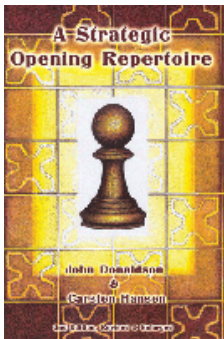




COLUMNISTS

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:

Chess Explained: The Nimzo-Indian
by Reinaldo Vera

The Sämisch King's Indian Uncovered
by Alexander Cherniaev & Eduard kuronov

Bogo-Indian Defence (CD)
by Boris Schipkov

En Passant

Chesspublishing.com: King's Indian
by Victor Mikhalevsky

Secrets of Opening Surprises Vol. 8
by Jeroen Bosch (ed.)

New In Chess Yearbook Vol. 86
by Genna Sosonko (ed.)

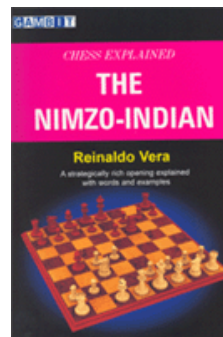
Indians Galore

The Indian complex of openings each have their own qualities and appeal to players of different styles. The openings include solid lines such as the Bogo-Indian (1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 Bb4+) and Nimzo-Indian (1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4) or the sharp and combative Grünfeld Indian (1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6, followed by ...d5) and King's Indian (1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7, followed by ...d6). In this month's column, I will review a number of new works within the Indian defenses before rounding off with brief looks at the King's Indian section of chesspublishing.com and two new publications from New In Chess.

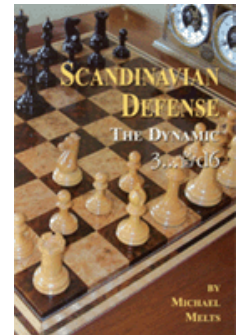
Chess Explained: The Nimzo-Indian by Reinaldo Vera, Gambit Publications 2008, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 111 pp., \$23.95

The Nimzo-Indian has been a favorite of chess players at all levels since its introduction by Nimzovitch in 1914. However, the vast amount of theory associated with the opening left me wondering how Vera would tackle his subject. On the back cover we are told:

“Chess Explained books provide an understanding of an opening and the middlegame to which it leads, enabling you to find the right moves and plans in your own games. It is as if you were sitting at the board with a chess coach answering your questions about the plans for both sides, the ideas behind particular moves, and what specific



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

knowledge you need to have.

“The Nimzo-Indian is one of the most important of all chess openings, and popular at all levels of play. Together with the Queen’s Indian (also covered in this series), the Nimzo has provided the backbone of the opening repertoire of a large portion of the world’s top players over the last 80 years. It is considered a fully reliable defence, and provides winning chances for both sides as it leads to structures of great strategic variety and complexity. Key battlegrounds in the Nimzo include the blockade, IQP positions, the handling of unbalanced pawn-structures, and the struggle between bishop and knight. All these topics are covered in depth in this book, and an understanding of them will prove valuable in a much broader context than just the Nimzo-Indian.”


This, admittedly, sounds great, to understand the ideas behind the opening, rather than memorize reams of theory. The contents are divided as follows:

- Symbols (1 pages)
- Introduction (2 pages)
- 1 Saemisch Variation: 4 a3 or 4 f3 (13 pages)
- 2 Capablanca Variation: 4 Qc2 d5 (11 pages)
- 3 Capablanca Variation: 4 Qc2 0-0 (20 pages)
- 4 Rubinstein System: 4 e3 0-0: Variations with Ne2 (20 pages)
- 5 Rubinstein System: 4 e3 0-0 with Bd3 and Nf3 (15 pages)
- 6 Fianchetto Variation: 4 g3 or 4 Nf3 c5 5 g3 (11 pages)
- 7 Leningrad Variation (4 Bg5) and Other Lines (12 pages)
- List of Games (1 pages)
- Index of Variations (2 pages)

From the above, it is obvious that much is missing. In the first chapter, there is nothing on 4...c5 and 4...d5 against 4 f3. In the Capablanca Variation, there is nothing on 4...c5, which is one of the primary answers for Black, and nothing on the lesser lines. The Rubinstein System only covers 4...0-0, thereby dismissing 4...c5, 4...b6, and 4...Nc6 as well as some lesser lines; and the last two chapters follow a similar pattern, but the missing lines are generally of less significance. Furthermore, Chapter 5 doesn’t even mention one of the most significant lines, the Karpov Variation, which can transpose from a number of other openings.

These are serious omissions, but it can fairly be said that the subject matter is much too big for the number of pages allotted to the coverage. The author had an unenviable task in picking which lines to cover, but he could have spread his net wider and perhaps justified some of his selections as to why certain lines are discussed and others aren’t.

Such as it is, this is more of an introductory repertoire book for someone who has yet to grasp the finer points of the opening as black. For prospective white players, there are a dizzying amount of variations absent, and this is quite disappointing. Still, the given lines are decently covered with well-chosen illustrative games, very good commentary and an excellent balance of theory, analysis, and prose. This is a decent book for someone with little or no experience with the Nimzo as black, and it is a good place to begin, just so long as you’re aware it is only the tip of the iceberg.

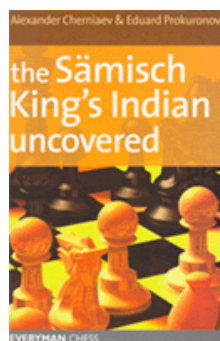
My assessment of this book: 

[Order](#) *Chess Explained: The Nimzo-Indian*

by Reinaldo Vera

Prokuronov, Everyman Chess 2007, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 175pp., \$24.95

Alexander Cherniaev is a grandmaster who has been based in the London area for a number of years and coauthor Eduard Prokuronov is a FIDE master who, according to the back-cover, is a many-time champion of the Arkhangelsk region of Russia. Interestingly, according to my database, Prokuronov seems to prefer the Averbach variation against the King's Indian.



The subject of the book is the reasonably popular Sämisch Variation, which arises after 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f3:

Then, after 5...0-0, White has the choice between 6 Nge2, 6 Bg5, and the main move 6 Be3. At this point the variations branch in all directions, as can be seen from the following overview of the contents:



- Bibliography (1 page)
- Introduction (2 pages)
- 1 The Classical Sämisch: 6 Be3 e5 7 d5 (17 pages)
- 2 Keeping the Tension: 6 Be3 e5 7 Nge2 (14 pages)
- 3 The Panno Variation: 6 Be3 Nc6 (35 pages)
- 4 6 Be3 c6 and 6...Nbd7 (34 pages)
- 5 The Sämisch Gambit: 6 Be3 c5 (16 pages)
- 6 The Sämisch-Benoni: 6 Be3 c5 7 d5 (13 pages)
- 7 The Sämisch-Benoni after 6 Bg5 and 6 Nge2 (24 pages)
- 8 The Flexible 6 Nge2 and 6 Bg5 (14 pages)
- Index of Complete Games (2 pages)

I found it both amusing and puzzling that the authors have chosen to include Gufeld and Schiller's quite poor *Secrets of the King's Indian* in the bibliography, yet ignored Ward's far more relevant *The Controversial Sämisch King's Indian* from 2004.

The presentation of the material is built around main illustrative games, and the authors have purposefully concentrated their commentary efforts on the opening and early middlegame phases, whereas late middlegames and endgames usually receive very little attention. The discussion of each variation usually begins with a very short well-balanced presentation of each line, typical ideas are discussed and explained in reasonable detail and supported by all the relevant theory. The authors have also added a solid amount of original analysis and ideas of their own for both Black and White.

This book is very attractive for practitioners from both sides, because the authors don't give preference to either side and are unbiased in their evaluations. It is well-written, and I quite enjoyed it.

My assessment of this book: ♦♦♦♦♦

[Order](#) *The Sämisch King's Indian Uncovered*

by Alexander Cherniaev & Eduard Prokuronov

Bogo-Indian Defence (CD) by Boris Schipkov, ChessBase GmbH 2008, Figurine Algebraic Notation, \$24.99

Russian opening theoretician Boris Schipkov has authored a number of opening CDs, none of which impressed me greatly. Yet, I'm pleased to see that previous flaws related to the linked games are not repeated on this new offering.



The material is divided as follows: /p>

- 1 General Introduction & Bibliography
- 2 Basic Strategic Ideas
- 3 4 Nbd2
- 4 4 Nbd2 d5
- 5 4 Nbd2 b6
- 6 4 Nbd2 0-0
- 7 4 Bd2 Be7
- 8 4 Bd2 Bxd2 5 Nbx2
- 9 4 Bd2 Bxd2 5 Qxd2
- 10 4 Bd2 c5
- 11 4 Bd2 c5 5 Bxb4 cxb4 6 g3
- 12 4 Bd2 a5
- 13 4...a5 5 g3
- 14 4 Bd2 Qe7
- 15 4...Qe7 5 Nc3
- 16 4...Qe7 5 a3
- 17 4...Qe7 5 g3
- 18 4...Qe7 5 g3 0-0 6 Bg2 Bxd2+
- 19 4...Qe7 5 g3 Nc6 6 Nc3
- 20 4...Qe7 5 g3 Nc6 6 Bg2
- 21 Conclusion

Unlike previous works, here all the game links (bar one) lead to annotated games. Although one item of concern is that some of the game annotations go back more than a decade and you would think that there have been more recent developments in the variation under discussion.

The weakness of this work is that the database texts are not very informative; they mostly serve as a portal to the annotated games. In many cases, a variation is mentioned and then followed by up to five linked games. Thus, there are very few cases where the texts tell the reader which line is superior to others or why. Furthermore, there are no conclusions at the end of each chapter to give us an idea of the current standing of the line in question.

The final chapter, "Conclusion" is very peculiar in itself and I will quote from it, because it is quite symptomatic of the entire coverage in the database texts:

"White has a slight advantage or the initiative only in a few variations of the Bogo: rare lines after 4.Nbd2, 4.Nbd2 d5 5.Qa4+ Nc6 6.a3 Bxd2+, 4.Nbd2 b6 5.a3, 4.Nbd2 0-0 5.a3 Bxd2+, 4.Bd2 Be7 5.Nc3, 4.Bd2 Bxd2+ 5.Nbx2 d5, 4.Bd2 Bxd2+ 5.Qxd2, 4.Bd2 a5 5.g3 d5 6.Qc2 Nc6, rare lines after 4.Bd2 Qe7 5.g3 and 4.Bd2 Qe7 5.g3 0-0 6.Bg2 Bxd2+ 7.Qxd2. Also 4.Bd2 a5 5.Nc3 and 4.Bd2 Qe7 5.g3 Nc6 6.Nc3 are interesting. If Black takes on d2 in the cases after 4.Bd2, usually the move Qxd2 is better than Nxd2 and at times leads to preferable positions for White, because then he can develop his knight on the good square: c3.

"Of course, these lines are playable too, because a slight edge is not decisive. We see that in some games the first player gets a small


advantage in the opening, then makes a blunder in middlegame. Or he keeps his small advantage in the middlegame but loses in the ending after a few mistakes.

“In many lines Black gradually equalizes with the superb plan of the advance ...d7-d6 followed by ...e6-e5. Also the counterblows ...d5 or ...c5 can lead to active counterplay or an absolute draw.”

This passage only partly made sense to me, but it is an almost ridiculous simplification of the current standing of the Bogo-Indian. And what about the lines that aren't mentioned in the conclusion; are they good for White, Black or are they considered equal? Of course you can go through the games in each chapter and deduce the approximate evaluation to make your own conclusions, but this should really be the job of the author.

As with many other ChessBase CDs there is a selection of “training games” where the student can test their newly acquired skills by guessing the right moves in some games annotated by the author. On this CD, the training base has twenty games that are quite instructive and entertaining in themselves; however, the annotations are not. For example, if you guess wrong, you are not told why the move is inferior to the one played in the game, nor do the annotations reveal much of interest otherwise. In some cases the comments are simply odd; for example, in the position after 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 Bb4+ 4 Bd2 (in the game Skembris-Andersson), you are asked: “What is the most straightforward attempt to play for a draw?” Huh? The most solid move and an Andersson favorite is 4...Bxd2+, but that definitely isn't because he is playing for a draw, it's because it is solid and runs the least risk of getting into trouble. Safety first is usually Andersson's motto, no matter who the opponent is, and if the position later allows him to play for a win, all the better. Personally, I think it is insulting to claim that Andersson, being rated 140 points above his opponent, is playing for a draw with his fourth move. In my opinion, these training games are only of relevance if the games and annotations come together in an instructive fashion and explain why one plan is superior to another.

Compared to his previous efforts, Schipkov has made a serious step in the right direction, but it is has a number of flaws and could easily have been better.

My assessment of this CD: 

Bogo-Indian Defence (CD)

Boris Schipkov

Chesspublishing.com: King's Indian by Victor Mikhalevski,
Chesspublishing.com 2008, Subscription \$19.50-\$99.00 per year.

I'm not much of an expert on the King's Indian, but for those who have interest in the opening this page is surely a must-read. Every month Israeli grandmaster Victor Mikhalevski thoroughly annotates eight or more recent games in the King's Indian. He also includes some of the Anti-King's Indian lines that are frequently seen at club level. Mikhalevski plays 1 d4 as white and the King's Indian as black, and it is clear from his presentation of the material that he really knows his stuff. New or relevant ideas are discussed in detail, and new trends are indicated to give readers an advantage over those who don't subscribe to this page.

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As with the other sections on chesspublishing.com, there are downloadable PDF and PGN files that cover all the games presented since 1999. This includes coverage by Andrew Martin from October 1999 to September 2002, and by Joe Gallagher from October 2002 to December 2003, as well as everything since Mikhalevski took the helm in January

2004. For fans of the King's Indian, the subscription to this page is very worthwhile.

My assessment of this site: ♦♦♦♦♦

Chesspublishing.com: Daring Defences
by Victor Mikhalevski

Secrets of Opening Surprises Vol. 8 by Jeroen Bosch (ed.), New In Chess 2008, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 143pp., \$21.95

The openings in this series of books come in all shapes and sizes. Some of the ideas are in topical variations from top tournaments, and some are so bizarre that you wonder who would be crazy enough to take them up, only to discover that several of the games are by international masters and grandmasters. The question then becomes: why not you?



The material in this volume is divided as follows:

- 1 The SOS Files by Bosch (8 pages)
- 2 Meeting the Caro-Kann with 2 Ne2 by Felgaer (12 pages)
- 3 The Meszaros Variation of the Sicilian by Reinderman (10 pages)
- 4 SOS versus Anti-Berlin by Bosch (5 pages)
- 5 SOS versus the Paulsen by Bosch (6 pages)
- 6 Nimzo-Indian with 6...Qe8!? By Maze & Cornette (13 pages)
- 7 The Budapest Gambit Can Still Surprise by Kogan (9 pages)
- 8 French Prophylaxis by Bosch (9 pages)
- 9 Caro-Kann: Demetiev Variation by Mikhalevski (4 pages)
- 10 The Porcupine Variation by Reinderman (6 pages)
- 11 Gajewski's Incredible Spanish Novelty by Bosch (6 pages)
- 12 Play the Spielmann Attack by Kogan (10 pages)
- 13 An Old Idea in the Modern Defence by Finkel (6 pages)
- 14 A Modest Indian by Bosch (4 pages)
- 15 A 19th Century Weapon versus the French by Glek (7 pages)
- 16 A Dynamic Ruy Lopez Surprise by Gofshtein (10 pages)
- 17 Kamsky's 'Spare Slav by Rogozenko (9 pages)
- 18 Authors and their Subjects (1 page)

With a few exceptions it's almost impossible to tell which lines are covered in the chapters listed above. However, it is noticeable that the chapters vary considerably in length. Of course, a short chapter doesn't necessarily indicate a lack of substance. Bosch's four page survey on 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nd2 – a Modest Indian – is an intelligent discussion that provides a number of insights on this quite harmless, but interesting idea. Yet chapter nine's coverage of the so-called Dementiev variation, which arises after 1 e4 c6 2 d4 d5 3 Nc3 dxe4 4 Nxe4 Nd7 5 Ne2 Ngf6 6 N2g3, is sparse at best. The first page is devoted to introducing Dementiev and the remaining pages cover three complete, but very lightly annotated games. If an idea is interesting enough to merit attention, why not force the author to write a proper survey?

As usual, there are many fun and entertaining ideas. Some are completely solid and user-friendly even for very strong players, while others are merely good fun and best used in games with shorter time limits. For those who like unorthodox, sharp or unusual ideas, this series of books is ideal; otherwise, it is simply a good read.

My assessment of this book: ♦♦♦♦♦

Order *Secrets of Opening Surprises Vol. 8*

by Jeroen Bosch (ed).

New In Chess Yearbook Vol. 86 by Genna Sosonko (ed) et al., Interchess BV 2008, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 247pp., \$28.95

Having reviewed thirty yearbook volumes, it is difficult to say something new. However, one thing that can be said is that the series continues to improve thanks to the editorial board of Genna Sosonko (editor), Peter Boel (managing editor) and René Olthof (supervisor).




The material is divided as follows:

- Opening Highlights (2 pages)
- Your Variations (2 pages)
- Forum (15 pages)
- Sosonko's Corner (4 pages)
- Surveys (32 variations – 212 pages)
- Book Reviews by Glenn Flear (5 pages)
- Code System (1 page)

For fans of current opening theory, these yearbooks are must-buys. I enjoy every issue and reading them makes me wish I played more frequently. The fun begins in the Forum section where there are several highly relevant discussions regarding the viability of certain variations, including a serious reader who's afraid that the Riga Variation in the Ruy Lopez (1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 0-0 Nxe4 6 d4 exd4) has been refuted once and for all. Yet, Boel believes Black can survive and suggests some options for consideration.

The Survey section features thirty-two opening surveys, one of which I authored on the English opening. Swedish grandmaster Emanuel Berg looks at a sub-variation in the highly theoretical and highly topical Poisoned Pawn Najdorf; the Hungarian duo of GM Lukacs and IM Hazai review the latest developments in the popular 5 Nc3 variation in the Petroff; Israeli GM Finkel examines the line 12 d3 Bd6 13 Re1 Bf5 14 Qf3 in the Marshall; the Rumanian duo of Urcan and Ceteras examine Colman's 8...Rb8 in the Two Knights Defense, citing a number of games played in a strong Romanian theme tournament; GM Kuzmin examines the popular Anti-Moscow Gambit, including the sharp piece sacrifice played in Topalov-Kramnik, Wijk aan Zee 2008; and rounding off the volume are less common lines such as 1 d4 Nf6 2 Nf3 c5 3 d5 b5 4 Bg5 Qb6 and 1 c4 e5 2 Nc3 Nf6 3 Nc3 Nf6 4 g3 Nd4.

In addition to all the opening theory, Sosonko gives his take on 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 g3 c5 4 d5 exd5 5 cxd5 b5, and Flear reviews four recent opening books. If you are serious about your chess, this series of yearbooks is for you.

My assessment of this book: 

[Order](#) *New In Chess Yearbook Vol. 86*

by Genna Sosonko (ed).

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