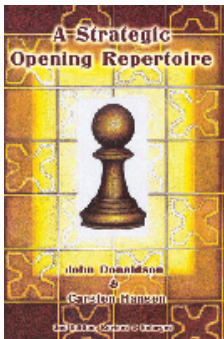




COLUMNISTS

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:

Dangerous Weapons: The Queen's Gambit
by Richard Palliser, Glenn Flear & Chris Ward

Dangerous Weapons: 1 e4 e5
by John Emms, Glenn Flear & Andrew Greet

Chess Explained: The French
by Viacheslav Eingorn & Valentin Bogdanov

Play the Semi-Slav
by David Vigorito

En Passant

Chesspublishing.com: 1 e4 e5
by Tont Kosten

Anti-Moscow Gambit for Experts (DVD)
by Rustam Kasimdzhanov

Beating the Open Games (2nd Ed.)
by Mihail Marin

Dangerous Classical Weapons

This month we will look at a number of titles that focus on the classical openings 1 e4 e5 and 1 d4 d5. Among these are two new titles in the *Dangerous Weapons* series from Everyman Chess, and some interesting efforts from American IM David Vigorito and former FIDE Knock-out World Champion Rustam Kasimdzhanov.

Dangerous Weapons: The Queen's Gambit by Richard Palliser, Glenn Flear & Chris Ward, Everyman Chess 2008, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 239pp., \$24.95

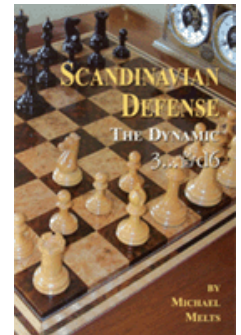
The idea behind this series is somewhat similar to that of *Secrets of Opening Surprises*. As John Emms writes in the introduction, dangerous weapons are:

“1) Moves that create complex, original positions full of razor sharp tactics and rich positional ideas where creative attacking play is rewarding moves which are new, rare or very fresh, leaving plenty of scope for research.

“2) Moves that are highly ambitious; ones which



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

aim for total domination.

“3) Moves that have previously been discarded or discredited by theory perhaps unfairly so or maybe for the wrong reasons.

“4) Moves that are visually shocking; moves which seem to contradict the laws of the game.”

In this volume international master Richard Palliser is joined by English grandmasters Glenn Flear and Chris Ward. Together they present fourteen “dangerous weapons” in the Queen’s Gambit. Flear and Palliser have each written five chapters, while Ward contributes four chapters.

There are ten recommendations for White and four for Black. This is hardly a surprise, as according to Palliser in the preface, the Queen’s Gambit is a solid opening for Black by its very nature and most of the sharp options for Black either carry “a sizeable chunk of theory or are simply unsound.”

The material is divided as follows:


- Preface (1 pages)
- Series Introduction (3 pages)
- 1 Playing ...b5 with Confidence (22 pages)
- 2 Having Fun Against the ...a6 Slav (14 pages)
- 3 Exciting Byways in the Main Line Slav: Part One (15 pages)
- 4 Exciting Byways in the Main Line Slav: Part Two (18 pages)
- 5 The a-pawn Cramp (17 pages)
- 6 The Hodgson-Smallbone Variation (20 pages)
- 7 The a-pawn Abstention (20 pages)
- 8 Going Long in the Moscow (17 pages)
- 9 Livening up the Exchange Variation: Part One (12 pages)
- 10 Livening up the Exchange Variation: Part Two (11 pages)
- 11 Shocking the QGD (11 pages)
- 12 The Anti-Vienna Gambit (21 pages)
- 13 Tricking the Tarrasch (18 pages)
- 14 Taking the Fun out of the Albin and Chigorin (14 pages)

The ideas can be categorized by these openings:

- Slav/Semi-Slav: 7 chapters
- Normal Queen’s Gambit including Exchange: 4 chapters
- Accepted, Tarrasch and others: 3 chapters

On the whole the ideas presented in this volume all fall within the theme of the title, and I am impressed with the creativity of the coauthors. Some of the ideas are quite decent as surprise weapons, but others are not to be recommended to those who are easily intimidated by tactics and complications.

For those who want something sharp and somewhat unusual in the Queen’s Gambit, primarily as white, this volume will make an excellent source of ideas and a good starting point for future research. Whether the ideas will hold up to closer scrutiny is anybody’s guess, but for now I wish those brave souls the best of luck trying them out.

My assessment of this book: 

[Order](#) *Dangerous Weapons: The Queen’s Gambit*

by Richard Palliser, Glenn Flear & Chris Ward

As with the above book, the authors fit a rather sizable number of openings into just one volume, when a narrower focus may have been in order so as to leave room for future separate volumes, say, on the Ruy Lopez by itself. In comparing the two, it is amazing that for just one dollar more, you get almost 100 pages more in this volume. That said, you can debate whether you agree with the authors choice of material.



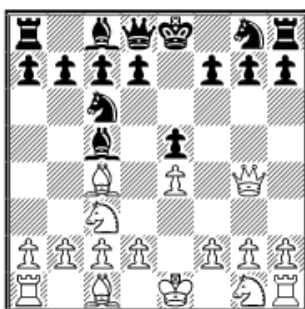
The contents are divided as follows:

- Preface (2 pages)
- Series Introduction (4 pages)
- 1 The Max Lange Gambit (32 pages)
- 2 Reviving the Max Lange Attack (20 pages)
- 3 Calming the Romantics (22 pages)
- 4 L'Oiseau (18 pages)
- 5 Twenty Years of Obscurity (16 pages)
- 6 Facing up to the Exchange Variation (13 pages)
- 7 Denying Black his Fun (20 pages)
- 8 Livening up the Three Knights and Scotch (17 pages)
- 9 Don't be Boring against the Göring! (10 pages)
- 10 Fighting the Pseudo King's Gambiteers (23 pages)
- 11 The Vienna Poisoned Pawn (14 pages)
- 12 Play like a Victorian: The King's Bishop Gambit (18 pages)
- 13 The Centre Game Revealed: Part I (41 pages)
- 14 The Centre Game Revealed: Part II (29 pages)
- 15 The Centre Game Revealed: Part III (32 pages)

The 100 pages of extra material in this volume can be attributed to international master Andrew Greet's three chapters on the Centre Game. These chapters are well-researched, well-analyzed and loaded with fresh ideas, but if you don't like the Centre Game as white, a third of the book can be considered a waste of time and space. I disagree with giving one opening so much coverage because the attraction of these volumes is that they offer a bunch of different ideas across a variety of openings. The remaining twelve chapters are split evenly between the two English grandmasters. From these, four chapters cover ideas for White, and eight offer suggestions for Black.

The authors have been quite inventive when devising dangerous ideas. I would hate to face some of these openings without being properly prepared; for example, those meeting the lines in the Max-Lange risk being at the receiving end of a slaughter. Chapter three is quite interesting from Black's perspective, taking some of the sting out of the Evans Gambit and adding a bit of flavor to something that would otherwise be a rather boring line for Black.

Chapter eleven is a bit unusual in that it is a "Dangerous Weapon" against something that has been considered a dangerous weapon! After 1 e4 e5 2 Nc3 Nc6 3 Bc4 Bc5, Black's last move has been considered inaccurate on account of 4 Qg4!?.



For instance, Black is in serious trouble after 4...Qf6? 5 Nd5! Qxf2+ 6 Kd1. However, Emms offers 4...Nd4!? as an alternative for Black, and if White isn't prepared, he will soon end up losing a miniature. Fascinating stuff.

I found this book to be an excellent addition to the series and it should help many players navigate some of the lesser



paths in these popular openings.

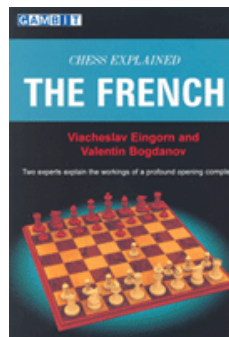
My assessment of this book: ♦♦♦♦♦

Order *Dangerous Weapons: 1 e4 e5*

by John Emms, Glenn Flear & Andrew Greet

Chess Explained: The French by Viacheslav Eingorn & Valentin Bogdanov, Gambit Publications 2008, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 127pp., \$23.95

In this series from Gambit Publications, each volume presents twenty-five recent games in which the authors strive to present the current standing of theory in all the major lines of the opening. While I had my doubts about such an undertaking on a subject as big as the French in such a short book, I have to say that I'm extraordinarily impressed by this volume.



The material is divided as follows:

- Symbols (1 page)
- Introduction (1 page)
- 1 The Advance Variation (14 pages) (14 pages)
- 2 The Tarrasch Variation: Lines with ...Nf6 (13 pages)
- 3 The Tarrasch Variation with ...c5 (14 pages)
- 4 Burn and Rubinstein Lines: Black plays ...dxe4 (14 pages)
- 5 The Classical French (3 Nc3 Nf6) (15 pages)
- 6 The Winawer Variation (3 Nc3 Bb4) (14 pages)
- 7 The Winawer Variation 4 e5 c5 (20 pages)
- 8 The Main-Line WinawerL 7 Qg4 (15 pages)
- List of Games (1 page)
- Index of Variations (2 pages)

Here each chapter has three main games, except the seventh which has four. While the lines are not covered as deeply as they would be in a monograph, this volume very capably presents the approximate evaluations of the most important lines. All major lines are discussed at some length, with typical plans, ideas, strategies, and even misunderstandings described in a way that is easy to follow; numerous lucid examples show why certain lines are preferred over others.

I'm impressed. This is an excellent starting guide for those considering taking up the opening for the first time or for those who wish to review the basic ideas and concepts. After reading this book, I learned a lot about the French from both sides of the board. This is a great guide to a popular opening. Go get it.

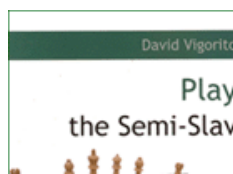
My assessment of this book: ♦♦♦♦♦

Order *Chess Explained: The French*

by Viacheslav Eingorn & Valentin Bogdanov

Play the Semi-Slav by David Vigorito, Quality Chess 2008, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 277pp., \$29.95

The Semi-Slav has been the stomping ground for some of the most popular lines in current opening theory for quite some time. Aside from



the currently very popular Anti-Moscow Gambit, other lines such as the Botvinnik Anti-Meran Gambit, the Meran, the Shabalov Variation, the Moscow Variation and several other theory-laden lines are covered in this volume.



The material is divided as follows:

- Bibliography (1 page)
- Introduction (5 pages)
- Symbols (1 page)
- Part I – The Moscow Variation 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 Nc3 e6 5 Bg5 h6
 - 1 Main Lines with 7 e3 (16 pages)
 - 2 Early Deviations 7 Qb3; 7 Qc2; 7 g3 (12 pages)
 - 3 The Anti-Moscow Gambit 6 Bh4 (22 pages)
- Part II – The Botvinnik Variation 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 Nc3 e6 5 Bg5 dxc4
 - 4 Main Line 16 Rb1 (16 pages)
 - 5 Main Line 16 Na4 (16 pages)
 - 6 White Plays 9 exf6 (10 pages)
 - 7 Early Deviations 6 e4 b5 7 a4; 6 a4; 6 e3 (12 pages)
- Part III – The Meran Variation 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 Nc3 e6 5 e3 Nbd7 6 Bd3 dxc4
 - 7 Bxc4 b5
 - 8 Wade Variation 9 e4 b4 10 Na4 c5 11 e5 Nd5 (18 pages)
 - 9 Reynolds Variation 9 0-0 a6 10 e4 c5 11 d5 (20 pages)
 - 10 Early Deviations 8 Bd3 Bb7 9 0-0 b4; 8 Bd3 Bb7 9 a3; 8 Bb3; 8 Be2 (16 pages)
- Part IV – The 6 Qc2 Variation 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 Nc3 e6 5 e3 Nbd7 6 Qc2 Bd6
 - 11 Positional Treatments 7 e4; 7 b3; 7 Be2; 7 Bd3; 7 Bd2 (24 pages)
 - 12 The Latvian Variation 7 g4 (16 pages)
- Part V – White Avoids the Main Lines
 - 13 Exchange Slav 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 cxd5 cxd5 (22 pages)
 - 14 Slow Slav 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 e3 Bf5 (18 pages)
 - 15 Odds and Ends 4 Qc2; 5 Qb3; 5 g3; 5 cxd5 (19 pages)
- Index of Variations (6 pages)
- Index of Full Games (2 pages)

As you may have noticed, Vigorito does the reader a favor by considering some annoying minor systems – from Black’s perspective – and suggesting a repertoire against them. For example, the Exchange Variation can be a deterrent for some players to take up the Slav, because it can be awfully boring and exceedingly difficult to play for a win as Black. While I’m not entirely sure prospective Black players will be impressed with the complexity of the chosen line, it certainly provides Black with a way to equality, where he may eventually be able to play for more. This is quite a bonus for the reader who is eager to dive into the complicated wonderland that is the Semi-Slav.

Since this is a repertoire book for Black, it is vulnerable to novelties and ideas that could overturn the recommended lines. For instance, in the Botvinnik Anti-Meran and the Anti-Moscow Gambits, the theory has already moved beyond what is presented in this volume. This is always a danger in such lines, so readers should be aware of the problem. However, this book also provides many original ideas – more than most other opening books in fact.

For players who employ these lines as black, this book is required reading, and white players can pick up plenty of ideas as well. It contains many ideas that will soon be tested in games at all levels. However, less experienced players, say below 1900-2000, should strongly think about whether they want to spend so much time memorizing the massive

amounts of theory, because it will hardly pay off in points compared to the effort put in.

My assessment of this book: ♦♦♦♦♦

Order *Play the Semi-Slav*
by David Vigorito

Chesspublishing.com: 1e4 e5 by Tony Kosten, Chess Publishing.com
2008, Subscription \$19.50-\$99.00 per year.

The 1 e4 e5 section of this site is currently hosted by the overall editor of chess publishing.com, English grandmaster Tony Kosten. In the past this page has been hosted by GM Paul Motwani, GM Nigel Davies, GM Olivier Renet, and GM Glenn Flear has filled in on a few occasions.



You would think that it is difficult to get around this giant complex of openings, but the hosts have covered the subject quite well. I only noticed sparse coverage of the King's Gambit, but you can hardly fault Kosten, since it is hardly a topical opening at any level. Yet many lesser openings such as the Bishop's Opening, the Evans Gambit and the like are represented, as well as the very topical Marshall Gambit and the brand new Gajewski Variation of the Ruy Lopez.

As with many of the other pages on Chesspublishing.com, there is hardly a better or more current way to stay on top of the latest developments in these openings. The material isn't only based on games by the very top players, but also on games by international masters and strong masters, as long as these games are of sufficient relevance.

As with the other sections on chesspublishing.com, there are downloadable PDF, PGN, and ChessBase format files that cover all the games presented since 1999. Finally, there is an active forum with an exchange of ideas between subscribers of the page. If you want to stay on top of the latest developments of 1 e4 e5 openings, this is the best choice for serious players.

My assessment of this site: ♦♦♦♦♦

Chesspublishing.com: 1 e4 e5
by Tony Kosten

Anti-Moscow Gambit for Experts (DVD) by Rustam Kasimdzhanov,
ChessBase GmbH 2008, Figurine Algebraic Notation, \$39.95

Over the last few years, the Anti-Moscow Gambit has emerged as one of the most topical lines in the Semi-Slav, and some spectacular games have been played in this opening. I can mention Kramnik-Anand from last year's world championship tournament in Mexico; Topalov-Kramnik from this year's Wijk aan Zee tournament, where Topalov sacrificed his knight on f7; and Kramnik-Aronian from the same tournament. In fact all the games are from 2006, 2007 and 2008.



The majority of ChessBase opening DVDs are geared towards players rated between 1300 and 2100; however, this new series targets very strong players. The DVD has nineteen video segments: an intro,

seventeen game segments and one wrap-up. The opening arises after 1 d4 d5 2 c4 c6 3 Nf3 Nf6 4 Nc3 e6 5 Bg5 h6 6 Bh4 dxc4 7 e4 g5 8 Bg3 b5.



The presentation is very theoretical, yet Kasimdzhanov spends a considerable amount of time explaining the background of the ideas, both short-term and long-term. This helps us navigate and understand these ridiculously complicated and otherwise incomprehensible lines, but I'm concerned about the durability of this product. You spend almost \$40 on a DVD with annotations to sixteen main

games (one game is featured in two segments), with a total running time of about three and a half hours, on a highly topical line where novelties happen all the time. Despite Kasimdzhanov's new ideas and analysis, the material will quickly be outdated and its relevance limited. Nor does it give you everything you need to play this line with confidence from either side of the board.

I honestly can't decide whether to recommend this DVD. It is clearly designed for a strong 2200+ audience, but I suspect this audience will not spend the money on a product of this nature.

My assessment of this DVD: ♦♦♦♦

[Order](#) *Anti-Moscow Gambit for Experts*

by Rustam Kasimdzhanov

Beating the Open Games (2nd Edition) by Mihail Marin, Quality Chess 2008, Figurine Algebraic Notation, Paperback, 332pp., \$34.95

Considering that the first edition was released in 2007, it is quite astounding that this one has an additional forty-four pages of material. When I reviewed the first volume in [November 2007](#), my conclusion was:

"I find this presentation valuable because all the relevant lines are discussed in detail, while the strategic, tactical and typical ideas are also highlighted, thus bridging basic awareness and detailed opening knowledge in one work. I am deeply impressed by the quality of the material presented in this book. Marin expertly guides the reader through intricacies that would otherwise be overwhelming.



"This book provides something for every level of player, from around 1500 to even strong grandmasters. If you play 1 e4 as white or 1...e5 as black, you will not regret purchasing this book, it is well worth it and then some!"

The same can obviously be said here, since it is the same book plus a good chunk more.

Buyers of the first edition shouldn't despair, because the publisher has generously allowed for the extra material to be available as a free [download](#) on their website. This is clearly a first in chess publishing: giving good material away free. So what on earth are you waiting for?

My assessment of this book: ♦♦♦♦♦

[Order](#) *Beating the Open Games (2nd Edition)*
by Mihail Marin

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