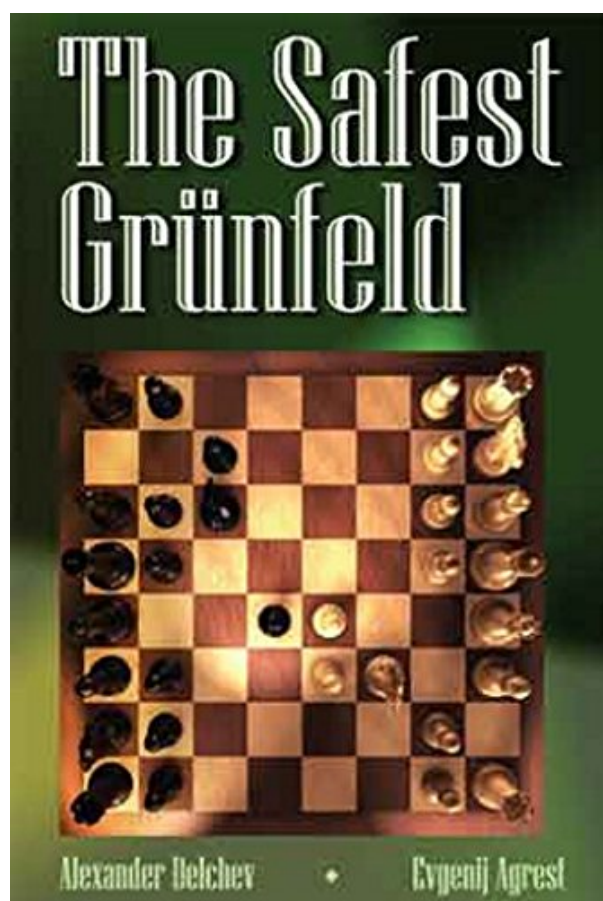


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The Safest Gruenfeld offers a complete repertoire for Black against 1.d4 and various Anti-Gruenfeld systems as 1.c4 Nf6 2.Nc3, 1.Nf3 Nf6 2.c4 g6 3.b4, 1.d4 Nf6 2.Nf3 g6 3.Nc3. The book follows Chess Stars trademark structure with 3 chapters in every part. "Main Ideas" aim to give you a succinct review of the theory and the basic knowledge that should you allow to start playing the opening without much study. They also give examples of middlegame plans and typical tactical motifs, to complement the "Step by Step" and "Complete Games" chapters.

- Sales Rank: #770820 in Books
- Brand: The House of Staunton, Inc.
- Published on: 2011-04-20
- Dimensions: 8.46" h x .79" w x 5.71" l,
- Binding: Paperback
- 348 pages

## Features

- Author: Alexander Delchev, Evgenij Agrest
- Pages: 348 Pages
- Publication Years: 2011

## Most helpful customer reviews

19 of 20 people found the following review helpful.

Great on ideas, flawed repertoire

By Roger Perry

Update January 2012

I have now had the opportunity to work with this book longer. Although it is strong on presenting IDEAS, the repertoire choices are at times unclear and unconvincing. To understand these weaknesses more I recommend reading the review on [...]. Even looking at my initial review you will see some quirky repertoire choices which can hardly be considered "safe". Because of the strength of the IDEAS I will leave this book at 4 stars, but it is not a MUST BUY.

If you read my review of Avrukh's twin volumes you will see that I also think he has some repertoire issues.

Surprisingly, against this strong company Yelena Dembo's slim volume (although a bit dated now), holds up relatively well for a lower Elo target market - although she has also made repertoire compromises.

Initial Review 2011

NOTE: Please see my comments on how I rated this book at end.

The Grunfeld has a proud literary tradition. Perhaps it is because of the clear strategic ideas, perhaps because of the forcing nature of the lines, or perhaps because of the continuous innovation since Grunfeld unleashed his idea against Alekhine in 1922. In 2011 we have two additions to the tradition, this volume by Delchev/Agrest, and Grandmaster Repertoire 8: The Grünfeld Defence Vol.1 by Avruk. I'll compare the latter in a later review.

Delchev/Agrest's book is aimed at normal players - say 1800-2200 Elo. Below that level I would not recommend the Grunfeld as an opening as the strategic ideas are complex (as a junior it took me 6 games before I won one); above that level players will find this book very useful but will need more.

Delchev/Agrest have structured their book around 16 parts - each part has a main ideas section, a main lines section in tree format, and a games section. Done poorly this approach can lead to duplication. Here it is done very well. The main ideas section first covers the positional aims. Openings must be understood before the lines are memorised, and these sections are essential. Second, the authors cover the main tactical motifs. This is an aspect not well covered in the tactical texts. Delchev/Agrest show the sort of positions where black can aim to exploit tactical means, or the sorts of positions to be wary of because white can exploit tactical means - important.

A summary of the recommendations for the main lines:

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Classical Exchange: Shamkovich's 10...Qc7. I was curious to see this 1960's favourite of Fischer resurrected. It has not been recommended since Adorjan/Dory Winning With the Grunfeld (Macmillan Chess Library) in 1987, and I thought it had been pushed into the background by Bf4 in the late 1980's. However the authors show how this can be met using their main positional ideas, and disagree on a key position with Sakaev { How to Get the Edge Against the Gruenfeld } who is the main authority on this line. As a back-up they offer Anand's 10...Na5 (well, Anand played it in his match with Topalov), also recommended by Dembo in Play the Grunfeld: Detailed coverage of this Kasparov favourite and provide a needed update.

Modern Exchange

- Eingorn's 8 Rb1: the declined variation with Chiburdanidze's 13...Bc7!? - I was really pleased to see this counter intuitive line recommended - most texts suggest the endgame variations. As a back-up they have 9...b6, which was also Dembo's recommendation.
- Karpov's 7/8 Be3: again Delchev/Agrest recommend avoiding the endgame.

Russian System: the semi-Smyslov with 7...Nc6. This has been the standard repertoire recommendation since Rowsen in 1999 { Understanding the Grunfeld }, followed by Dembo.

Systems with Bg5: standard 4/5...Ne4, but avoiding the sharp lines after 7...e6 with 7...0-0!?. As an aside, over the years I have found 4...Ne4 5 Nxe4 a surprisingly annoying line - I had a very good miniature win over Bruce Watson, but recently lost to Luke Li. This gets very little coverage, but neither has anyone else.

Systems with Bf4: standard mainlines. Note that Dembo (surprisingly) recommended 5 e3 00, allowing the gambit 6 cxd5 Nxd5 7 Nxd5 Qxd5 8 bxc7. Delchev/Agrest claim this leads to an almost certain draw, and thus return to the sharp 5...c5 as providing better winning prospects.

Fianchetto: the main debate in repertoire books has been when to play ...e5. Dembo delayed castling and started active play immediately. Delchev/Agrest hold back and play 8...00 and 9...Re8. This was also the preferred approach of Janjgava in 2003 in his book dedicated to these lines King's Indian & Grunfeld: Fianchetto Lines.

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Each part follows with a games section. Delchev/Agrest use this well, either to show the continuations of their recommended lines, or to demonstrate their back up lines.

I am a player in the target range of this book. I have been playing the Grunfeld since 1972, and this text gives me almost everything I need. I will use it as my main reference for the immediate future. If you are of my level, I thoroughly recommend Delgrev/Agrest.

The only remaining question is 4 stars or 5? I want to reserve 5 stars for the books that I have been most influential on me: Hartson's 1972 Grunfeld Defence (Chess); Adorjan/Dory's 1987 Winning With the Grunfeld (Macmillan Chess Library), Rowsen's 1999 Understanding the Grunfeld, and Sakaev's 2004 How to Get the Edge Against the Gruenfeld. However Delgrev/Agrest is a "complete" opening tutor, and if I am still using Delchev/Agrest as my main reference in 4-5 years time I will upgrade the rating.

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