

# Bookshelf

By Migry Zur Campanile

A question which I often get asked is to recommend bridge books to friends or pupils: this reflects the difficulty that most people have in choosing what is right for them amongst the vast choice available. I write vast choice but that unfortunately applies only to books in English. The small selection of books available in Hebrew does a great disservice to the otherwise high standard of the book publishing sector in Israel.

It is a fact that the great majority of bridge books sitting on the shelves of most players I know are in English: whether this is the reason for not having more books in Hebrew or it is merely the result of such a state of affairs, it is not clear.

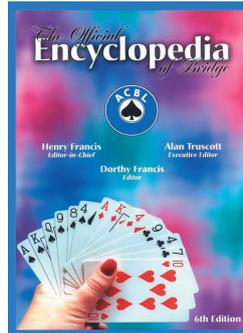
I strongly believe that until we can make available in Hebrew a good selection of those evergreen classics of bridge, in order to sustain and strengthen the interest of the budding bridge fan with texts of outstanding quality and readability, our efforts to further propagate this wonderful game of ours will be an uphill struggle.

From my little corner I can promise that I will happily review any newly published book in Israel. It is simply a matter of forwarding it to our editorial department.

The reviews published in this page will of course reflect only my personal opinions.

The ratings I give are connected to many factors: whether the book achieves the aim it sets out to, its readability, its value for money and the overall feeling one gets out of the finished product: its typographical vest, the cover, the clarity of the text and so on.

The prices are usually those indicated on the books themselves; we all know that they can vary enormously when we check out our local booksellers or online traders and wholesalers. All I can advise is to shop around and, if the online price seems too good to be true, always remember to factor in the delivery price and the eventual taxes in order to make an informed purchasing decision.



**The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge 6th Edition** by Henry G. Francis and Alan Truscott; Published by ACBL Inc; 1000 pages (54.95 USD)

**Target: Novice-Expert**

**Rating : 95/100**

The Official Encyclopedia of Bridge is an excellent all-round bridge reference. It has now arrived to its 6th edition and the editing team has put together a colossal effort to update the immense wealth of data it contains.

Well.. what is in these 1000 pages that makes it such a must for the keen bridge player ?

In short: it provides everything you could possibly want to know about bridge.

The great amount of information in this book is hard to imagine.

We have definitions of thousands of terms, descriptions of dozens of bidding systems, many hundreds of bidding conventions, a large section on card play (obscure coups, endplays, squeezes are provided and explained with diagrammed examples), rules (sometimes in great detail), hundreds of pages of history , and some fascinating trivia (kidnapping, murders, scandals, weird hands), and lots about tournament directing.

One of its most useful features is 57 pages of card combinations, like how would you play a suit of Q109xx (Dummy) and Axx (Declarer) needing four tricks?

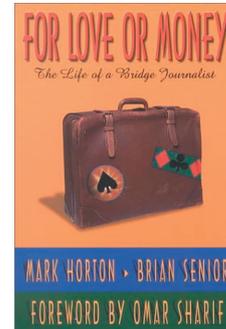
There are 168 pages of biography, 64 pages of major tournament results.

The book ends with a bibliography of thousands of bridge books to further wet your appetite.

Naturally even a weighty tome like this will unavoidably miss out a few names (for instance: mine, as you might have guessed!) but rest assured that if you ever had a question about bridge, the answer

is probably in here.

It is not cheap but it is the ultimate addition to everyone's bridge library, the reference book you will feel you can never do without. Thoroughly recommended.



**For love or money**

**The life of a bridge journalist**

by Mark Horton and Brian Senior; Published by Master Point Press; 190 pages (17 USD)

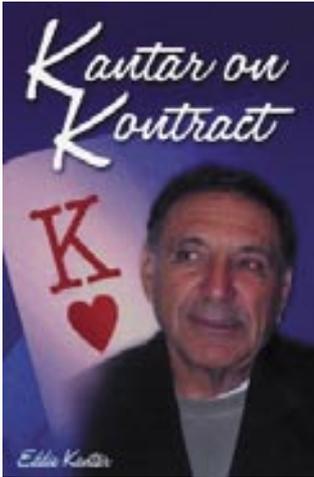
**Target: Intermediate-Expert**

**Rating: 85/100**

The great German chess player Siegbert Tarrasch used to remark that: "Chess, like love, like music, has the power to make men happy". Can bridge live up to the same challenge? The authors clearly think so and this book is their attempt to prove it.

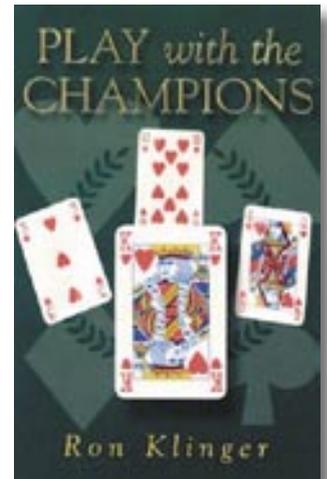
Brian Senior and Mark Horton are experienced international players, and also two of the world's top bridge journalists. In one capacity or the other they have attended every World Championship and major international tournament in the last twenty years. In this book they aim to share some of their unique insider knowledge freely interspersed with a nicely assorted set of stories and some well chosen hands to illustrate the tale. Their writing style is nothing short of sparkling and the book rates splendidly in the "what-shall-I-be-reading-at-the-beach" category. Because let us make something clear: this is not the kind of book which will turn you overnight into a champion; it is a nice, often funny and well written behind-the-scenes look at the life of two top bridge players/journalists, as we see them jet-setting around the world in search of stories and adventure. Do they do it for love or money - or is it something else? 17 USD later... I wonder.

## Bookshelf



*Kantar on Kontract* by  
Eddie Kantar,  
published by Masterpoints  
Press in 2004;  
192pp, 16.95\$  
Target: Intermediate-  
Expert  
Rating: 95/100

*Play with the Champions*  
by Ron Klinger,  
published by Batsford in  
2004  
176pp, 15.95\$  
Target: Advanced-Expert  
Rating: 88/100



**T**HE legendary Eddie Kantar has been one of the two most popular and prolific American bridge authors of the past quarter century (the other being Mike Lawrence), so I was really looking forward to reading his new book, *Kantar On Kontract*, a selection of his best pieces from some 40 years of writing on bridge.

The collection includes many great bridge hands, fascinating stories of life on the tournament trail, tips to help your game, including some examples of pitfalls to avoid with some of Kantar's greatest disasters at the bridge table. An example? Easy, the first catastrophe is on page one: Eddie Kantar and Paul Soloway are defending four clubs with a combined trump holding of six cards including AQJ98, and took one trick in the suit. Can you do better?

In addition we have perhaps the most famous hand ever played by the Italian great, Giorgio Belladonna, an example of how preemptive bids can provide a blueprint to declarer, why it isn't always a good idea to double a slam contract holding three aces, a trick hand that Kantar sometimes sneaks into his bridge classes, and much, much more, always magically brought to life by Kantar's breezy writing style that is both entertaining and instructive.

How does he continue to write such wonderful books, with the perfect mixture of humour and instruction? To complete the story the book comes with a great glossy front cover, excellent printing and font selection, and an optimal use of white space. A great read and thoroughly recommended.

**P**LAY with the Champions follows the true and tested format of the "bridge movie": what you get is one player's hand, normally from an important event, and the opportunity to face both the bidding and play decisions that came up at the table - or, if there was a blunder, the decisions that should have arisen!

Assisted by the author's masterly commentary and analysis, the book succeeds in its aim to help the reader think like an expert (hopefully not just for the duration of the book!) The one down-side to the layout is that on average each deal occupies over four pages. Thus you get only thirty-six deals in all despite the fact that the book runs to one hundred and seventy-six pages. Having said that, the author has made a good choice of material and in some cases the reader has the chance to play several different contracts, or perhaps the same contract but on a different lead, so the book does offer reasonable value.

Perhaps the other thing that may not be everyone's cup of tea is that you will encounter a good variety of bidding systems. The back-cover mentions that defensive problems are included, although they are fairly few and far between. It is, however, interesting to note the number of defensive lapses made at the table, proving that even international players are fallible, as readers of "The House of Horrors" know only too well! The other thing that struck me was that on more than one occasion the player who originally held the hand avoided a straightforward bid in favor of either a complex or undisciplined action.

All in all another good effort by the well known Australian author and one that is likely to add some precious insights to the reader's bidding and play.