



## COLUMNISTS

**Checkpoint**

Carsten Hansen

**Reviewed this month:**

***The ABC of Chess Openings***  
(DVD) by Andrew Martin

***The ABC of the Ruy Lopez***  
(DVD) by Andrew Martin

***The ABC of the King's Indian***  
(DVD) by Andrew Martin

***TWIC Theory***  
by Andrew Martin et al

***New In Chess Yearbook Vol. 74***  
by Genna Sosonko (ed.)

***Secrets of Opening Surprises Vol. 3***  
by Jeroen Bosch (ed.)

***Tango! A Dynamic Answer to 1 d4***  
by Richard Palliser

**The Busiest Man in Chess**

The summer has come upon us and it is time to relax a little and get our opening repertoires together for the coming chess season. In this month's column we'll look at some of the most recent works by the busiest man in chess these days, English international master Andrew Martin. First up are three of his recent DVDs published by ChessBase, and then we'll have a brief glance at the theory service from *The Week in Chess*. Also included this month are two familiar titles from New in Chess and a fascinating new book by English international master Richard Palliser.

*Fritztrainer Opening: The ABC of Chess Openings* (DVD) by Andrew Martin, 2005 ChessBase GmbH, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Total Running Time: 309 minutes, \$34.95

We begin with the most basic of the three DVDs by Andrew Martin. As the title indicates this is mostly for inexperienced players, and he doesn't hide the fact that this is elementary stuff. Even if the openings are occasionally a bit complicated, Martin always seems to keep in mind that it has to be simple enough for weaker players to understand, so he keeps the tone light and entertaining. In fact, I even giggled and laughed aloud while working with the DVD on my laptop.



With this in mind, I also found the DVD cassette back cover blurb somewhat humorous:


*...Invaluable advice is given about what to look for and how to play each specific category, and the instruction is enhanced by use of recent, thematic master games to compliment this advice. General instruction about how to play the opening is also included.*

This all sounds reasonable enough and in accordance with what you can expect, however, one of the games in the coverage of the King's Gambit can hardly be called recent – given that it was played in the 1950s. The back cover blurb continues:

*There is something here for everyone. Strong and even very strong players will enjoy the investigations into some excellent modern novelties, whereas the average player or even beginner will pick up a wide range of interesting ideas to use in their games.*

I can't imagine why any strong, and in particular, any very strong player would sit through a DVD called *The ABC of Chess Openings* just to look for one or two interesting ideas, especially when he first has to pay \$34.95 without even knowing what he may get in return.

This is not a criticism of Martin's work. I generally found him to be well-prepared and interesting, and I was never bored or felt the urge to skip to the next chapter. My main concern is that the price of the product is a bit steep for something that only browses the subject and whets the appetite.

**My assessment of this DVD:** 

[Order](#) *The ABC of Chess Openings*  
(DVD) by Andrew Martin

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*Fritztrainer Opening: The ABC of The Ruy Lopez* (DVD) by Andrew Martin, 2004  
ChessBase GmbH, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Total Running Time: 213 minutes,  
\$29.95

It has always puzzled me as to why so many players rated below 2000 avoid the Ruy Lopez, which arises after 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5. It contains so many possibilities for both sides that it is much more attractive than the Italian Game (3 Bc4 Bc5). True, Black has a billion or so different variations to choose from, which may be discouraging to some, but White has a number of short-cuts. These may not be the most dangerous lines, but they still provide White with plenty of opportunity to play for a win, whether it is in a strategic fashion or in a wild style.



The material is divided as follows:


1. Intro, 2. Sustained Pressure, 3. Simplicity, 4. Solidity, 5. The Lopez 'Grip', 6. Black tries to smash the Ruy Lopez, 7. Intro to Theory and Berlin, 8. Berlin 1, 9. Berlin 2, 10. Schliemann, 11. Bird, 12. Cozio, 13. Smyslov's, 14. Classical, 15. Berlin Classical, 16. Chase Variation, 17. Steinitz Deferred, 18. Main Line 1 Steinitz Variation 5 d3, 19. Main Line 2, 20. Main Line 3, 21. Outro

The DVD only offers a repertoire for White, so the scope of the coverage is very limited and quite one-sided. The length of the chapters vary, some are just over six minutes, while the longest are 14-16 minutes. Obviously, the time allotted will never suffice to cover the particular variation, or the entire opening for that matter. Martin is well aware of this and he lets the viewer understand that this is hardly more than an appetizer.

Martin has always been good at finding interesting and entertaining games, as well as having a knack for finding lesser lines that are easy to add to your repertoire without a large amount of study or memorization. Additionally, compared to other DVDs from ChessBase, it was a pleasure listening to somebody that speaks English as their first language. It makes for a more pleasant experience and I enjoyed watching it.

On the downside, the presentation is somewhat loose and unscripted, with little consideration for the viewer, who in most cases will not be a particularly strong player. Martin also looks like an amateur using ChessBase in comparison to the DVDs by Kasparov and Aagaard. They each used multi-colored squares, highlighted arrows, and a number of other graphic tools, while Martin only occasionally changes the square color to green.

This DVD will give you a good start if you're rated 1200-1700 and want to learn how to play the Ruy Lopez as White without having to study two dozen books and tons of theory.

**My assessment of this DVD:** 

[Order](#) *The ABC of the Ruy Lopez*  
(DVD) by Andrew Martin

*Fritztrainer Opening: The ABC of The King's Indian* (DVD) by Andrew Martin, 2004 ChessBase GmbH, Figurine Algebraic Notation, DVD ROM, Total Running Time: 233 minutes, \$29.95

Andrew Martin has written extensively about the King's Indian over the years. It is an opening he plays and understands very well. Therefore, with his skills as a chess educator, his enthusiasm for it is easily transmitted.



After a short introduction, Martin gives two of his own games before proceeding to the coverage of the variations. Martin's main focus is on Black and he emphasizes that the two key elements in the King's Indian are aggression and flexibility. His games amply illustrate this, and I have included the first of the two games, which was played in the semifinal for the World Championship in Correspondence Chess.

***Ljukmanov, V - Martin, A***  
Corr. 1994

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.Nc3 Bg7 4.e4 d6 5.f3 b6 6.Be3 Bb7 7.Qd2 c5 8.d5 Nbd7 9.h4 a6 10.Nh3 Ne5 11.Be2 h5!? 12.Nf2 Bc8!? 13.Bf4 Ra7!? 14.0-0-0? [14.a4!?] 14...Nfd7 15.Kb1 b5! 16.cxb5 Qa5! 17.Rc1 axb5 18.Bxb5 Ba6 19.Bxa6 Qxa6 20.b3 0-0 21.Bh6 Nc4!!**



**22.bxc4 Rb8+ 23.Ka1 Bh8 24.Nfd1 Rab7 25.Re1 Ne5**, and amazingly White resigned. As Martin demonstrates, White is just clearly worse with no counterplay, and in top level correspondence chess the outcome is not in doubt.

The presentation is much more fluent and far more interesting than on his Ruy Lopez DVD, although he still needs to improve his use of ChessBase graphics. The target audience for this DVD is up to around 1900 ELO. I also

heartily recommend Martin's book *King's Indian Battle Plans*, which together with the DVD will give you everything you need to know about the King's Indian and then some.

**My assessment of this DVD:** 

[Order](#) *The ABC of the King's Indian*  
(DVD) by Andrew Martin

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*TWIC Theory* by Andrew Martin et al, 2005 TWIC, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Downloadable ChessBase Files, single articles \$5.00 or all 12 for \$15.00

The *TWIC Theory* service is on hiatus for the summer, so I will only briefly mention it and then return to it in more detail in the Fall. The concept was to provide weekly theoretical articles written by a grandmaster or international master. Upon resumption they plan to offer an annual subscription and to switch to a monthly rather than a weekly output.



Here are the articles presently available:

- TWIC Theory Issue #1 – IM Andrew Martin on the King's Indian Fianchetto Variation, Botvinnik's 9.Be3
- TWIC Theory Issue #2 – GM Tony Kosten on the Najdorf 6.Bg5 / 7...Nc6
- TWIC Theory Issue #3 – IM Malcolm Pein on the Breyer Lives!
- TWIC Theory Issue #5 – GM Eric Prie on 4.e3 Bg4!? in the Slav
- TWIC Theory Issue #6 – IM Bernd Rechel on 'Battling on in the Kieseritzky Gambit'.
- TWIC Theory Issue #7 – GM Bogdan Lalic on the Bogo-Indian.
- TWIC Theory Issue #8 – GM Glenn Flear on the Meran Variation with 8. Be2.
- TWIC Theory Issue #9 – IM Andrew Martin on the Sicilian, O'Kelly
- TWIC Theory Issue #10 – WGM Yelena Dembo on the 4.Be3 in the Caro-Kann Advance Variation
- TWIC Theory Issue #11 – GM Igor Khmelnitsky on the 4.a4 in the Alekhine Defence
- TWIC Theory Issue #12 – GM Larry Christiansen on New Paths in the Sveshnikov Sicilian

I generally found the issues to be of very high quality with quite a bit of original input by the authors. This could easily have been a bunch of games quickly edited in ChessBase and then sent out to the subscribers, but that is hardly the case. My only concern is that the material may be too advanced for many readers to fully understand the variations and underlying concepts. Other than that I am impressed.

**My assessment of these articles:** 

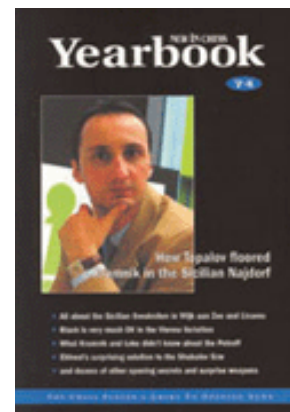
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*New In Chess Yearbook Vol 74* by Genna Sosonko (ed.), 2005 Interchess BV, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Softcover, 244 pp., \$27.95

Based on my previous recommendations for the NIC yearbook series I could make quick work of this review and simply say, "Go buy it." And it is difficult to think of a reason not to buy it, because there is an almost endless flow of interesting and useful material in every single volume.

As usual the material is divided as follows:

- Forum & Sosonko's Corner
- Surveys
- Service



For some odd reason they moved the contents pages to the back of the book and placed the section that has pictures of the contributors to the front. Then follows the Forum, which contains reader's letters, oftentimes it is regular players who send their own games or bits of analysis to familiar games. However, well-known players are also prone to write in and Kortchnoi submits three games about the line 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e5 3 dxe5 Ng4 4 Bf4 g5!?, which was the subject of a survey in volume 73. There are many other interesting submissions besides this one. In the last section of the yearbook Glenn Flear reviews three recent books on the King's Indian.

My favorite section is Sosonko's Corner, which has explored a plethora of intriguing topics over the years. This time he discusses the Nd5 sacrifice in the Hedgehog structure. An example is the game Sosonko-van der Wiel, Brussels Blitz 1987:

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 c5 4.Nf3 cxd4 5.Nxd4 Qc7 6.Nc3 a6 7.Bg5 Be7 8.Rc1 b6 9.Bg2 Bb7 10.Nd5!**



**10...exd5 11.cxd5 Bb4+ 12.Kf1 Qe5 13.Bf4 Qh5 14.Qb3 Nxd5 15.Bf3 Qh3+ 16.Bg2 Qh5 17.Bxd5! Qxd5 18.Rc8+ Ke7 19.Qxb4+ Kf6 20.e4! Nc6 21.Rxc6+ and Black resigned.**

The greater part of the yearbooks is the opening surveys. Once again the selection is interesting and varied, and provides plenty of food for thought. There are surveys on highly topical lines such as the English Attack, Sveshnikov Sicilian, Vienna Variation of the Queen's Gambit and others. It also includes compelling minor lines such as the Caro-Kann: 1 e4 c6 2 c4 d5 3 exd5 cxd5 4 cxd5 Nf6 5 Qa4+, which was played twice in the most recent tournament in Bermuda.

The surveys include:

Sicilian Defense (8 surveys), French Defense (1 survey), Caro-Kann (2 surveys), Scandinavian (1 survey), Petroff (1 survey), Ruy Lopez (2



surveys), Italian Game (1 survey), King's Gambit (1 survey), Slav Defense (3 surveys), Catalan Opening (1 survey), Nimzo-Indian (3 surveys), Gruenfeld Indian (2 surveys), King's Indian (1 survey), Benonis (2 surveys), Queen's Pawn Opening (1 survey) and finally Dutch Defense (1 survey). With contributions by: Stohl, Tukmakov, Scherbakov, Nikitin (Kasparov's former second), Tiviakov, Marin, Ehlvest, Greenfeld, Rogozenko to only mention a few.

The surveys provide pretty much everything you need to immediately begin playing an opening. Obviously, it helps to already be familiar with it, so you can just do a quick study of the survey and then put it into practice. I would imagine that most strong players read these yearbooks, but even club players will be able to find lines that interest them. It is just a matter of looking for the ideas that suit your repertoire.

Therefore, "Go buy it!"

**My assessment of this book:** 

[Order](#) *New In Chess Yearbook Vol. 74*  
by Genna Sosonko (ed.)

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*Secrets of Opening Surprises Vol. 3* by Jeroen Bosch (ed.), 2005 New In Chess, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Softcover, 143 pp., \$21.95

It seems like only a short time ago that volume two landed in the mail, and now we already have volume three in front of us, but trust me – I'm not complaining. The adventurous openings featured in the *SOS* books simply beg to be played. They are often so bizarre and fascinating, that you can easily imagine your regular blitz buddies cursing over some of ridiculous looking moves that are covered in this volume. Lines such as the Sicilian Rauzer (1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 Bg5), where Black now plays 6...g6!? or the Sicilian Sozin (1 e4 c5 2 Nf3 d6 3 d4 cxd4 4 Nxd4 Nf6 5 Nc3 Nc6 6 Bc4), where 6...Na5!? is discussed. Or how will the guy who always gets into time trouble react to 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5 4 h4?



While some of the moves are decidedly offbeat, quite a few of the ideas in this volume qualify as interesting sidelines. For instance, 1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 Nxe5 d6 4 Nc4!?, which is covered by the young Czech Grandmaster Navara; or Beliavsky's line against the Benko: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5 4 Nd2!?. Without going into the specific variations, other featured openings include: the King's Indian Attack, Grünfeld, Sicilian Kan, Petroff, Slav with ...a6, Scotch Game, French Defense, Benko Gambit, Sicilian Rauzer, Caro-Kann Fantasy Variation,

Reti Opening, French Defense w/3 Nc3, Queen's Gambit Accepted, Evans Gambit, Sicilian Sozin, and finally the English: 1...e5 Four Knights.

There's also an impressive array of contributors: M. Gurevich, Beliavsky, Navara, Chernikov, Mikhalechishin, Matamaros, Rogers, van der Weide, Bosch, Rogozenko, Bluvstein, Flear and Romanishin.

Each volume has an update of the material from the previous ones, and I imagine this chapter will be extensive as more volumes are published and the lines are adopted by even more people. But for the moment, the developments are still manageable. NIC is offering a promotional cash prize of \$275 (or Euro 250) to the person who plays the best game with an opening from this volume and submits it before November 15, 2005.

Let's take a look at the winner of the best game award from Volume 2. Despite White's name, he is not a computer:

*Deep Sengupta – Tigran L. Petrosian*

Kochin jr 2004

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nf6 3.Nc3 Nc6 4.g3 Nxe4!? 5.Nxe4 d5 6.Nc3 d4 7.Ne4 f5 8.Neg5 e4 9.Bc4 exf3 10.Bf7+ Kd7 11.Be6+ Ke8 12.Bf7+ Ke7! 13.Bb3 Kf6! 14.Nf7? Qe8+ 15.Kf1 d3!



16.Qxf3 Nd4 17.Qxd3 Nxb3 18.Nxh8 Qc6 19.Kg1 Nxa1 20.b3 Qxc2?! 21.Qd4+ Ke6 22.Qxa1 Bd7 23.Bb2 Bc6 24.h3 Bc5 25.Bxg7 Bxf2+! 26.Kh2 Qe4? (26...Bxg3+! 27 Kxg3 Qd3+ 28 Kh4 Qd8+ 29 Kg3 Qg5+ 30 Kf2 Qxd2+ 31 Kg3 Qe3+ 32 Kh4 Qf4+ 33 Qh5 Bf3 mates, but that is not necessarily easy to spot, especially if you are in time trouble, which is imaginable after the heavy complications in the game so far. The remainder of the game also supports this notion.) 27.Qf6+ Kd5 28.Rc1? Re8 29.Rc4? Bg1+! And mates: 30.Kxg1 Qe1+

31.Kg2 Re2+ 0-1

The game is annotated in some detail in the book. I hope this inspires you to pick up a copy of the book and test some of their wild ideas. Not everything has to be as boring as an Exchange Slav, and saying that, I wonder what they have in mind against it...

My assessment of this book: 

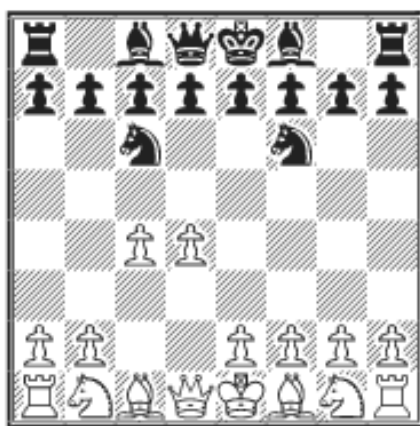


*Tango! A Dynamic Answer to 1 d4* by Richard Palliser, 2005 Everyman Chess, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Softcover, 192 pp., \$23.95

The Tango has certainly developed a devoted following, however, many people still consider it to be an obscure opening. Probably because it looks almost too daring to fully believe in it. In this context, I find it difficult to understand why more strong players don't include it in their repertoire against lower-rated players. After all, the opening more or less forces White to think on his own from move three, with ample opportunity to go astray on almost any move.



The Tango arises after 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 Nc6!?:



I'm sure that 95% of 1 d4 and 2 c4 players are not prepared for 2...Nc6. I would most likely transpose to a Nimzo-Indian after 3 Nf3 (to prevent Black from playing ...e7-e5) 3...e6 4 Nc3 Bb4 5 e3, which I think should be very slightly better for White. This, of course, isn't terribly ambitious, but it has the advantage of not plunging into one of the many positional traps that exist in this opening, where White is left struggling with an overextended pawn structure and far too many weak dark squares.

Let's see how the material is divided:

- Bibliography
- Acknowledgements
- Introduction
- **1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 Nc6**
  - 1. The Dark-squared Centre: White Develops Classically (21 pages)
  - 2. The Dark-squared Centre: White Counters Dynamically (23 pages)
  - 3. The Lunge: An Ambitious Early Advance (17 pages)
  - 4. The Menagerie: Offbeat Tries for White (20 pages)
  - 5. Reaching a Nimzo: Utilising the c6-knight (17 pages)
  - 6. The Zurich Variation: An Underrated Nimzo Line (24 pages)
  - 7. The Zurich Variation: 6 a3 Bxc3+ 7 Qxc3 (26 pages)
  - 8. The Fianchetto: Countering the Catalan (17 pages)
  - 9. The Flexible King's Indian: Countering the Crafty 4 a3 (15 pages)
- Index of Variations

The chapter names may look odd, but they can help you remember the variations, which is important because a conceptual understanding of the opening is necessary to play these lines well. The first indication of what we are in for is the reasonably extensive bibliography which shows that transpositions can arise from such openings as the King's Indian, Nimzo-Indian, English Opening, Bogo-Indian, Catalan Opening and a few others.

Palliser presents the material using variation trees rather than complete games, which is a departure from the normal Everyman Chess format for opening books. Still, Palliser has managed to include many complete games in the introduction to each chapter, where he shows the typical ideas for both sides. This makes for very interesting reading and it helps prepare us for the theoretical part of the chapter, which would have been far more difficult to understand under other circumstances.

Here is an excerpt from the introduction to give you a better idea of the underlying concepts and of how White often struggles to come to terms with the opening. The annotations are by Palliser:

The Tango is an ideal opening at club level, not so much because it contains some well-hidden traps early on in the game but mainly because it doesn't require memorizing oodles of theory. Black need to know a little in places, but a good general understanding, allied with constantly aiming for activity, is much more important, as should become clear from the strategic examples throughout this work.

It isn't easy for poor White, however, and not only because the Tango remains quite a surprise. Players under 2000 often struggle in the early stages, having been taken out of their usual favored set-ups. Some may play aggressively, such as 3 d5 of Chapter 3, whilst others will stick to classical development, which is especially easy to handle as Chapter 1 reveals. Indeed, even a women's world champion can struggle:

***Zhu Chen – Christiansen***

US-China Summit, Seattle 2001

**1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 Nc6 3.Nc3 e5 4.d5 Ne7 5.g3!? Ng6 6.Bg2 Bc5 7.e3**

White wasn't rated as high as 2538 for nothing; she's met Black's dark-squared set-up by cleverly aiming to limit the scope of the key dark-squared bishop and the g6-knight.

**7...0-0 8.Nge2 a6!**

An important concept: Black preserves the bishop from being exchanged after ...d7-d6 (with Na4), and will now look to utilise the e5-bridgehead and his knights to expand on the kingside.

**9.0-0 d6 10.Bd2 Bd7 11.Rb1 b5!**

8...a6 wasn't just a defensive measure, as it also supports this thrust which rather breaks up White's natural queenside advance with b4 and c5. Christiansen has handled the opening actively and well, and already White is starting to struggle.

**12.b4 Bb6 13.a4?**

No doubt White thought that she should be much better on the queenside but, compared with a King's Indian, Black's dark-squared bishop is playing a key role outside the pawn chain. This pawn sacrifice is simply too ambitious, although even after 13 Qb3 Qe7 14 a4 bxc4 15 Qxc4 a5!, and only then ...Ne8 and ...f5, Black would still have had a pretty reasonable position.

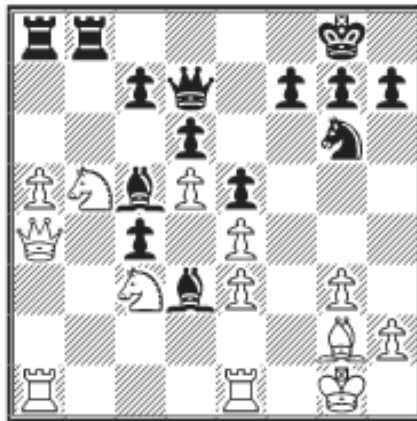
**13...bxc4 14.a5 Ba7 15.b5 axb5 16.Nxb5 Bf5! 17.Ra1 Bc5**

Like all Tango players strive to do, Christiansen is accurately responding to the downsides of White's plan. The position has now opened up for his bishops, although the kingside remains the overall target.

**18.Nec3 Bd3 19.e4 Qd7! 20.Re1 Rfb8 21.Qa4 Ng4**

Having sensibly rejected the exchange to keep the initiative, Black begins to hone in on White's relatively undefended kingside. Indeed, as is often the case in the Tango, the attack is very fast, while White struggles to make any further inroads on the other flank.

**22.Be3 Nxe3 23.fxe3**



**23...h5! 24.Bf1 h4 25.Bxd3 cxd3  
26.Kg2 hxg3 27.hxg3 d2 28.Re2 Qg4!**

In the blink of an eye, the white monarch's defences have been blown away and Christiansen comes in for the kill.

**29.Rh1**


Preventing 29...Nh4+, but unsurprisingly Black now has a neat

finish.

**29...Nf4+! 30.exf4 exf4 31.Rxd2 Qxg3+ 32.Kf1 Qf3+ 33.Ke1 Qxh1+ 0-1**

While the games in the book are addictive and enjoyable, I'm even more impressed by the amount of original material Palliser includes in the theoretical sections. There's an abundance of original analysis and improvements over existing theory, as well as hundreds of other suggestions.

I am happy to recommend this book, and I hope that many players are inspired by the above game to consider springing this exciting opening on unsuspecting opponents. The author has done an excellent job and I have already made space on my bookshelf for his next work.

My assessment of this book: 

[Order](#) *Tango! A Dynamic Answer to 1 d4*  
by Richard Palliser

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