g3 f5

A very ambitious set-up that suits Smirin, a sharp player, very well.

4 Bg2 Nf6 5 e3

This is not frequently seen. In Spraggett-Speelman, Hastings 1989/90, the Canadian grandmaster played 5 d3 Be7 6 Nf3 0–0 7 0–0 Kh8 8 Bd2 Na6 9 Rb1 c6 10 b4 Nc7 11 b5! c5 12 Bg5! Ng8 13 Bc1 Bf6 14 Bb2 Ne7 15 Qc2 b6 16 Nd2 Rb8, and after the game Speelman recommended 17 Qa4!. The text gives the black f-pawn an extra target.

[CH: this deserves a comment, because with the colors reversed, this is a Closed Sicilian, where Black very frequently plays ...e7-e6, and it is considered a good continuation, even with a tempo less. Think, people think!]

**5...g6 6 Nge2 Bg7 7 b4 Nc6 8 b5 Ne7 9 a4 0-0 10 d3 Rb8 11 Ba3
Be6 12 Rc1 Kh8 13 0-0 g5**

As in the Dutch Defence and the King's Indian, White has a space advantage on the queenside, but Black now starts an attack on the kingside.

14 Qd2 Ng6 15 Nd5 f4 16 exf4 gxf4 17 Nec3

Only a computer would consider 17 gxf4, after which Black has several promising possibilities: 17...Bh6, 17...Rg8 or, perhaps the strongest one 17...Nh4!

17...Bh6 18 Rcd1 Rg8

Already 18...fxg3!? Was looking quite promising, for example 19 Qxh6 Ng4 20 Qh5 gxh2+ 21 Kh1 Nxf2+ (21...Rxf2? 22 Ne4!) 22 Rxf2 Rxf2. But there is no need for such fireworks – yet!

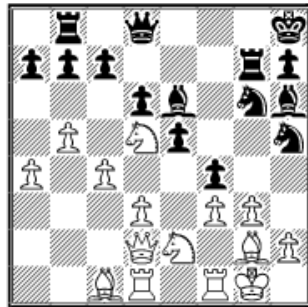
19 f3 Nh5 20 Ne2

20 Ne4 Bxd5 21 cxd5 fxg3 22 Qxh6 gxh2+ 23 Kh1 Ngf4.

20...Rg7

Here Black could strike with a line similar to the one mentioned in the previous note: 20...Bxd5 21 cxd5 fxg3 22 Qxh6 gxh2+ 23 Kh1, and now not Ngf4 24 Nxf4 Nxf4 25 Rf2, but first 23...Qh4!, threatening 24...Ng3+ and covering the f2-square.

21 Bc1



21...Nh4! 22 Qe1

After 22 gxh4 Bh3 23 Rf2 Qxh4 24 Nec3 Rbg8 White would have to give the queen on g2.

**22...fxg3 23 hxg3 Bxc1 24 Rxc1
Qg5**

Piling up the pressure on the g-file again.

25 Kh2

If 25 f4 Qg4! 26 Ne3, and now 26...Nxc3 27 Nxg2 (27 Nxg4? loses a piece to 27...Nxe1) 27...Rbg8, and White will succumb.


25...Rbg8 26 Rg1 Nxc3! 27 Nxg2 Qh6! 28 Qe3 Nxf3

Mate.

A beautiful game by Black, but where did White go wrong? Not a single move was given as inferior, dubious or bad. The only comment that suggested an alternative was after White's fifth move. This can hardly constitute an improvement. So the conclusion you can draw from this game is that the reversed Closed Sicilian wins for Black, if White plays 5 e3!

This book is entertaining and fun to read, and I'm sure you can get some

inspiration from playing through the games. You may even avoid some mistakes in your own games or be better able to exploit your opponent's mistakes. But as a thorough guide to opening trickery, I will certainly question it.

My assessment of this book: 

**Order *Tactics in the Chess Openings 6:*
Gambits and Flank Openings
by Sipke Ernst & Geert van der Stricht**

King's Indian Attack (DVD) by Nigel Davies, ChessBase GmbH 2007,
Figurine Algebraic Notation, Playing time: more than 5 hours, \$39.95

This is the first of two ChessBase DVDs by
Davies that will be reviewed this month.



The material is divided as follows:

- Intro
- Fischer - Myagmarsuren, Sousse 1967
- Davies - Plaskett, Manchester 1983
- Psakhis - Paunovic, Minsk 1986
- Dolmatov - Lautier, Polanica Zdroj 1991
- Kaidanov - Zapata, New York 1993
- Fischer - Panno, Buenos Aires 1970
- Morozevich - Kogan, London 1994
- Evans - Filguth, Lone Pine 1978
- Davies - Roeder, Lyon 1990
- Davies - Collins, 4NCL 2005-06
- Balashov - Groszpeter, Dortmund 1992
- Stein - Haag, Tallinn 1969
- Stein - Portisch, Moscow 1967
- Vaganian - Torre, Moscow (ol) 1994
- Biyiasas - Vasiukov, Hastings 1978
- Ivkov - Lima, Las Palmas 1989
- Gutman - Leinov, Israel 1980
- Davies - Nascimento, Paz e Amizade 1985
- Yap - Bani, Balatonbereny 1985
- Itkis - Ionescu, Ciocaltea mem 1995
- Salov - Hübner, Barcelona 1989
- Petrosian - Yudovich, Moscow 1953
- Davies - Manor, Israeli Club Championship 1990

This is a long and impressive list of games, but it really doesn't tell us much, because we have no idea which variation is covered in each game. The first game is a classic. Fischer, playing white, brilliantly executes his kingside attack and finishes Black off with panache. As Davies tells us, the game is reproduced in just about every work recommending the King's Indian Attack, and it would be criminal of him to leave it out. Indeed it is a beautiful game:

Fischer – Myagmarsuren

Sousse Interzonal(3) 1967 [A08]

1 e4 e6 2 d3 d5 3 Nd2 Nf6 4 g3 c5 5 Bg2 Nc6 6 Ngf3 Be7 7 0-0-0
8 e5 Nd7 9 Re1 b5 10 Nf1 b4 11 h4 a5 12 Bf4 a4 13 a3!? bxa3
14 bxa3 Na5 15 Ne3 Ba6 16 Bh3 d4 17 Nf1 Nb6 18 Ng5 Nd5 19
Bd2 Bxg5 20 Bxg5 Qd7 21 Qh5 Rfc8 22 Nd2 Nc3 23 Bf6 Qe8 24
Ne4 g6 25 Qg5! Nxe4 26 Rxe4



26...c4 27 h5 cxd3 28 Rh4 Ra7 29
Bg2! dxc2?! 30 Qh6 Qf8 31 Qxh7



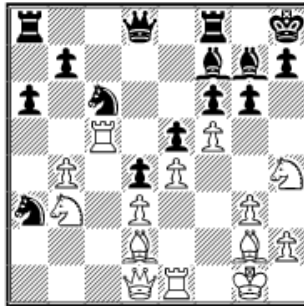
+ 1-0

Another nice game is by Davies himself. It is an example of how White can play the King's Indian Attack against the Sicilian, without playing something lame like 1 e4 c5 2 d3:

Davies – S.Collins

4NCL 2005–06 Birmingham 2006 [A05]

1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 c3 Nf6 4 d3 Nc6 5 g3 g6 6 Bg2 Bg7 7 0–0 0–0 8 Re1 e5 9 a3 d5 10 Nbd2 d4 11 cxd4 cxd4 12 b4 a6 13 Nb3 Ne8 14 Bg5 f6 15 Bd2 Nd6 16 Rc1 Kh8 17 Nh4 Nb5 18 Rc5 Be6 19 f4 Nxa3 20 f5 Bf7



21 Rd5 Qe8 22 fxg6 hxg6 23 Nc5 Ra7 24 Nd7 Nb5 25 Qg4 Be6 26 Qxg6 Bxd7 27 Bh6 Rf7 28 Rxd7 Qxd7 29 Bh3 Qxh3 30 Qxf7 1–0

In contrast to previous DVDs by Davies, his presentation seems somewhat unprepared. He often searches for words and suggests moves without having a countermove prepared, and he

seems to be speaking more extemporaneously. Thus, the presentation suffers from an enormous amount of “uhh...” breaks. This is distracting and annoying and it lasts for more than five hours!

That said, Davies presents a good case for employing the King's Indian Attack as white against most Black setups, although the reality is of course less rosy than Davies suggests. Also, I should mention that Davies does not cover the main recommendation for Black against the King's Indian Attack that Palliser's gives in his book. That recommendation is a good solid try against the King's Indian Attack, and it indicates that some variations and side lines are missing from Davies's presentation.

Overall, I'm not exactly blown away by this DVD; mainly because it lacks substance. It has a lot of games, but the annotations are a little fluffy and lack depth. Alternative moves are scarcely covered and when they are the analysis is only a couple moves deep. This is something of a let-down compared with Davies's earlier works, but still better than many other DVDs.

My assessment of this DVD: ♦♦♦♦

King's Indian Attack (DVD)

by Nigel Davies

Chesspublishing.com: Daring Defences by Glenn Flear, Chesspublishing.com 2008, Subscription \$19.50-\$99.00 per year.

Chesspublishing describes this section of its site as follows: “The Daring Defences is a grouping of those defences to d4 that are either ‘correct to just a little risky’ (the Grünfeld, the Dutch), or very risky (the Benko, the Budapest Gambit, the English Defence), except for the Benoni which is handled elsewhere.”

Chess
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.COM

English grandmaster Glenn Flear has hosted this page since the end of

2002; prior to that it was hosted by grandmasters McDonald and Tisdall.

As you can see, the openings covered are very different in style and volume of theory, and I doubt many players use more than one of them as black. Yet anyone who plays 1 d4 and 2 c4 should have a keen interest in them.

Flear skillfully dissects the huge volume of recent games in these openings. He indicates trends, interesting ideas and novelties, and presents them with plenty of supporting explanatory prose and analysis.

Each update has up to twelve recent games, usually played within the five weeks prior to the update in question. If I were only going to subscribe to a couple of sections, this would definitely be one of them.

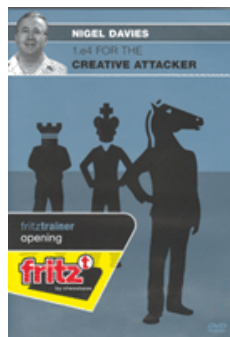
My assessment of this site: ♦♦♦♦

Chesspublishing.com: Daring Defences
by Glenn Flear

1.e4 for the Creative Attacker (DVD) by Nigel Davies, ChessBase GmbH 2007, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Playing time: 4 hours, \$39.95

This title sounds fairly interesting and it leads one to believe that they will get an attractive repertoire of sharp variations; however, the end result is rather disappointing. As well as the Scandinavian and some side lines after 1 e4 e5, the openings covered are:

- 1 e4 c5 2 Na3
- 1 e4 e6 2 f4
- 1 e4 d6 2 f4
- 1 e4 g6 2 f4
- 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 f3
- 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 g3
- 1 e4 Nf6 2 Nc3 d5 3 e5 Nfd7 4 f4



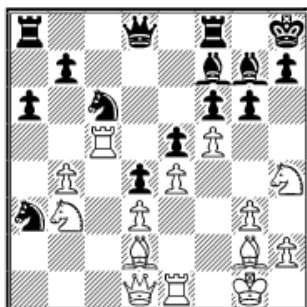
Calling this a repertoire for the creative attacker is more of a marketing ploy, rather than an accurate description of the contents. Obviously asking for an edge for White in these lines is a bit too much. However, the goal is to force both players to think for themselves, with White hoping to be better prepared against an ignorant opponent.

With the very first game, Davies illustrates that he is willing to play the openings he recommends:

Davies – Surtees

Heywood (rapid) 2007

1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 f3 e6 4 Nc3 Bb4 5 a3 Bxc3+ 6 bxc3 dxe4 7 Qe2
exf3 8 Nxf3 Qa5 9 Bd2 Qa4 10 Qe5 f6 11 Qg3 g6 12 Bd3 Ne7 13
0-0 Qa5 14 Qh4 0-0 15 Bh6 Rf7



16 Ne5 Nf5 [17...fxe5 18 Qe7!] 17
Rxf5 exf5 18 Bc4 fxe5 19 Qe7 1-0

This is a nice game, but Davies is facing a 57-year-old opponent rated below 2200. It is hardly a contest between equals. I would be more impressed if Davies had shown a game where he played 1



e4 e6 2 f4 against a 2500 rated player and gotten a decent result.

There are two games by strong grandmasters in this line, but that hardly validates the opening.

The chosen lines for this production are fun and can be used as surprise weapons, but, with the exception of 3 f3 against the Caro-Kann and 4 g3 in the Four Knights, they are hardly worthy of holding a regular spot in your repertoire.

My assessment of this DVD: ♦♦♦♦

Order *1.e4 for the Creative Attacker (DVD)*

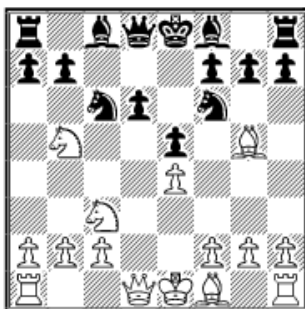
by Nigel Davies

My Best Games in the Sveshnikov (DVD) by Alexei Shirov, ChessBase GmbH 2007, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Playing time: 4 hours, \$39.95

At the beginning of this DVD, Shirov informs us that this is his final presentation for ChessBase. For what it's worth, I don't think we could have asked for a better way to conclude this series.



The Sveshnikov Sicilian arises after 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 e5 6 Ndb5 d6 or 1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 e6 (usually played to avoid 2...Nc6 3 Bb5) 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 Ndb5 d6 7 Bf4 e5 8 Bg5.



Shirov tells us he started playing the opening in 1992 after some analysis sessions with Kramnik. He won his first games against GMs Thomas Luther and Oliver Renet, both of which are presented on this DVD. However, his admission that the analysis has not been computer checked is a bit odd. It is arrogant to ask a consumer to shell out \$40, when you can't be bothered to update your own

analysis from 1992. He also looks a bit disheveled, as if he had just woken up.

Several times Shirov is puzzled by the variations and repeats himself from one game to the next. He also occasionally takes breaks to consider the options in a given position. There are twelve games presented, and a few more mentioned during the different segments, but not shown in full.

I like the overall quality and instructional value of these DVDs, but Sveshnikov fans will be unlikely to find anything new or of lasting value. For players rated 1600-2100, who are looking to take up the opening, the material can be used effectively.

My assessment of this DVD: ♦♦♦♦

Order *My Best Games in the Sveshnikov*

by Alexei Shirov

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