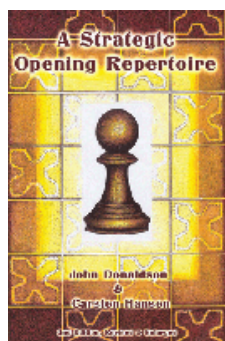




COLUMNISTS

Checkpoint

Carsten Hansen



Rating Chart

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

CHESTHEATRE

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

[The Complete
DGT Product Line](#)

Reviewed this month:

Starting Out: The c3 Sicilian
by John Emms

ECO E (4th ed.)
by Zdenko Krnic (ed.)

The Tarrasch Defence (DVD)
by Nigel Davies

En Passant

New In Chess Yearbook, Vol. 89
by Genna Sosonko (ed.)

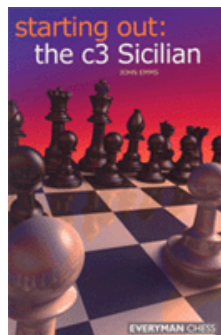
Chesspublishing.com: Anti-Sicilians
by David Vigorito

Mixed Bag

We look at a mixed bag of recent releases in this month's column. Serious players will enjoy the new volume of *ECO E* and the *New In Chess Yearbook*, while lower ranked players may benefit from the new book on the c3 Sicilian by Emms or the new DVD on the Tarrasch by Davies. Finally we take a brief look at the Anti-Sicilians section on Chesspublishing.com. I wish all readers a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Starting Out: The c3 Sicilian by John Emms, Everyman Chess 2008, Figurine Algebraic Notation, paperback, 207pp., \$24.95

In the introduction to this volume, Emms tells us that this line rose from obscurity when it was adopted by Sveshnikov, Vasiukov and Dvoretsky in the early 1970s. He continues "and by the mid 1990s it was being used by some of the World's greatest players, for example Karpov, Kramnik, Adams and Ivanchuk." However, this is tantamount to mere name-dropping as the listed players, apart from Adams, have only assayed the c3-Sicilian about a dozen times between them. True, he also lists some of the players who genuinely contributed to the development of the variation: Tiviakov, Rozentalis, Pavasovic, Nisipeanu, Sermek, Smagin and Rausis, but he should also have included Baklan, Blatny, Godena, Kharlov, Schmittziel, Stevic, Vajda and Vysochin to mention some of the other frequent practitioners of this variation.



The material is divided as follows:

- Bibliography (1 page)
- Introduction (6 pages)

Check out these
bestselling titles from
USCFSales.com:



Danish Dynamite
by Karsten Müller
& Martin Voigt



*The Fearsome Four
Pawns Attack*
by Jerzy Konikowski &
Marek Soszynski

Read an excerpt [here](#).



*The Modern Morra
Gambit*
by Hannes Langrock

- 1 2...d5: Black Plays Aggressively (45 pages)
- 2 2...d5: Positional Lines (48 pages)
- 3 2...Nf6: Traditional Lines with cxd4 (36 pages)
- 4 2...Nf6: Modern Lines (35 pages)
- 5 Second Move Alternatives (27 pages)
- Index of Variations (4 pages)
- Index of Complete Games (2 pages)

Before moving on, let's have a look at one of Emms's own games annotated by him in the book.

J.Emms – R. Sagall

London (rapidplay) 1995

1.e4 c5 2.c3 Nf6 3.e5 Nd5 4.d4 cxd4 5.Nf3 Nc6 6.Bc4 Nb6 7.Bb3 d5 8.exd6 e6 9.cxd4 Bxd6 10.0–0 0–0 11.Re1

Note: This is a favorable IQP position for White. With a knight on b6 rather than f6, and a bishop on d6 rather than e7, Black has much less cover on the kingside than normal and so he is vulnerable to the threat of an attack.

Indeed, it was no real surprise when my opponent decided to reposition his knight back into the centre.

11...Nd5 12.Nc3 Nce7

A good move, solidly protecting d5. 12...Be7 would be another lost tempo, while we have seen in Game 23 the dangers of exchanging on c3.

E.Sveshnikov-R.Maninang, Manila 1982, supplied further evidence, with 12...Nxc3?! 13.bxc3 Qc7 14.Qd3! (preparing Ng5) 14...e5 15.dxe5 Nxe5 16.Nxe5 Bxe5 17.Ba3! Bxh2+ (17...Rd8 18.Rxe5!) 18.Kh1 Rd8 19.Qf3 Be5 20.Qe3! Bd6 21.Bxd6 Qxd6 22.Rad1 proving to be all too easy for White.

13.Bg5!?

There are some promising alternatives, including 13.Bc2, 13.Ne5 or even 13.Ng5!?, but I had a specific idea in mind.

13...Qb6 14.Qd3 Bd7 15.Rad1 Bc6?

Of course ...Bc6 is a desirable move in the long run, but in this particular situation there were more pressing matters to deal with. Black had to play 15...h6, against which I was planning to blast open the centre with 16.Bxe7!? Nxe7 17.d5 [CH: 17.Bc2!? may well be an improvement, e.g. 17...g6 18.Ne4 Kg7 19.Ne5 with a very pleasant position for White]. Looking at it now, though, 17...Rad8! holds the position, as 18.dxe6 Bxe6 19.Bxe6?? can be met by 19...Bxh2+!.

16.Bxe7!

Square vacation: g5 is urgently required by another piece.

16...Nxe7 17.Ng5 Ng6 18.Rxe6!

Hansen116e

Exploiting the absence of the bishop from d7. This rook sacrifice is virtually winning for White.

18...fxe6 19.Qh3!

19.Bxe6+? Kh8 20.Qxg6 (20.Qh3 h6) 20...hxg6 21.Rd3 and Rh3 mate would be a pretty finish, but Black only has to spot 21...Bf3! to spoil the

fun.

19...Rf6

19...h6 loses to 20.Qxe6+ Kh8 21.Qxg6 Be4! 22.Qxe4 (but not 22.Ncxe4?? Bxh2+!) 22...hxg5 23.Bc2 g6 24.Qxg6 Bxh2+ 25.Kxh2 Qxg6 26.Bxg6 Rxf2 27.b3.

20.Bxe6+ Kf8 21.Nxh7+

21.Qxh7! would be stronger.

21...Ke7 22.Nxf6 gxf6 23.Qh7+!

Black has no choice but to take the bishop.

23...Kxe6 24.d5+ Bxd5 25.Nxd5 Qxb2?

Black's only chance was 25...Rh8!, even though White should win after 26.Qxh8 26...Nxh8 27.Nxb6 axb6 or even 26.Qxg6 Bxh2+ 27.Kf1 Qb5+ 28.Rd3.


26.Qxg6

Good enough, although strictly speaking mate in four with 26.Nc7+! Bxc7 27.Qd7+ Ke5 28.Rd5+ Ke4 29.Qf5 would have been more accurate.

26...Rh8 27.Qg4+ Ke5 28.Ne3 1-0

This game is representative of what you will find in the book. The annotations are relatively light but instructive. The analysis of the opening discusses the most important lines so that you can take up the opening with some confidence without having to fear that you have missed something dangerous or complicated, but does not dive too deeply into the intricacies of each line.

Emms tells us from the get-go that he has a slight bias for white, but he is quite objective about which lines are best for either side. Rather curiously neither *Chess Explained: The c3 Sicilian* by Collins or the *Sicilian Defence with 2 c3* DVD by Tiviakov are mentioned in the bibliography, though both were published in 2007. Nevertheless, I find this book to be well-written and an easy read. The target audience is 1400 up to around 2000.

My assessment of this book: 

[Order](#) *Starting Out: The c3 Sicilian*

by John Emms

Encyclopaedia of Chess Openings, Vol. E (4th edition) by Zdenko Krnic et al, Sahovski Informator 2008, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Hardcover, 672pp., \$57.95

The third edition of this volume, at 528 pages, was the same size as the second, but it had 65% new material. Compared to the previous two editions, an additional 144 pages of material has been added to this fourth edition. Yet, this is not so surprising given that the pace of today's opening theory is simply breathtaking. The sheer volume of material on these openings is absolutely astounding.



The unsung hero of this massive volume is FIDE master Borivoje Vujacic, currently rated 2315 on the latest ELO list, as he is listed as the only contributor! In comparison, the names associated with the second edition included Adorjan, Bagirov, Beljavsky, Botvinnik, Ehlvest, Ftacnik, Gulko, M.Gurevich, Hübner, Yusupov, Karpov, Kortchnoi, Polugaevsky, Ribli, Salov, A.Sokolov, Sveshnikov, Taimanov, and Vaganian, to mention just a few. Thus, it was a slightly different caliber of book back then. Of course, our new friend, Vujacic, has undoubtedly been supported by numerous chess engines, just as anyone else would have been, but it is nevertheless a sign of decline that not even one grandmaster has been part of the creative process to compile this volume.

The material is divided as follows:

- System of Signs (3 pages)
- E0: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 – without 3 Nf3, 3 Nc3 (130 pages)
- E1: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 (136 pages)
- E2: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 – without 4 Bg5, 4 Qc2, 4 e3 (30 pages)
- E3: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 – with 4 Bg5, 4 Qc2 (48 pages)
- E4: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 e3 – with 4...0-0, but not 5 Nf3 and without 4...0-0 (32 pages)
- E5: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 Bb4 4 e3 0-0 5 Nf3 (24 pages)
- E6: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 – without 4 e4 and 3...d5 (64 pages)
- E7: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 – without 5 f3, 5 Nf3 (34 pages)
- E8: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 f3 (34 pages)
- E9: 1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 Bg7 4 e4 d6 5 Nf3 (129 pages)

In each chapter, the material is further divided into ten subchapters; for instance, E00, E01, E02, etc. This makes the material fairly easy to navigate even though there can be some crossovers.

The material is presented in horizontal columns and contains no text within the variations. The only text is in the System of Signs index at the beginning of the book. If you are familiar with *Chess Informant*, you will have no problem “reading” the *ECO*, because it uses even fewer symbols. The main problem of course is that you don’t know why the editor evaluated a position a certain way and which elements factored into that evaluation.

Another interesting observation is that because of the explosion of information in certain openings some *ECO* codes have seen a huge expansion. For example, in the Queen’s Indian Defense the code E12 almost exclusively covers the lines with 4 a3 and 4 Nc3 Bb7 5 a3; this code has no less than 114 main lines, 646 footnotes, and covers a whopping 41 pages, whereas the rest of the codes for the Queen’s Indian E13-19 cover 71 pages in total.

Compared to the second edition from 1991, the following codes have seen the most increase of material: E01 (+21 pages), E04 (+15 pages), E05 (+16 pages), E15 (+14 pages), E32 (+ 14 pages), and E97 (+16 pages). The King’s Indian with 8 d5 Ne7 and then either 9 Nd2 or 9 b4 went from 29 footnotes in 1991 to 251 footnotes! The overall section changes are as follows: E0 +78 pages, E1 +24 pages, E2 –4 pages, E3 +18 pages, E4 –12 pages, E5 –14 pages, E6 +2 pages, E7 –2 pages, E8 +2 pages, and E9 +56 pages.

Much of the new material seems to have derived from databases, but these games are mainly over-the-board encounters and there are precious few correspondence games, even from the top correspondence players. It seems as though Vujacic’s main job was to sift through the huge volume of available games and evaluate the positions at which they diverge. Any original input is very sporadic, and there is little to be found, especially when compared to older editions. Furthermore, move annotation symbols

are often omitted. For instance, a main line might lead to a slight advantage for White, but an alternative for Black will lead to a decisive advantage for White, yet no single move receives a question mark. This is indicative of laziness on the part of the compiler, and I find it highly annoying.

This isn't a book that you want to lug through the airport, but *ECO* remains relevant to today's chess players as a reference guide to the current general evaluation of various lines. I use it in my own research as an important reference tool.

My assessment of this book: ♦♦♦♦

[Order ECO E \(4th edition\)](#)

by Zdenko Krnic et al

The Tarrasch Defence (DVD) by Nigel Davies, ChessBase GmbH 2008, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Playing time: 3 hours 50 minutes, \$34.95

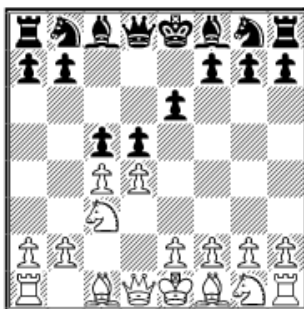
As Davies points out in the introduction to this DVD, when presenting the game Petrosian-Spassky from their 1969 World Championship match, the Tarrasch Queen's Gambit is an excellent weapon for Black at club level where easy access to piece play is far more important than playing for subtle positional advantages.

He also points to some players who have employed the Tarrasch, including Spassky and Kasparov, and of more recent pedigree Spanish GM Illescas and Armenian GM Lputian.

However, none of these players have used this opening since 2000 and calling these few "a galaxy of stars" as Davies does is quite a bit of an exaggeration. Furthermore, Kasparov pretty much gave up on the opening during his 1984 match against Karpov. If Davies wanted to present a top name, then Grischuk should have been his man.



The Tarrasch arises after 1 d4 d5 2 c4 e6 3 Nc3 c5, or via other move orders:



The material is divided into twenty-two main games that are all annotated by Davies. However in comparison to his other DVDs, the coverage is much briefer than is customary for him. I think it is because the opening is easier to understand and because he doesn't go into as much detail.

On the contents page we only see the games listed, but not the lines to which they pertain. This is quite annoying, because if you wish to locate a particular line, it can only be done by trial and error. Furthermore, I find it quite surprising that only three of the main games were played after 2000 and only two of these are grandmaster encounters. In fact fifteen of the games are from before 1990; you would think that it is possible to find more up-to-date and relevant material than rehashing Burn-Znosko-

Borovsky and Rotlewi–Rubinstein. A quick search in my main database found no less than 359 games played between 2000 and 2007 where the players average ELO was at least 2500. Yet, annotating hard-fought recent grandmaster games is far more difficult than presenting a bunch of rather one-sided games. Of all of the games on this DVD, twenty-one are black wins. This simply doesn't paint a realistic picture. To boot, several of the games aren't all that good or even particularly instructive.

Nigel Davies has recorded several very good DVDs in the past; however, this one falls short. It just isn't very good, so you should spend your money on something else.

My assessment of this DVD: ❖❖

Order *The Tarrasch Defence*
by Nigel Davies

New In Chess Yearbook, Vol. 89 by Genna Sosonko (ed), New In Chess 2008, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 246pp., \$24.95

The main headlines on the cover of this volume are as follows:

- Anand sets the Meran on fire
- Five-time Russian champ Peter Svidler slays Radjabov's Dragon
- Does rising star Vugar Gashimov still trust his pet Benoni?
- Viacheslav Zakhartsov's adventures in the Najdorf Poisoned Pawn
- Erwin I'Ami digs Bareev's crazy English line with both colours



As usual, the material is divided as follows:

- Opening Highlights (2 pages)
- Your Variations (2 pages)
- Forum and Sosonko's Corner
- Forum (17 pages)
- Sosonko's Corner (7 pages)
- Surveys (32 surveys – 206 pages)
- Service
- Book Reviews (5 pages)
- New In Chess Code System (1 page)

The *Yearbook* starts out with a bang with several really interesting contributions in the Forum section. Some of the contributors are grandmasters, but several others are just regular players whose ideas and games deserve an extra look. One enjoyable example is given by Peter Boel, who discuss the intricacies of the game Trent-Kotronias from the Liverpool 2008, where after a detailed coverage of the opening moves: 1. d4 Nf6 2.Bg5 Ne4 3.Bf4 c5 4.f3 Qa5+ 5.c3 Nf6 6.d5 Qb6 7.e4 Qxb2 8. Nd2 Qxc3 9.Bc7 d6 10.Rb1! b6!? 11.Bb5+!? Bd7 12.Qa4 Qa5? 13.Qxa5 bxa5 14.Bc4 Ba4 15.Bxb8 Kd8 16.Rb7! a6 17.Ba7 Bb5 18.Bb6+ Kc8 19. Rc7+ Kb8 20.Bxb5 axb5, the following position arose:



As Boel writes, “How on earth did those white pieces get there?” retrograde analyst Raymond Smullyan would ask. More importantly: how can Black get rid of them?” The game was ultimately won by White, after Black blundered while playing for a win.

The surveys cover the following openings: Sicilian Defense (8), French Defense (1), Caro-Kann (1), Ruy Lopez (3), Scotch Game (1), Budapest Gambit (2), Slav Defense (6), Tarrasch Defense (1), Queen’s Indian (2), Grünfeld Indian (3), King’s Indian (1), Modern Benoni (1), Dutch Defense (1), and English Opening (1). Note that the editors go to great lengths to make sure that the contributors cover as many different lines as possible in each volume. So for a line to see multiple surveys, it has to be exceedingly popular with substantial developments from the previous survey, otherwise something else will given preference. Also note that for a line to be covered, it doesn’t have to be topical in recent grandmaster praxis, it can just be a line of interest in which there is something new to say.

Every serious chess player should read the *New In Chess Yearbook*. You will be hard pressed to find material of a similar standard in print elsewhere. Furthermore, studying the material in these volumes gives you ample possibilities for widening your opening repertoire. In each survey you will find numerous improvements and new ideas compared to existing opening theory. For lower-ranked players, the *Yearbook* can also be used as a catalog of ideas to gain an advantage over similarly rated players who may not read this book.

My assessment of this book: ♦♦♦♦♦

New In Chess Yearbook, Vol. 89
by Genna Sosonko (ed.)

Chesspublishing.com: Anti-Sicilians by David Vigorito, Chess Publishing.com, Subscription \$19.50-\$99.00 per year.


The Anti-Sicilians cover all the lines that do not feature in the open Sicilian (2 Nf3, 3 d4 and 4 Nxd4). This leaves plenty of ground to cover with fairly popular lines such as 2 c3, the Closed Sicilian, the Grand Prix Attack, the Rossolimo, the Moscow Variation, 3 Qxd4 and numerous others. Some of these are seen regularly at grandmaster level, but most are not, which is probably why this section of the website is particularly popular amongst club players.



American international master David Vigorito has very capably hosted this section since March 2008. Earlier hosts include IMs Gary Lane and Andrew Martin and GM Jonathan Rowson, as well as stand-ins IM Richard Palliser and GM John Shaw. Each update usually consists of eight games, annotated in detail with references to theory.

As with the other pages, a subscription gives you access to all the previous updates and games dating back to October 1999. This totals

more than 700 annotated games. These are available in PGN, ChessBase, and PDF formats. The site's Forum allows you to discuss any number of topics with fellow subscribers. If you want to have a finger on the pulse of opening theory in your favorite lines, chesspublishing.com could well be the answer for you.

My assessment of this site: 

Chesspublishing.com: Anti-Sicilians
by David Vigorito



[TOP OF PAGE](#)



[HOME](#)



[COLUMNS](#)



[LINKS](#)



[ARCHIVES](#)



[ABOUT THE
CHESS CAFE](#)

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

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

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

© 2009 CyberCafes, LLC. All Rights Reserved.

"**ChessCafe.com**®" is a registered trademark of Russell Enterprises, Inc.