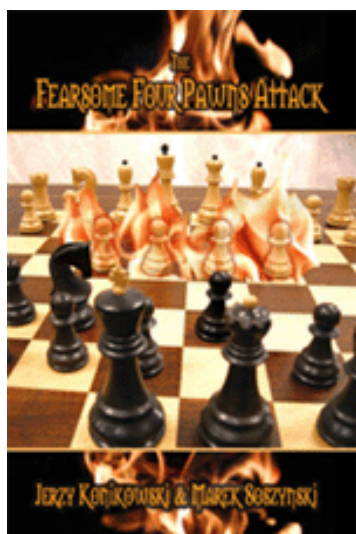




COLUMNISTS

Checkpoint

Carsten Hansen

**Reviewed this month:*****Queen's Indian Defence: The Easy Way (DVD)***

by Jacob Aagaard

The French Defence (DVD)

by Ari Ziegler

The ABC of the Benko Gambit (DVD)

by Andrew Martin

ChessBase Magazine #113 (DVD)

by Fredrick Friedel (ed.)

En Passant***The Trompowsky: The Easy Way (DVD)***

by Andrew Martin

The ABC of the Caro-Kann (DVD)

by Andrew Martin

The Scandinavian: The Easy Way (DVD)

by Andrew Martin

New in Chess Yearbook, Vol. 80

by Genna Sosonko (ed.)

DVD Dizziness**Rating Chart**

– A poor book.



– Not very good.



– A useful book.

If the fall television network premiers have not grabbed your attention, then perhaps you'll prefer to make more productive use of your time with any of the seven DVDs reviewed this month. I'll also look at the latest *New in Chess Yearbook*, which always provides high entertainment value.

Queen's Indian Defence: The Easy Way (DVD) by Jacob Aagaard,

♦♦♦♦ – **A good book.**

♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦ – **An excellent book.**

ChessBase GmbH 2006, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Playing time: 3 hours, 49 minutes \$34.95

In the introduction to this DVD, Aagaard is lazily leaning back in a chair, legs crossed, unshaven, hair unkempt, wearing a ratty-looking t-shirt, and holding a glass with an umbrella sticking out of it. He calls it learning the openings “holiday-style,” which might give the impression that he is not all-together serious, but once the presentation starts Aagaard is all business. The viewer is in for a treat.



The contents are divided as follows:

- Introduction
- Lecture 1: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 b6 4 Bf4
- Lecture 2: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 b6 4 e3
- Lecture 3: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 b6 4 Nc3 Bb7 5 a3
- Lecture 4: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 b6 4 Nc3 Bb7 5 Bg5
- Lecture 5: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 b6 4 g3 Ba6 5 b3 - I
- Lecture 6: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 b6 4 g3 Ba6 5 b3 - II
- Lecture 7: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 b6 4 g3 Ba6 5 Qa4
- Lecture 8: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 b6 4 g3 Ba6 5 Qc2
- Lecture 9: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 b6 4 g3 Ba6 5 Qb3
- Lecture 10: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 b6 4 g3 Ba6 5 Nbd2
- Lecture 11: The generic pawn structure
- Bonus Lecture 1: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 g3 d5 4 Nf3 Bb4+ 5 Nbd2
- Bonus Lecture 2: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 g3 d5 4 Nf3 Bb4+ 5 Bd2
- Bonus Lecture 3: Glud-Aagaard Danish Championship 2006

One device that Aagaard uses should be utilized on all opening DVDs, which is at the end of each segment he gives the game with a few more details and game references to other sidelines and so on. This gives the student a little more information to work with if he feels motivated to dig deeper.

Aagaard presents the material in the same provocative fashion that he writes his books, pushing traditional understanding in a casual fashion, yet with a keen eye for detail and preparation to match. The Queen's Indian has an absolutely massive amount of theory to consume if you desire to learn everything there is to know; however, this is totally unnecessary, as with a limited amount of work and Aagaard's able assistance, you can put a decent, playable repertoire together that doesn't require too much memorization, yet one that also offers Black excellent opportunities to equalize and even play for the initiative without risking too much.

My assessment of this DVD: 

Order *Queen's Indian Defence: The Easy Way*

by Jacob Aagaard

The French Defence (DVD) by Ari Ziegler, ChessBase GmbH 2006, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Playing time: 6 hours, 48 minutes \$29.95

This DVD is far above most others in terms of the quantity and quality of content. It is almost seven hours long, and it contains 27 segments with an additional 59 more with annotated games! As with the other DVDs, the presentation favors one side, in this case it is Black.



During his presentation, Ziegler, who is a Swedish international master and one of the principals behind Quality Chessbooks, speaks slowly, quietly and clearly, to methodically present exactly what the student really wants: opening theory, more opening theory and then even more opening theory. His material is well-researched, and with numerous examples he helps the viewer gain an understanding of the underlying ideas, strategic and tactical, which will allow one to play the opening confidently.

The contents are divided as follows:

- Introduction and Advance Variation (7 segments)
- Tarrasch Variation (8 segments)
- Classical Variation (11 segments)
- Other Lines (1 segment)

I found one detail rather odd, while the presentation is in English, the text of several of the main games is in Swedish. This is disappointing because many of Ziegler's annotations are more thorough than what is shown in the video presentation.

At times Ziegler skips a little too fast through the moves, which may leave less experienced players somewhat dizzy in their attempt to keep up with the rapid fire pace. Nonetheless, this DVD is jam-packed with quality study material and is an excellent solution for the serious player who would like to build a French repertoire.

My assessment of this DVD:

Order *The French Defence*

by Ari Ziegler

The ABC of the Benko Gambit (DVD) by Andrew Martin, ChessBase GmbH 2006, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Playing time: 4 hours \$29.95

This DVD is meant to be a very general introduction to the Benko Gambit: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b4. This has been one of my favorite openings, so I was particularly curious as to what material was chosen and how it was presented.



The material is divided as follows:

- **Introduction:**
- Van Scheltinga-Opocensky: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 c5 4 d5 d6 5 e4 b5
- Taimanov-Bronstein: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 g6 4 Nc3 d6 5 e4 b5
- Aspler-Benko: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5 4 cxb5 a6 5 bxa6 Bxa6 6 Nc3 d6
- Parr-Browne: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5 4 cxb5 a6 5 bxa6 Bxa6 6 Nc3 d6
- Cheparinov-Ivanchuk: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5 4 cxb5 a6 5 b6
- **Benko Gambit accepted:**
- Gurevich-Cao Sang: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5 4 cxb5 a6 5 bxa6 Bxa6 6 Nc3 d6 7 g3
- Radziewicz-Pinski: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5 4 cxb5 a6 5 bxa6 Bxa6 6 Nc3 d6
- Wright-Fedorowicz: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5 4 cxb5 a6 5 bxa6 g6 6 Nc3 Bxa6 7 Nf3
- Marquez Molina-Bellon Lopez: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5 4 cxb5 a6 5 bxa6 g6 6 g3
- Pawn Structure
- Aseev-Ponomarev: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5 4 cxb5 a6 5 bxa6 g6 6 Nc3 Bxa6 7 g3
- Bangiev-Devic: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5 4 cxb5 a6 5 bxa6 g6 6 Nc3 Bxa6 7 f4
- Knaak-Vaganian: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5 4 cxb5 a6 5 bxa6 Bxa6 6 Nc3 g6
- Summary Benko Gambit accepted
- **Benko Gambit declined:**
- Georgiev-Rogers: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5 4 cxb5 a6 5 e3
- Elson-Mannion: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5 4 cxb5 a6 5 b6

- Aubry-Goulenok: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5 4 cxb5 a6 5 b6
- Breutigam-Fedorowicz: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5 4 cxb5 a6 5 Nc3
- Dzagnidze-Kostiuk: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5 4 cxb5 a6 5 f3
- Sokolov-Bareev: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5 4 Nf3
- Gheorghiu-Norris: d4 Nf6 2 c4 c5 3 d5 b5 4 a4
- Summary : Benko Gambit Declined and farewell

There are many games, and in general, they are well-chosen and very instructive. Martin's strength as an educator and chess coach is that he conveys his message to the viewer through simple means. In addition to having decent opening coverage, the student will have Martin's "live" commentary, which provides plenty of insights into the standard positional, strategic and tactical elements.

The first two examples are more than fifty years old, but despite the initial murky move order, the games are incredibly modern in the way that Black handles the execution of the game plan. Here is the very first game from the DVD, with notes based on Martin's:

Van Scheltinga-Opocensky

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 c5 4 d5 d6 5 e4 b5

This is how the gambit was played in its infancy, Black plays his gambit only after White has committed to e2-e4 and has to keep his knight on c3 to protect, and therefore forcing White's next.

6 cxb5 Bg7 7 Nf3 0-0 8 Be2 a6 9 0-0

Or 9 a4 axb5 10 Bxb5 Ba6.

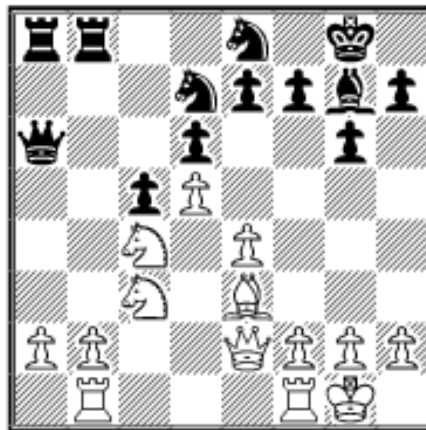
9...axb5 10 Bxb5 Qb6 11 Nd2 Ba6 12 Nc4 Qb7 13 Bxa6 Qxa6 14 Qe2?!

Martin gives 14 Ne3 as better.

14...Nbd7 15 Be3 Rfb8 16 Rab1

Here 16 Rfe1 or 16 h3 should be preferred.

16...Ne8



17 Rfe1??

This is a blunder that loses a piece. Martin challenges the viewer to find the rather simple, yet conceptually tricky, continuation. Martin doesn't mention it, but even after his suggested improvement 17 Bd2, Black obtains a good game after: 17...Nb6! 18 b3 Nxc4 19 bxc4 Rb4! 20 Rfc1 Rxc4 21 Rb2

Ra4!, and Black is clearly better.

17...Bxc3 18 bxc3 Rxb1, and White resigned as he loses a piece after 19 Rxb1 Ne5.

The presentation in the first part tends to be very superficial, with ample talk and little substance in regards to variations. For example, in the game Taimanov-Bronstein, Martin mentions one line given by Bronstein in his tournament book, but ignores several others that could have shed further light on the game. This also occurs several times in the presentation of the theoretical material, yet Martin still does a decent job of providing a playable Black repertoire. I agree with most of his choices in variations.

Of course Martin had to cut a few corners, because even with as many main games as he has chosen, there are still many loose ends and minor lines that have been skipped in order to keep things relatively uncomplicated. Also, the analysis is rather sketchy and shallow in places. Martin often suggests a move, but then doesn't pursue the ideas with any further analysis. Such an approach is simply unacceptable for more advanced players, but I suspect Martin has kept it simple to avoid confusing the student. You can argue both for and against the approach taken; however, it cannot hurt to give a few extra lines.

Overall, I find this DVD to be quite informative and worthwhile, and I have no doubt that anyone using it will learn the basics of the Benko Gambit well enough to take up the opening with confidence.

My assessment of this DVD: 

Order *The ABC of the Benko Gambit*

by Andrew Martin

ChessBase Magazine #113 (DVD) by Fredrick Friedel (ed.), ChessBase GmbH 2006, Figurine Algebraic Notation, \$22.95

Along with *Chess Informant* and *New In Chess Yearbook*, *ChessBase Magazine* (or *CBM* as it is often abbreviated) has become a mainstay for many chess professionals and serious enthusiasts. In the past, it was published on a CD, accompanied by a thin booklet describing its contents. Now it has been upgraded to a DVD to accommodate more ChessBase Media videos, but otherwise the contents are pretty much the same.



Some of the highlights on this DVD are the annotated games by Anand, Radjabov, Van Wely, and Kasimdzhanov. Below is one of the games that has been annotated exclusively for

CBM. As you can see, there are several spelling and grammatical errors, but fewer errors than in other cases. I don't understand why the editors of *CBM* don't weed out these silly mistakes. Sometimes you are left wondering "what is the annotator talking about?"

Van Wely,Loek (2655) - Antonio,Rogelio Jr (2539) [E37]

Turin ol (Men) 37th Turin (11), 02.06.2006

[Van Wely]

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3!?

During my preparation I spend a lot of time on my decision on this move. 3Nf3 followed by a possible Bogo/Queen Indian or not to forget to mention a Benoni, looked also very tempting to me. Luxury of choice makes life difficult sometimes

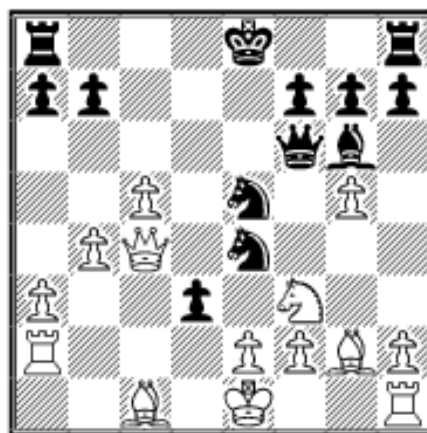
3 ..Bb4 4 Qc2 d5!?

This move however, came as a surprise to me. Since this game took place after the restday, I figured out my opponent might have spend his free day checking my game versus Joel Lautier, which took recently place in the Dutch league. Fortunately I had also checked this line and was ready to shoot as well

5 a3 Bxc3+ 6 Qxc3 Ne4 7 Qc2 c5 8 dxc5 Nc6 9 cxd5 exd5 10 Nf3 Bf5 11 b4 d4 12 g4 Bg6 13 Qc4 d3 14 Bg2!?

[in the above mentioned game 14 Be3 Qf6 15 Rd1 dxe2? a) 15 ..0-0-0!? was a suggestion of Michail Gurevich in the post-mortem of the game, and not a stupid one it seems; b) 15 ..Rd8?! Topalov-Anand Corsica 2003; c) 15 ..0-0!? Funnily, this move played in the game Sasikiran-Carlsen was played on the same day as my game with Lautier. The concept was quite interesting, but in the end Magnus was happy to make the draw 16 Rxd3 b5 17 Qc1 a5 18 bxa5 Nxc5 19 Rc3 Nd3+ 20 exd3 (20 Rxd3!? Bxd3 21 g5) 20 ..Qxf3 21 Rg1 Ne5 22 d4 Nc4 23 Bg2 Qxg4 24 h3; 16 Bxe2 0-0 17 0-0 Nc3 18 Rd6 Nxe2+ (18 ..b5 19 Qxb5! Nxb5 (19 ..Qxd6 20 cxd6 Nxb5 21 Bxb5) 20 Rxf6 Nc3 21 Rxc6 Nxe2+ 22 Kg2 Be4 23 Rd6 f5 24 g5 f4 25 Bd2 Rf5 26 h4 h6 27 Re1 just doesnt work for black) 19 Qxe2 was played and black was simply a pawn down]

14 ..Qf6 15 Ra2 Ne5 16 g5!



This move is not difficult to find for a modern professional with many silicon friends. After the match France-The Netherlands, which was played before this match, I told Joel Lautier that he was lucky to escape from playing me. Instead he played black against Sergei Tiviakov and made a very comfortable draw. His claims were that he

was ready to play me. Now I am still wondering how “ready” he really was.... [16 Qb5+ Nc6 (16 ..Kf8!?) 17 Qc4= Kramnik-Anand Dortmund 1999]

16 ..Nxc4

[another try would have been 16 ..Qf5 but heavy complications start after 17 Qd4 which are difficult to evaluate when you are not prepared]

17 gxf6 Nc3?!

tempting but black would have done better to go for the more conservative [17 ..Nxf6 18 Nd2 Nxd2 19 Rxd2 0–0–0 20 0–0 Nd5 21 exd3 Nf4 with compensation, although I must confess that I think that white can get an edge somewhere]

18 fxg7 Rg8 19 Ra1 0–0–0

in the analysis my opponent tried to improve his play, but in the end my king always ended up nicely blockading on d2. My teammates were here worried about the outcome of the game, since I went for a big think. But my ears didn't get red, normally a good sign!

20 Bh3+! Kb8?

[20 ..f5 (only move) 21 e3 Rxd7 (21 ..Ne4 22 Nd2) 22 Nd2 and black will slowly be pushed back]

21 Bf4+ Ka8 22 Rc1

my opponent is falling for the same illusion as I did many times in my preparation. There is no mate on d1

22 ..dxe2 23 Rxc3 1–0

An attractive feature of *CBM* is the opening surveys. This issue features a rather impressive lineup of grandmasters and reputable opening theoreticians covering topical variations:


- A30 Symmetrical English 3...d5 4 d4 - by Marin
- A87 Dutch 7 0-0 e6 - by Marin
- B31 Sicilian 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 g6 4 Bc6 bc6 - by Kritz
- B61 Sicilian Rauzer 6...Bd7 - by Hazai & Lukacs
- B76 Sicilian Dragon 9 000 d5 10 Kb1 Rb8 - by Rogozenko
- B80 Sicilian Topalov Variation - by Ftacnik
- C45 Scotch 6 Nb5 - by Postny
- C48 Spanish Four Knights 4...Nd4 5 Bc4 - by Hazai & Lukacs
- D00 London System 2.Bf4 c5 - by Knaak
- D02 London System 2.Nf3 Nf6 3 Bf4 c5 - by Knaak
- D15 Slav 4...a6 5 a4 - by Rogozenko
- D85 Gruenfeld Exchange 7 Qa4+ - by Krasenkow
- E58 Nimzoindian Rubinstein 9...Qc7 - by Gavrikov

However, there is a technical glitch in the survey on the Dutch, as the text for the survey on the Symmetrical English is repeated in its entirety.

Other features of *CBM #113* include:

- A segment on the Chess Olympiad in Turin 2006 with over 3,800 games.
- A segment on the Mtel Masters Tournament in Sofia, where Marin discusses the tournament, provides an opening survey of the games, and annotates a number of games in detail.
- A segment on “Aktual Tournaments,” which features games annotated by Anand (including audio commentary), Marin, Erenburg, Kritz, Tiviakov and Macieja.
- “The Trap” is based on the CD *1000 Opening Traps* by Rainer Knaak and Karsten Müller. In this installment, Knaak presents an example from the Bogo-Indian; however, he doesn’t seem particularly confident in front of the camera, so it is somewhat painful to watch.
- “Move by Move” is a segment by English grandmaster Daniel King that features a training question with every move, similar to *Solitaire Chess*.
- Peter Wells’ “Strategy” segment discusses exchange sacrifices. This section in itself is worth the price of the DVD. You cannot help but become a stronger player by carefully studying the examples and intelligent commentary.
- “Tactics” features 23 combinations from the Turin Olympiad. German international master Oliver Reeh also gives a video presentation of his favorite combination, from the game Berkes-Pazos Gambarotti. Reeh seems very comfortable speaking English and does so with only a slight hint of a German accent.
- Dr. Karsten Müller presents a number of very interesting and instructive endgames. This segment contains 36 examples, four of which are video based.
- “New ChessBase Products” features six new titles, including: Aagaard on the Queen’s Indian, and Martin on the Caro-Kann and on the Trompowsky.
- “Tele-Chess” is hosted by correspondence grandmasters Juan Sebastian Morgado and Roberto Alvarez. Both have annotated some games exclusively for this DVD, in addition to collecting no less than 7,100 games from recent IECG correspondence tournaments. The games vary wildly in quality, because they include unrated players as well as those rated up to 2700.

ChessBase Magazine contains plenty of quality material and gives a wide-ranging audience more than enough bang for their buck. I highly recommend it.

My assessment of this DVD: 

Order *ChessBase Magazine #113*

by Fredrick Friedel (ed.)

The Trompowsky: The Easy Way (DVD) by Andrew Martin, ChessBase GmbH 2006, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Playing time: 3 hours, 30 minutes \$29.95

The back cover blurb states: “In this fascinating DVD, International Master Andrew Martin traces the history of the opening from those early days, through the ‘golden age’ of the late 1980’s and 1990’s and shows how the theory and ideas have evolved into the sharp and dangerous weapon that Trompowski undoubtedly is today. Martin simplifies the theory of 2005 and creates an easy-to-understand repertoire for the White player that recaptures the pioneering spirit of those early days... with interest!”



While the DVD does present many fun miniatures with decent commentary, the theoretical coverage is extremely superficial, as numerous critical lines are given very short shrift, and few, if any, alternatives for Black are discussed. Of all the DVDs in this column, this one is clearly the worst.

My assessment of this DVD: ♦♦♦

[Order](#) *The Trompowsky: The Easy Way*
by Andrew Martin

The ABC of the Caro-Kann (DVD) by Andrew Martin, ChessBase GmbH 2006, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Playing time: 4 hours, 13 minutes \$34.95

The Caro-Kann Defense is a very reliable opening for Black, and Martin has hand-picked a repertoire that demands some understanding of the general ideas and a solid foundation of theoretical knowledge in lines where it isn't important for Black to know everything to keep the balance.

I found his presentation rather enjoyable, instructive, and entertaining. He eloquently offers a good balance of variations, analysis and verbal explanations, without complicating matters too much, making the material very easy to comprehend for



lower-ranked players.

My assessment of this DVD: 

Order *The ABC of the Caro-Kann*


by Andrew Martin

The Scandinavian: The Easy Way (DVD) by Andrew Martin, ChessBase GmbH 2006, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Playing time: 3 hours \$29.95

Martin has previously advocated 1 e4 d5 2 exd5 Qxd5 3 Nc3 Qa5 in various media, but for the purpose of this DVD, he now recommends 3...Qd6. This line came into prominence following the publication of a book by [Melts](#) and through the adoption of the line by Dutch grandmaster Tiviakov, who continues to play it to this day.



The *Easy Way* series is aimed at a slightly more advanced audience and therefore Martin's main focus is on theory. He provides a fair amount of strategic discussions, but he still cuts a few corners nonetheless, as some of the critical lines are not discussed in as much depth as they should have been. The overall presentation is rather good and will leave the viewer fairly confident about the 3...Qd6 lines. However, it doesn't feature any other alternative and is aimed only at the black player.

My assessment of this DVD: 

Order *The Scandinavian: The Easy Way*

by Andrew Martin

New in Chess Yearbook, Vol. 80 by Genna Sosonko (ed.), Interchess BV 2006, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 248pp., \$28.95

My opinion of the *New in Chess Yearbooks* has been well-documented and this volume is of the same outstanding quality as the previous ones. The features are familiar: Photo Gallery, Variation Index, Forum, Sosonko's Corner, Opening Surveys, Book Reviews and the New in Chess Code System overview, but the contributions are original and fresh.



I can rave on about the wonderful qualities of each feature, but suffice it to say that the variations are topical and some of the surveys are excellent, especially Galkin's in-depth survey on a sub-variation of the ultra-popular Sicilian Sveshnikov and Kapengut's survey on the Sämisch-Benoni.

My assessment of this book: 

[Order](#) *New in Chess Yearbook, Vol. 80*
by Genna Sosonko (ed.)

 **TOP OF PAGE**

 **HOME**

 **COLUMNS**

 **LINKS**

 **ARCHIVES**

 **ABOUT THE
CHESS CAFE**

[\[ChessCafe Home Page\]](#) [\[Book Review\]](#) [\[Columnists\]](#)

[\[Endgame Study\]](#) [\[Skittles Room\]](#) [\[Archives\]](#)

[\[Links\]](#) [\[Online Bookstore\]](#) [\[About ChessCafe.com\]](#) [\[Contact Us\]](#)

Copyright 2006 CyberCafes, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

"**The Chess Cafe®**" is a registered trademark of Russell Enterprises, Inc.