

# Saint-Vincent, Aosta Valley (Valle d'Aosta)

GM Hon. **Enrico Paoli** just after his 95th birthday, then FM **Magnus Carlsen**, 12 years 2 months, GM **Viktor Korchnoi**, 72 years, and WGM & GM **Antoaneta Stefanova**, 24 years, all together in **February 2003** at **Saint-Vincent Open**, 186 players, incl. 39 GMs, 11 WGMs, 6 Elo Top 100. Clear winner: **Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu**, globetrotter **Sergei Tiviakov** best runner-up. More below! Romanishin, Bareev, young Vallejo Pons, Dominguez Perez, Volokitin, Radjabov, played in other editions.



**Saint-Vincent**, a small city of the mountainous **Aosta Valley** situated between in northern Italy which has hosted annually an **important Open Festival series** (record thrice (co-)winner is Sergei Tiviakov), the first **European Individual Championship 2000** (won by Pavel Tregubov), held yearly since then at changing venues, the Mitropa Cup in 1988 and 2001, the first three editions of the European World Senior Championships 2001, 2002 and 2003 took part in Saint Vincent, Aosta Valley, the **World Senior Championship 2006 in Arvier, Aosta Valley**, (won by Viktor Korchnoi, his first and his only entry at age of 75), the **European Club Team Championship 2005**, the European Union Championship 2007 (Nikola Sedlak won), then the Francophone Championship in 2009, and **several national Italian Championships**.

Sponsored by the Region and the Municipality. **Agostino Scalfi** as the main event organizer.

Tourism: <http://www.lovevda.it/en/database/3/tourist-resorts/aosta-valley/saint-vincent/424>

The **Aosta Valley** is an **Alpine valley** which with its tributary valleys includes the Italian slopes of → **Mont Blanc**, → **Monte Rosa**, **Gran Paradiso** and the → **Matterhorn**; its highest peak is **Mont Blanc** (4,810 m or 15,780 ft). This makes it the highest region in Italy ([list of Italian regions by highest point](#))

The **Aosta Valley** (*Valle d'Aosta* or *Val d'Aosta*) is thus a mountainous region in northwestern **Italy**. It is bordered by **Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes**, **France**, to the west, **Valais**, **Switzerland**, to the north, and by → **Piedmont**, **Italy**, to the south and east. The regional **capital** is → **Aosta** (Quotation from Wikipedia)

**The winners of the traditional Open tournaments are (if shared, best on tie-break first):**

**1987** (2nd, held in October) IM **Fernando Braga**, mostly national as the first edition (data n/a)

**1988** (3rd, now usually held in December) **Guillermo Garcia González** (Cuba) on tie-break,

**Roman Hernandez Onna** (Cuba), IM **Fernando Braga** (Argentine born, Italian from 1984)

**1989** (4th) IM (later GM) **Michele Godena** (Bareev joint runner-up, FIDE Campomanes at 3/9)

**1990** (5th) **Margeir Petursson** on tie-break, **Van der Sterren** (incl. Flear, Gallagher, Sadler, Garcia Palermo, Gheorghiu, Palac, Cebalo, Gaprindashvili, Arakhamia, 110 players in A-section)

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**1998** (6th edition, now usually held in February, after a pause of eight years) **Robert Zelcic** (incl. Franco Ocampos, Miladinovic, Cebalo, or young Vallejo Pons, 71 players, none at Elo 2600+)

**1999** (7th) **Nigel Davies** (GM in 1993) on tie-break, IM **Ennio Arlandi**, IM **Renzo Mantovani**

**2000** (8th) **Igor Novikov** on tie-break, **Yuri Razuvaev**, **Dimitri Komarov**, **Hichem Hamdouchi**, **Sergei Tiviakov**, **Josif Dorfman**, **Vladislav Nevednichy** (7 grandmasters shared first place!, incl. Romanishin, Franco Ocampos, Davies, Flear, Godena, Zelcic, or Nana Ioseliani, 112 players)

**2001** (9th) IM (later GM) **Dmitry Jakovenko** on tie-break, **Walter Arenciba Rodriguez** (incl. Milov, Lputian, Palac, Rogers, Romanishin, rising Radjabov, Stripchenko, Arakhamia-Grant)

**2002** (10th) **Vladimir Malakhov** on tie-break, **Vladimir Epishin**, **Andrei Volokitin** 15½ young, but already a grandmaster, **Sergei Tiviakov** (incl. top-seeded Sutovsky, Jakovenko, M. Gurevich, Acs, Palac, Cebalo, Godena, Flear, young Dominguez Perez, Rogers, Skripchenko, 174 players)

Viktor Korchnoi and young Magnus Carlsen in the Aosta Valley (record number of participants): **2003 (11th) Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu** as clear first at 7.5/9, **Viktor Korchnoi** shared 5th at 6.5/9; FM **Magnus Carlsen**, born 1990, at 5/9 (a few months later in 2003 he got the IM title, GM 2004), his father Henrik Carlsen at 3.5/9, **Enrico Paoli** (born in January 1908, playing competitively chess at 95 years), scoring also 3.5/9. In total 186 players (six of Elo Top Hundred, 39 GMs, 11 WGMs), incl. Tiviakov (runner-up on tb), Azmaiparashvili (top seeded), Nevednichy, M. Gurevich, Volkov, Baklan, Atalik, Golod, Palac, Zalcic, Miladinovic, Naumkin, Cebalo, Godena, Bauer, young Jones, Glenn & Christine Flear, **Antoneta Stefanova** (women's no. 2, and already a male gm), Ketevan Arakhamia-Grant, Almira Skripchenko, young Elisabeth Paehtz, Elena Sedina, Jovanka Houska, Margarita Voiska, and Masha Klinova, WGM and IM from Israel, the best woman in this Open.

Inspirational game: [Zalcic vs Ibrahimov \(2003\) Valle d'Aosta op 11th \(365chess.com\)](#)

IM (later GM) Rasul Ibrahimov (AZE) made a gm norm during that Open tournament

Gender battle: [Magnus Carlsen vs Antoaneta Stefanova \(2003\) \(chessgames.com\)](#)

Gender battle: [Ketevan Arakhamia-Grant vs Viktor Korchnoi \(2003\) \(chessgames.com\)](#)

Masterpiece by the winner: [Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu vs Sergey Volkov \(2003\) \(chessgames.com\)](#)



Nisi: Everything under control. Photo: bestofchess

**Liviu-Dieter Nisipeanu, Romania, since 2014 playing for Germany. Born 1976, GM 1997. Romanian Champion three times in 1993, 1996, and 2002, also German Champion in 2017.**

**European Individual Champion in Zegrze, Poland 2005. FIDE World Championship semi-finalist in Las Vegas 1999, eliminating Ivanchuk and Shirov; to succumb to the eventual winner, Khalifman.**

Co-winner Pune GMT, India 2004, and Bosna Sarajevo 2006; won Saint-Vincent Open 2003 & 2004, won Sants in Barcelona 2005 & 2018 in play-off, won Pardubice Czech Open 2013 on tb & 2014, won Doeberl Cup (Open) 2014 in Canberra, Australia on tb, won Benasque 2021, among others.

*In Sofia, M-Tel 2007 Masters, 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> at 5/10 (with Mamedyarov, Kamsky, Sasikiran; Topalov won). Played all Aerosvit 2006 – 2008, played at Kings in Romania 2009 – 2013, and 2018 (Rapid & Blitz). Played in Dortmund 2015 (=2<sup>nd</sup> with So, above 4. Kramnik; Caruana won), 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019.*

*Invited multiple times in the **B**-group at Wijk aan Zee, but never played in the A-group there.*

Nisipeanu surpassed the 2700 Elo barrier once, in Oct-Dec 2005 (FIDE quarterly list) at 2707 Elo, his peak ranking is no. 15= (cp. Florin Gheorghiu: peak nominal rating 2605 Elo, no. 10 in 1980).

Nisipeanu wins outright a second in a row (Paoli participated again, he died a year later in 2005):  
**2004 (12th) Nisipeanu** at 7.5/9, M. Gurevich best second on tb (162 players, without Mag & Vic)

**2005 (13th, in April, Arvier) Carlos Garcia Palermo** (Italy, originally from Argentina), 54 players

**2006 (14th, in October) Sergei Tiviakov** as clear first at 8.5/9, Epishin sole second, only 43 players



Globetrotter GM Sergej Tiviakov: Record thrice (co-)winner at the Aosta Valley Open in 2000 (shared), in 2002 (shared), and again in 2006 (outright). Photo: Alchetron

#### **Main sources:**

FIDE Elo list January-March 2003: [Top 100 Players January 2003 FIDE Top players archive](#)

In FIDE, Magnus Carlsen (Elo 2357) is indicated as “f” = FIDE Master, his father Henrik Carlsen is untitled, Magnus achieved 4/8 points against rated opponents (FIDE link), 5/9 points in total, gaining 13.2 Elo; compare organizer web. Viktor Korchnoi (Elo 2642) scored 6.5/9 points vs. an average of 2475 Elo, that meant +0.2 Elo. Korchnoi and Carlsen did not play each other, they met later, Magnus then a gm at Elo 2581, Viktor at Elo 2601

2003 Open: [https://ratings.fide.com/tournament\\_report.phtml?event16=25061&t=Array](https://ratings.fide.com/tournament_report.phtml?event16=25061&t=Array) (FIDE)

2003 Open: <http://theweekinchess.com/html/twic432.html#7> (TWIC)

2003 Open: [http://www.torneionline.com/loto\\_tornei\\_d.php?codice=2003XAO12&tipo=1](http://www.torneionline.com/loto_tornei_d.php?codice=2003XAO12&tipo=1) (FSI)

2004 Open: [https://ratings.fide.com/tournament\\_report.phtml?event16=37291&t=0](https://ratings.fide.com/tournament_report.phtml?event16=37291&t=0) (FIDE)

2004 Open: <http://theweekinchess.com/html/twic484.html#8> (TWIC)

2004 Open: [http://www.torneionline.com/loto\\_tornei\\_d.php?codice=2004XAO05&tipo=1](http://www.torneionline.com/loto_tornei_d.php?codice=2004XAO05&tipo=1) (FSI)

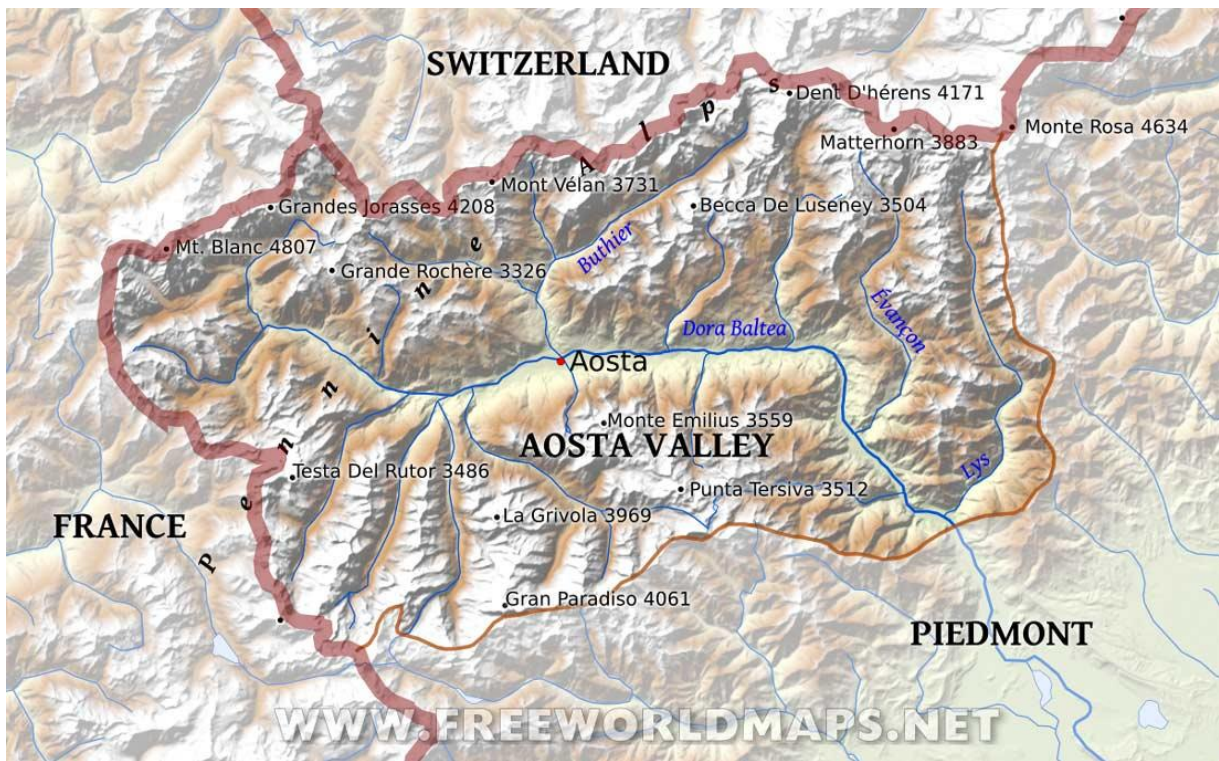
#### **Overall year-by-year survey of the Saint-Vincent, Aosta Valley Open Festival series:**

[http://www.torneionline.com/loto.php?path=albi/06\\_Grandi\\_Tornei\\_e\\_Festival/&link=93\\_Valle\\_d\\_Aosta.htm](http://www.torneionline.com/loto.php?path=albi/06_Grandi_Tornei_e_Festival/&link=93_Valle_d_Aosta.htm)

**Lifetime overview of Paoli's tournaments:** [FSI - Federazione Scacchistica Italiana \(torneionline.com\)](#)

Wikipedia entry of Paoli in Italian language: [Enrico Paoli - Wikipedia](#)





Source and further informations: [Region of Aosta Valley - Italia Mia](#)

(quote) «As skiing and walking country, Valle d'Aosta is unsurpassed. Fringed by Europe's highest mountains, Mont Blanc, the Matterhorn and Monte Rosa, veined with valleys and studded with castles, Valle d'Aosta is very picturesque. The central Aosta valley cuts right across the region, following the River Dora to the foot of Mont Blanc on the French border.

Valle d'Aosta is the least Italian of all the Italian regions. Its landscape and architecture are Swiss, the official language is French, and in some valleys the locals, whose ancestors emigrated from Switzerland, still speak a dialect based on German.»



The Church of San Vincenzo. Source: [Tour in Valle D'Aosta | Miraga Viaggi](#)





Aosta Valley in summer. Source: [Lago Bleu Valle D'Aosta Aostatal - Kostenloses Foto auf Pixabay](#)



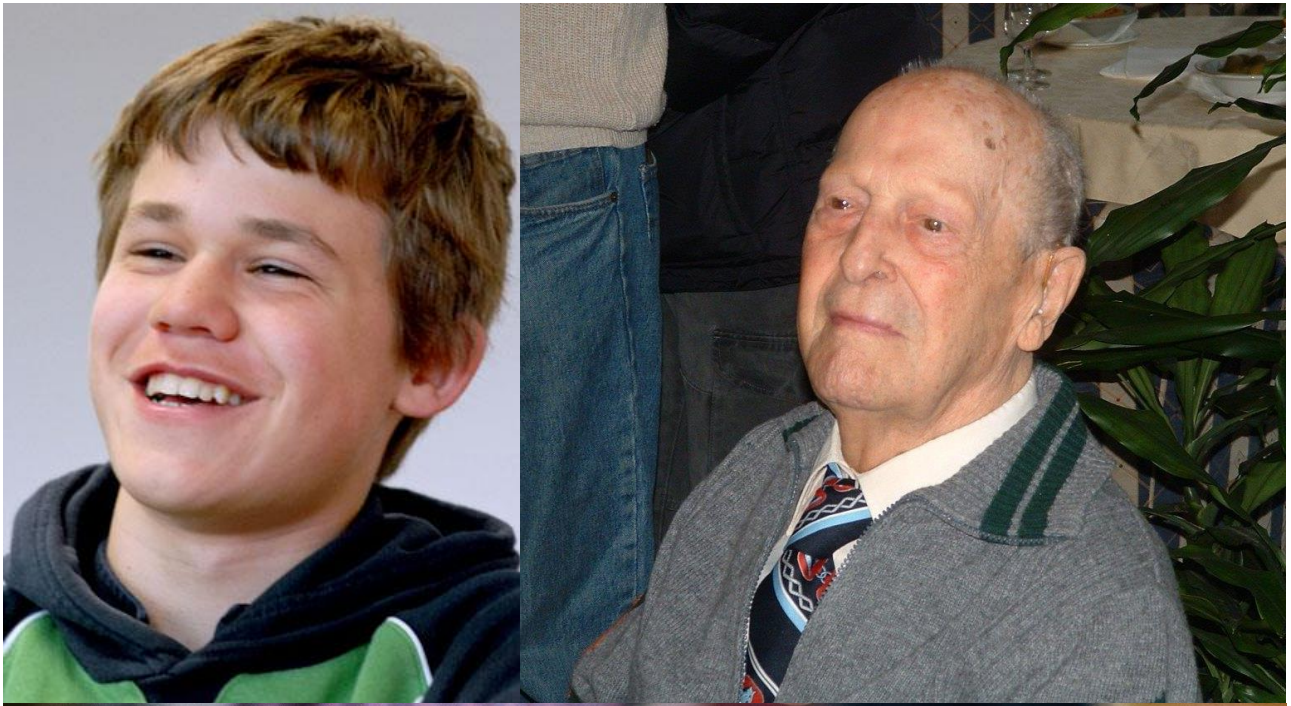
Aosta Valley in winter. Source: [Valle d'Aosta | Fotogalerie von Valle d'Aosta \(orangesmile.com\)](#)





Stefanova faced apprentice Carlsen at Aosta 2003 (career total: three draws). Photo: Chessblog.  
[chessblog.com](http://chessblog.com) - [Alexandra Kosteniuk's Chess Blog](http://AlexandraKosteniuk.com) (with an interview by Alexandra Kosteniuk).  
 Korchnoi, a very busy and successful septuagenarian player, in Elo Top 50 😊 Photo: KMO. Viktor's  
 next station: [Reykjavik Hrokurinn Invitation](http://ReykjavikHrokurinn.com), first round 18 Feb 2003, Aosta Open last round 16 Feb 2003.





A young Carlsen, Paoli in 2004, the winner Nisipeanu pictured in 2016. Photo: Andreas Kontokanis.  
Cp. Nisipeanu's arguably biggest career triumph: <http://www.olimpbase.org/ind-eicc/eur-2005.html>

(The picture gallery with Carlsen, Korchnoi, Nisipeanu, Paoli, Stefanova, and Tiviakov, is *not from Aosta*, but all participated in that fabulous 2003 Open. Trivia: Viktor Korchnoi played them all during his career)