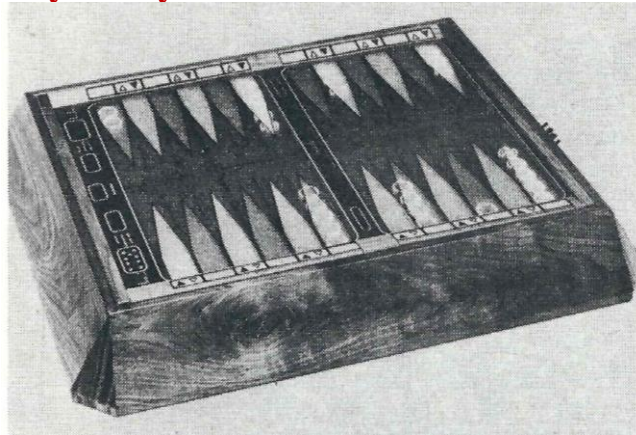


**06-1979 [P-4401] Applied Concepts - Aristotle (backgammon computer)**

All of Applied Concepts' and Chafitz's products have my attention. Many of those products came about through close collaboration. Toward the end of the 1970s, Chafitz (based in Rockville, Maryland) merged with Applied Concepts (based in Garland, Texas), and it can be assumed that the Aristotle backgammon computer also came about through this joining of forces in 1979. For my own convenience, I store all the products of these two companies in my database under the heading "Applied Concepts." For example, I previously made an entry about the rare chess robot Boris Handroid (prototype) and Boris Grandmaster (prototype). But what more or less managed to escape my attention is Aristotle. In Germany, this identical backgammon computer was sold under the name "Aristoteles." Aristotle (384 BC) was a Greek philosopher and scientist who is considered one of the most influential classical philosophers in the Western tradition. A new product like a very exclusive backgammon computer may well have a weighty name and so that became Aristotle.

**Offered by Sandy Electronic from Munich - Germany**



**Aristoteles – world champion backgammon computer from 1979**

**This computer defeated the backgammon world champion Luigi Villa 7:1 in Monte Carlo in 1979. After long negotiations, we were finally able to make this absolute top model available in a strictly limited edition in Germany. The elaborate manufacturing process and the workmanship in real precious wood with a special glass playing surface make this luxury model a rarity for connoisseurs who are prepared to spend more than 5000 DM (2500 €) on a very exclusive piece of electronic jewelry with almost human "intelligence".**

**Delivery is ONLY on pre-order. Long delivery times must be expected. The program was developed by the world-famous computer expert DR. HANS BERLINER in collaboration with KIM BRAND and PAUL MAGRIEL.**

**336 display elements (neon gas) replace the usual game chips, the dice are rolled electronically and the playing field is operated with 48 sensor switching elements. A further 17 switching elements are located on the central control unit. Score display with 3 digits.**

**Aristoteles first analyzes and evaluates each move before reacting in less than 1 minute, depending on the position up to 1 sec. depending on the position. Aristotle can play for both sides, against itself and normally against the player, and also makes move suggestions.**

**Dimensions: approx. 74 x 64 x 10 cm. Weight: approx. 16 kg. Price: approx. DM 5500.**

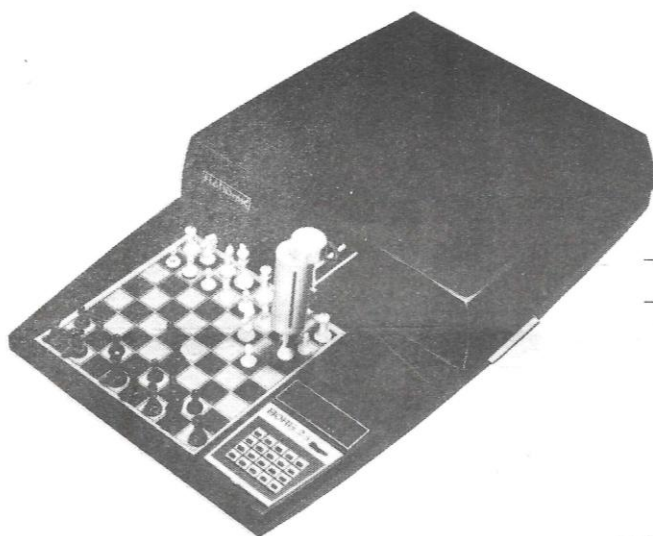
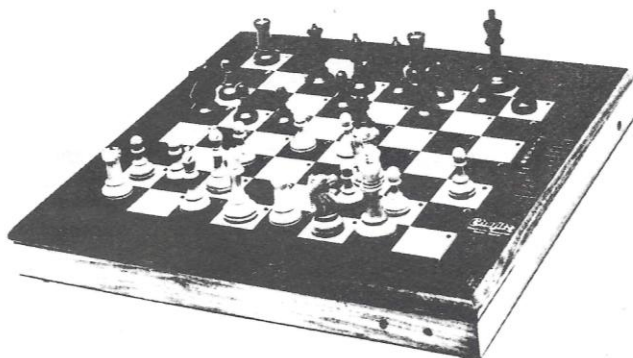
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DM 2.498,-

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 Dame Modul incl. Steine DM 498,-  
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### HANDROID

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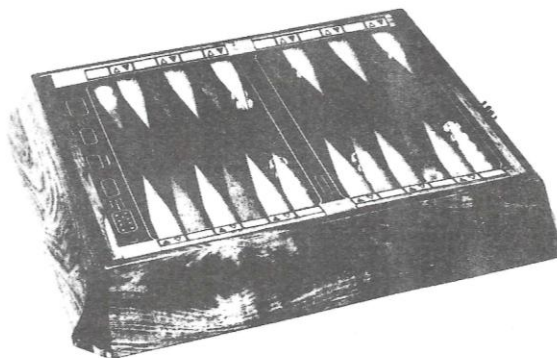
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 Schachmodul dazu DM 599,-

### ARISTOTELES

Der Backgammoncomputer der den Weltmeister schlägt.

- Luxus Casino-Spielmaschine, die auch in Las Vegas steht
- Über 300 Anzeigesegmente
- Handarbeit

Limitierte Auflage nur auf Vorbestellung



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Alle Angaben unverbindlich, Liefermöglichkeiten und technische Änderungen vorbehalten.

Clearly, the most exclusive computers were shown in one brochure! It is noteworthy, however, that the Handroid was said to be mass-produced. This has never been the case, and therefore seems more like wishful thinking. At the Aristoteles, one can read that this backgammon computer can also be played in Las Vegas. Most likely in some casino, and that proves that Aristoteles was actually produced and for sale! But the question is how many were made worldwide. In my opinion, I do not think more than 10 pieces, because the price for such a device was exorbitantly high. Still, I hope that one will be offered for sale someday, if only as evidence and for the pictures.

## It's Only Logical: After Electronic Chess Comes Backgammon

By Jerry Knight

At first there was only Boris. A nice walnut box, nothing fancy, but the best chess-playing computer that \$300 could buy. Steve Chafitz sold tons of 'em, literally, and spawned a Boris dynasty: a \$400 rechargeable Boris [HV: = **Boris Master**], a \$119 traveling Boris [HV: = **Boris Diplomat**] and an \$895 Boris Grand Master [HV: = **Boris Grandmaster - prototype**] that plays chess better than its grandfather and lets you cheat.



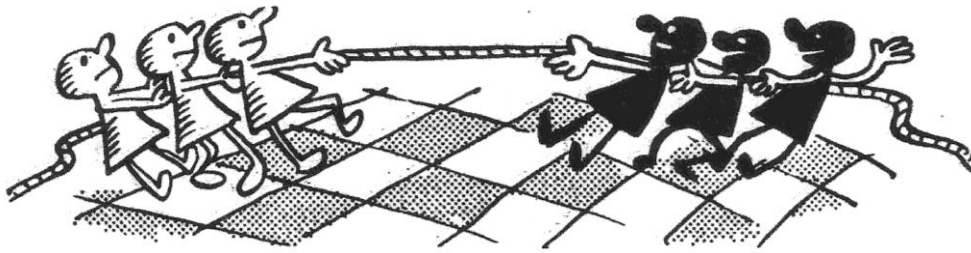
"THE POWER IS OUT ALL OVER THE NEIGHBORHOOD. LET ME GUESS, YOU WERE WINNING A GAME OF GAMMON ON THE COMPUTER?"

And now (while the calculator geniuses of Texas Instruments and the toy tycoons of Mattel are starting to sell their own Boris clones) the little Rockville company that brought you Boris is introducing **Aristotle**. [HV: In Germany this model is called **Aristoteles**.]

Aristotle plays backgammon. Not only plays backgammon, but plays it with enough class to qualify as one of the high tech toys that Neiman-Marcus will offer its customers next Christmas. Undeterred by Aristotle's shipping magnate price tag (\$2,500 retail) merchants from Beverly Hills to Broadway placed orders by the hundreds when Aristotle debuted at the Consumer Electronics Show last month in Las Vegas.

Between Aristotle and Boris, salesmen for Chafitz Inc. of Rockville wrote more business in 3½ days at the show than we did in the first 3½ years we were in business, said president Steven Chafitz. Chafitz and his wife, Arleen, went into business in 1971 dealing in used office machines. With the help of Boris and now Aristotle they are carving what be next year will be a \$20 million niche in the electronic specialty business. Though they sell video games and "dumb" electronic playthings at their store on Rockville Pike, the Chafitz specialty is making and selling "smart" electronics, games that have what computer people call "artificial intelligence." Nearly 1,500 retail stores sell Chafitz games.

The brains of Boris and Aristotle are electronic chips, the kind that run calculators, but the two Chafitz machines have learned their games from professionals. Aristotle's program is the effort of backgammon professional **Paul Brill** and Carnegie-Mellon University professor **Hans Berliner**. Boris' latest chess lessons were taught by Dan and Kathe Spracklen, whose \$5,000 home computer beat a million dollar Amdahl 470 V/6 in the North American Computer Chess Championship. But it is the marketing skill of Steve and Arleen Chafitz and their product development chief Dan Neumayer that is making Boris and Aristotle Millionaires. The couple started out buying old office furniture and selling it via the want ads, and loading up station wagons with old typewriters in New York and driving them back to Washington. On one such trip Steve saw his first pocket calculator. It cost \$400 and Chafitz bought it on the spot.



The next step was selling calculators at a discount, by mail at first and then from a tiny Rockville store. The couple learned how to market high ticket electronics and when Steve heard about some Texas computer specialists who had a machine that played chess, he went off to see it. That was Boris; the rest in the history of the chess computer business. Aristotle is the result of all that Boris taught the Chafitzes. The original Boris had to have its chess moves punched into a little calculator keyboard using the standard, but awkward chess code.

Opponents of the Boris Grand Master simply move their pieces across his electronic board. Boris flashes little lights to indicate his own moves. Aristotle works the same way, but is all electronic. To move a marker from one point to another the player simply touches the starting point and the destination and the electronic board flashes the moves and feeds it into the computer. The dice roll automatically and electronically.

Aristotle is good enough that beginning players will win only one game in 10 or 20 (mostly through luck) and even the best player will lose often enough to stay interested. Boris can be set to play at 10 different skill levels and in the top-of-the-line version has a reset button that allows up to three plays to be replayed. It's not cheating, it's teaching, insists Arleen, who designed Boris and Aristotle's cabinets. Players can also sharpen their skills (or turn chess and back-gamon into spectator sports) by setting the games on automatic and letting the computer play against itself,

Source: The Washington Post - July 4, 1979

NB: The 1979 Winter CES was held in January in Las Vegas. The 1979 Summer CES was held in June 3–6 in Chicago at McCormick Place. I have the impression that there is a mistake here. Thus, if one reads the article correctly, **Aristotle was not presented in Las Vegas, but in Chicago in early June 1979!** Traders thus had to pay \$2,500, for the purchase of Aristotle. The selling price then probably must have been about \$4,000, and the intention was to be able to sell them just before Christmas 1979.

With scores of electronic games on the market, selecting the one for you shouldn't become a guessing game. Choosing the best game can be easier when you know more about us.

## THESE GAMES THINK.

We're Chafitz, the company that has become the leader in developing games that do more than buzz, sing or blink lights at you. Our games are designed to think and play as if they were human. Boris, our chess computer, has already become the standard throughout the world. Our new chess computer game, Sargon 2.5, is so powerful that it defeated a 5 million dollar chess computing Goliath.

Chafitz's games are designed to provide challenge and excitement for all skill levels, beginners as well as Masters. Some of our games even talk to their human opponent with messages that advise you of a blunder or caution you of impending defeat.

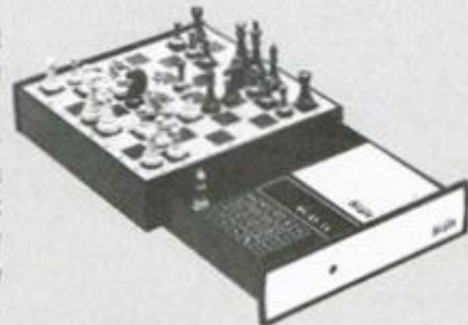
Chafitz is committed to producing the most advanced games possible and that is why we're constantly pioneering new programming breakthroughs.

A program developed for our backgammon game, Aristotle, was pitted against the current world backgammon champion. Aristotle clearly demonstrated to the world that Chafitz is Number One in computer games by defeating the champion 7 to 1 in a 7 point match. This is the first time ever that a world champion was defeated by a computer.

When you're ready to buy an electronic game, remember our name, Chafitz. We're the people who make the games that think.



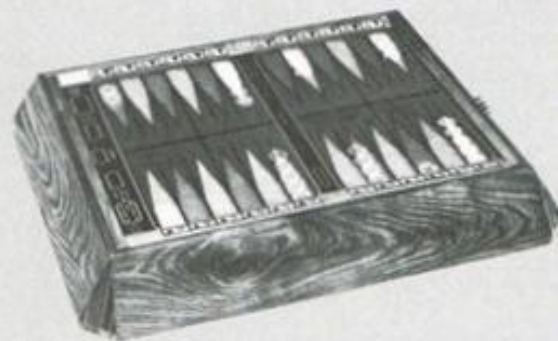
**AUTO-RESPONSE CHESS BOARD.** The ultimate in computer chess. Moves and responses are electronically indicated when player moves pieces on the board. Never a button to press.



**MODULAR GAME SYSTEM.** An exclusive Chafitz concept designed to never become outdated. Interchangeable modules allow continuous updating as new programs are developed. Modules will soon be available for a variety of board-games. Compact, battery operated and portable.



**BORIS DIPLOMAT.** The world's first battery operated portable chess computer. Designed for all levels of play. It is compact enough to slip into a briefcase.



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SEE THESE CHESS AND BACKGAMMON GAMES at major retailers and specialty shops worldwide. For further information and the name of the store near you, call or write: Chafitz, Inc. Dept. 783, 856 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Md. 20852 (301) 340-0200. In Canada call (416) 683-4555.

# Chafitz

© 1979

Here is a 1979 advertisement of Chafitz computers showing a young Robert Chafitz playing against the ARB Sargon. Notice that his position is hopelessly lost and he is about to be mated by the computer in 2 moves.

# COMPUTER CHESS

HARRY SHERSHOW – Dept. Editor  
MORRIS MILLER – Chess Annotator

## Chafitz' Big Move in Computer Chess

"Programmers specializing in the field of intelligent games are now learning how to avoid mistakes and how to cope with the complexities of producing games of intelligence." That was the bold declaration made recently by Steve Chafitz, of Chafitz Company, MD., at the Consumer Electronic Show in Chicago. "Our own programmers have already made those mistakes and traveled down wrong paths many times. Now they are well out of the woods and speeding down the road designing some of the world's most advanced and challenging games of strategy!"

The company's programmers had learned the art of squeezing every bit out of a byte, Chafitz added with his unbounded enthusiasm, and were now packing programs tighter than many experts ever believed possible. The result, he said, is producing the best intelligence-based games on the market.

He noted that most past developments in the field of consumer products (and specifically computer-related games including TV games) had been hardware related. Manufacturers had always relied on advancements in integrated circuit technology to improve efficiency of microprocessors which, in turn, improved efficiency of the final product. As a result, noted Chafitz, there had been a lag between new hardware advances and improved final products. "Software for these processors," he declared, "can now be developed quickly by our talented programmers. I feel confident in stating that our new software advancements are going to outpace the Industry's hardware advancements. It's this zero lead time in software programming that will keep the Chafitz company out in front of its competition!"

Chafitz also announced that his company had succeeded in gathering together the world's foremost pro-

gramming talent now in the electronic-game field. "There isn't a company in the world that has the resources that we now have on our programming staff," he declared. "Anyone can design a hand-held football or baseball game which is known in the industry as a 'dumb' game and which is basically a skill game of manual dexterity. However, 'intelligent' games like chess and backgammon require considerable programming skills. People will continue to play football games for solitary diversion. But once they have an opportunity to challenge an intelligent game they immediately acquire the competitive feeling of playing against another human."

Earlier models of Boris have performed unmatched chess-playing feats against programs twice the size of BORIS. Chafitz emphasized that it is this earlier programming quality along with the company's several years of marketing experience in the consumer electronics industry, plus its new crackerjack programming staff that will mark the Chafitz company as the leader in the growing game market.

Newly added to the Chafitz' programming staff are Dan and Kathe Spracklen, a well-known husband and wife programming team from California. This couple authored the famous SARGON chess program which was designed to run on a \$1,500 microcomputer. SARGON astonished the computer chess community when it defeated AWIT, on a \$5,000,000 computer at the North American Computer Tournaments held last December in Washington D.C. The Spracklens have significantly improved their winning program and now have their most advanced version running on the new BORIS. That was Steve Chafitz's major announcement. The computer-chess community is anxiously waiting to see how this compact-sized superior-playing \$375 computer will fare against the big machines in upcoming competition.

At the same consumer show, Chafitz also unveiled a superlative computer



Paul Magriel, current World Backgammon Champion, demonstrates Chafitz' new ARISTOTLE, said to be the strongest-playing computer backgammon device in the world. Heading the staff of people who wrote the backgammon program using a new concept was Dr. Hans Berliner, of Carnegie-Mellon. ARISTOTLE was scheduled to play the winner of July's Merit World Backgammon Championships in Monte Carlo.

### Chafitz' Big Move in Computer Chess

Source: Personal Computing Magazine – September 1979

backgammon game that is being added to the BORIS product line. World Backgammon Champion, Paul Magriél, was on hand at the Chafitz press conference to demonstrate the new backgammon game, ARISTOTLE. After the demonstration, Magriél noted that ARISTOTLE was the most advanced and intelligent computer game available anywhere at any price. Development of ARISTOTLE was said to be the result of a team effort by the most prominent talents in the field of A.I. Dr. Hans Berliner along with Kim Brand of Intelligence Systems, Ltd. pooled their talents with Paul Magriél as consultant to create what is now being called a "revolutionary product". Dr. Hans Berliner is a computer scientist from Carnegie-Mellon University. He earned his Ph.D. in Computer Science and is regarded as a world expert in A.I. relating to games of strategy.

The computer programming method which was developed by Dr. Berliner and which is lodged in a "knowledge-base" makes computer "thought" approach the function of the human brain. This feat is described as a significant breakthrough in Computer Science and specifically in A.I. And ARISTOTLE is the first consumer product to utilize this new programming technique. Chafitz says it has plans to use this "knowledge-base" programming

method in a variety of consumer products.

ARISTOTLE is so powerful that it was the only non-human invited to play at the Merit World Backgammon Championships in Monte Carlo this past July. Arrangements had been made for the emerging winner of the Championships to pit his strategy against ARISTOTLE. (If the match did take place, the outcome and action will be described in a future issue of PC.)

In addition to ARISTOTLE, Chafitz also displayed its new Modular Game System (MGS). MGS utilizes computer modules no larger than a cigarette pack to house programs. The new Chafitz System cannot become obsolete because its modules are all interchangeable. The System is capable of playing chess, backgammon, checkers or any other game of strategy. Upcoming modules will soon be available to instruct and tutor beginner players through various levels of learning in various complex games. Unlike TV-cartridge-games which require the use of television, the Chafitz Modular Game System is only 9" x 9" x 2" and operates on batteries. It has been designed to serve as a handy travelling companion. A memory storage feature permits a game to be interrupted, then resumed up to one week later.

Also pulled out of Chafitz' bag of new tricks was another chess-playing computer which is the closest thing to the perfect "non-human chess partner". This game, called an "Electronic Response Game Board", is a full-size chess playing board that electronically senses the movement of playing pieces. The game is also designed to play checkers or any other game requiring a 64-square checkerboard. The player merely moves his piece on the board and the computer, sensing the move, responds by illuminating small lights on the squares indicating its own response to the human's move. The human player complies with the computer's decision and moves the piece as indicated.

Chafitz, Inc. is a privately held corporation with offices at 1055 First St., Rockville, MD., a suburb of Washington, D.C. President Steve Chafitz with his wife (and Corporate Vice President), Arleen, launched Chafitz, Inc. in 1971 with their meager \$75.00 savings. Today, Chafitz has become a major influence in the area of Consumer Electronic Games. In addition to the manufacture and world wide distribution of artificially intelligent electronic games, Chafitz, Inc. also operates a unique electronics specialty center which serves the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area.

### **Chafitz' Big Move in Computer Chess**

**Source: Personal Computing Magazine – September 1979**



**September 1979: ...This game, called an 'Electronic Response Game Board', is a full-size chess playing board that electronically senses the movement of playing pieces. The game is also designed to play checkers... (The photo was taken by Ruud Martin at Heiko Berger's home in August 2025. The Avelan checkers program is rock solid.)**

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35	MODUL KRIEGSSPIEL	Spielmodul Schachvariante f. MGS	18	298.--
36	MODUL BORCHECK	Spielmodul DAME mit Steinen f. MGS	18	298.--
37	MODUL ODIN	Spielmodul REVERSI m. Steinen f. MGS	18	298.--
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39	Tasche	für MGS und ENCORE Geräte	6	68.--
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	BORIS 79 sol. Vorrat	Schachcomputer, Holzschatulle	6	498.--
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70	HAND ROID	ROBOTER für Schach und Dame	1	ca. 4000.--
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VERSAND und VERPACKUNGSKOSTEN ab DM 500.-- WARENNETTOWERT FREI

## Sandy Electronic Preisliste 1981

**For comparison for prices in Germany, Boris Handroid chess robot for DM 4000 and Aristotle backgammon computer for DM 5500 and a Sargon ARB chess computer for DM 2500. These were the exclusive top models of the time!**

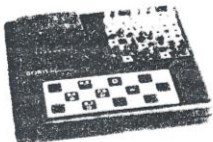


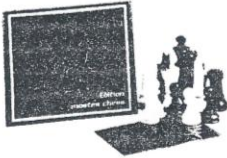
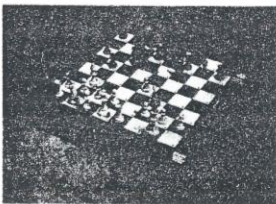
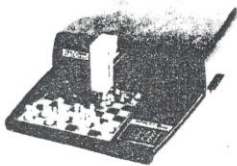
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## PREISLISTE 1981 – SCHACHCOMPUTER

Änderungen vorbehalten

		empf. VK-Preis incl. MWST.
	<p><b>SCHACHCOMPUTER BORIS DIPLOMAT II</b></p> <p>Geeignet für Anfänger und Gelegenheitspieler. Kein Modul erforderlich. Batterie-Akku- und Netzbetrieb möglich.</p> <p>Netzgerät für Diplomat II</p>	198,--  19,80
	<p><b>SCHACHCOMPUTER SANDY ENCORE</b></p> <p>Geeignet für Club- und Turnierspieler. Nachfolgemodell des CHAFITZ SARGON 2,5 bzw. BORIS 2,5. Modul bereits eingebaut (kann durch die Servicestelle ersetzt werden, wenn ein stärkeres Programm verfügbar ist). Inkl. Netzgerät. Akkubetrieb möglich.</p>	698,--
	<p><b>MULTISPIEL-COMPUTER MGS III Grundgerät</b> (ohne Modul)</p> <p>Nachfolgemodell des CHAFITZ SARGON 2,5 bzw. BORIS 2,5. (geeignet für sehr starke Club- und Turnierspieler)</p> <p><b>Das bzw. die für die entsprechenden Spiele notwendige(n) Modul(e) müssen separat gekauft werden.</b> Inkl. Netzgerät. Akkubetrieb möglich.</p>	749,--
	<p><b>MGS III m. SANDY MASTER Modul</b></p> <p>Schachmodul « SANDY MASTER » (Universalmodul)</p>	1098,-- 349,--
	<p>Schachmodul «GRÜNFELD*» (Eröffnungsmodul)</p>	298,--
	<p>Schachmodul «CAPABLANCA*» (Endspielmodul) lieferbar ca. Herbst 1981</p> <p>*Diese beiden Module sind für das Schachspiel nicht unbedingt erforderlich. Sie erhöhen aber die Spielstärke des Schachprogramms in der Eröffnungs- bzw. Endspielphase beträchtlich.</p>	398,--
	<p><b>SCHACH- UND DAME-COMPUTER ARB m. SARGON 2,5 Modul</b></p> <p>Geeignet für Club- und Turnierspieler. Mit Sensoren, kein Eintasten der Züge. Inkl. leicht auswechselbarem Modul für Schach und Netzgerät. <b>ARB m. 3000 Modul</b> lieferbar ca. Herbst 1981</p>	2498,--
	<p>ARB-Modul für Dame inkl. Steine ARB-Modul Schach 3000 ARB-Tragetasche m. Figurenfach</p>	2798,-- 498,-- 698,-- 148,--
	<p><b>SCHACH- UND DAME-COMPUTER HANDROID</b></p> <p>Der erste in Serie hergestellte Schachroboter, der seine Züge automatisch ausführt. Mit Sensoren, kein Eintasten der Züge. Inkl. leicht auswechselbarem Modul für Schach und Netzgerät.</p>	

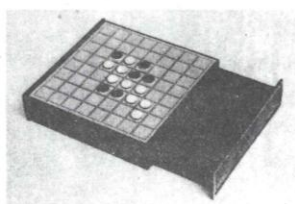
### Sandy Electronic Preisliste 1981 – Schachcomputer

Interestingly, however, the Handroid chess robot no longer has a retail price specified, whereas previously it was indicated that it would be a series production model...

# PREISLISTE 1981 – SPIELCOMPUTER

Versand ab DM 500,-- EK Wert frei,  
darunter zzgl. P/V

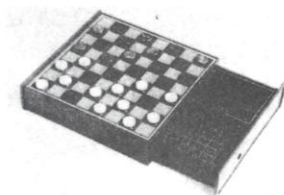
empf. VK-Preis  
incl. MWSt.



## REVERSI COMPUTER ODIN ENCORE

Auf den hohen Spielstufen für  
Menschen praktisch unschlagbar.  
Modul bereits eingebaut.  
Inkl. Netzgerät. Akkubetrieb möglich.

598,--



## DAME-COMPUTER BORCHECK ENCORE

Auf den hohen Spielstufen für  
Menschen praktisch unschlagbar.  
Modul bereits eingebaut.  
Inkl. Netzgerät. Akkubetrieb möglich.

598,--

Alle hier aufgeführten Spiel-  
module lassen sich für die  
früher gelieferten Computer-  
modelle «CHAFITZ  
SARGON 2,5 MGS»,  
«BORIS 2,5 MGS» und  
«MODULAR GAME SYSTEM»  
verwenden.

## MODULE FÜR MULTISPIEL- COMPUTER MGS III

Modul für LAS VEGAS (17 + 4)

148,--

Die Spielmodule können ohne  
Werkzeuge in wenigen Sekun-  
den ausgewechselt werden.  
Spielfläche und Steine  
(Figuren) für das betreffende  
Spiel werden mitgeliefert (falls  
erforderlich).

Modul für DAME (BORCHECK)

298,--

Modul für REVERSI ODIN

298,--

Modul für MONITOR  
(Schachvariante für 2 Spieler)

198,--

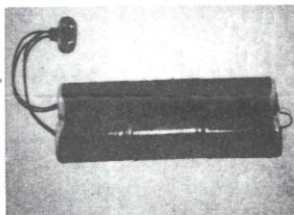
Nachfolgendes Zubehör ist für alle  
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**TRAGETASCHE f. MGS/ENCORE**  
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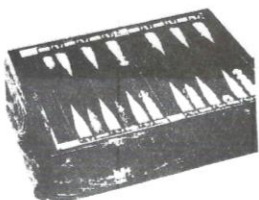
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**LUXUS-BACKGAMMON-COMPUTER  
ARISTOTELES**  
Turnier- und Übungsgerät für den  
ernsthaften Spieler.

ca. 7000,--

## Sandy Electronic Preisliste 1981 – Spielcomputer

**Very remarkable is the increased price for the Aristotle backgammon computer from DM 5500,-- to DM 7000,--! Especially also considering as we now know, that almost no copies were sold. Did this have to do with the sale of the last available ones?**

## Electronics Retailing Dynamo of the 70's Comes Full Circle with e-End<sup>USA</sup>

How did it all begin? Steve Chafitz talks about e-End<sup>USA</sup> and how the consumer's love for "anything electronic" fuses with the millions of tons of electronic waste ending up in the right place-reused and recycled.

**Interviewer:** Steve, Forbes magazine called you a marketing dynamo that "set up a business to bring American's ballpoint pens with built-in calculators, the first computerized chess sets and dozens of other gadgets." In the early 70's electronics were not as we know them today. Back then, you were an engineer for Gillette. Tell us what the electronics world was like?

**Steve Chafitz:** In the early 70's there really wasn't an electronics world at all. Most of the devices that people are familiar with today were mechanical. Typewriters, adding machines, even calculators were mechanical. When the integrated circuit was developed for consumer use, it changed the world-everything became smaller, lighter, and required less power.



**Steve and Arleen Chafitz, as appeared in the December 3, 1979 issue of Business Week. Do you guys see that too? Yes, you recognize that MGS Sargon 2.5 chess computer right away, of course, but that huge Aristotle backgammon computer you have to take in!**

**Interviewer:** You were quoted as saying "that large scale integration...shrank that 5 pound calculator to the size of a credit card, priced it for \$6...and put it into the supermarket."

**Steve Chafitz:** But even back then, the first calculator was not pocket sized, was not credit card size, it was maybe the size of a book. It took years for the technology to make the chip small enough and we are seeing that today with computers.

**Interviewer:** How did you and your wife Arleen create a cutting edge electronics retailing empire with just \$75.00?

**Steve Chafitz:** I've always been a tinkerer and I had an idea for an invention and I needed to use some space in an office machine dealer's store. I ended up running the store and selling used typewriters and adding machines and his business philosophy wasn't anywhere close to the customer service thoughts I had. So back in 1971, my wife Arleen and I found ourselves buying old machines, fixing them up and advertising them in the paper. When we got a call, I drove to the customer and showed the equipment out of the trunk of my car.

Later, I started traveling to NY to buy equipment and one day this man on Lafayette Street said, Stevie, I want to show you something. And he took out this little box that had display tubes on it that lit up when you pressed the buttons and it instantaneously divided 146 by 3 and you got your answer. Mechanical machines would literally take minutes to do that! I brought it back and started marketing them. I made a very small profit, sometimes just dollars, but I kept buying more products. The key was marketing and keeping up with the fast pace of electronics. I read everything I could.



**Customers line up outside of Chafitz's 'Space Age Fantasies'.  
As appeared in the September 1982 issue of Merchandising.**

**Interviewer:** By the 80's you had built the Chafitz electronics empire, with a DC metro "Space Age Fantasies" store and a very successful mail order business that was written about in Business Week, Forbes, the Washington Post, Time Magazine, The Wall Street Journal, Computer Merchandising and others. Your radio jingles were hummed on the streets of DC and you built an incredible following.

People lined up outside, came in limos, and called from overseas. It's hard to believe that early on, electronic board games were the wallflowers of the games industry. But by the 80's your company had pioneered the most advanced and intelligent computer games available anywhere, at any price. Highlights of the June '79 Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago read: "Chafitz corners the market on artificial intelligence." You actually had a stable of programming experts, tell me about that?

**Steve Chafitz:** Just to rewind a bit, one evening when I was home having dinner, I got a call from Bobby Fischer. He was excited about our electronic chess game "Boris" and I realized that if he was interested in our electronic chess game that there was a major market out there. We increased our development of electronic games and yes, we hired the brightest and the best programmers in the country to develop programs for our games.

**Interviewer:** Steve, you staged some pretty exciting events using Boris your computerized chess game and Aristotle your Backgammon game.

**Steve Chafitz:** Yes, our electronic games were the best on the market and our electronic Backgammon was the first ever to beat a world champion player. That was at the world championships in 1979 held in Monte Carlo. That was big news. And just like Bobby Fischer was interested in our electronic chess, the world Backgammon champion Paul Magriel was excited about our Backgammon game and he joined our team to endorse and showcase our electronic games.



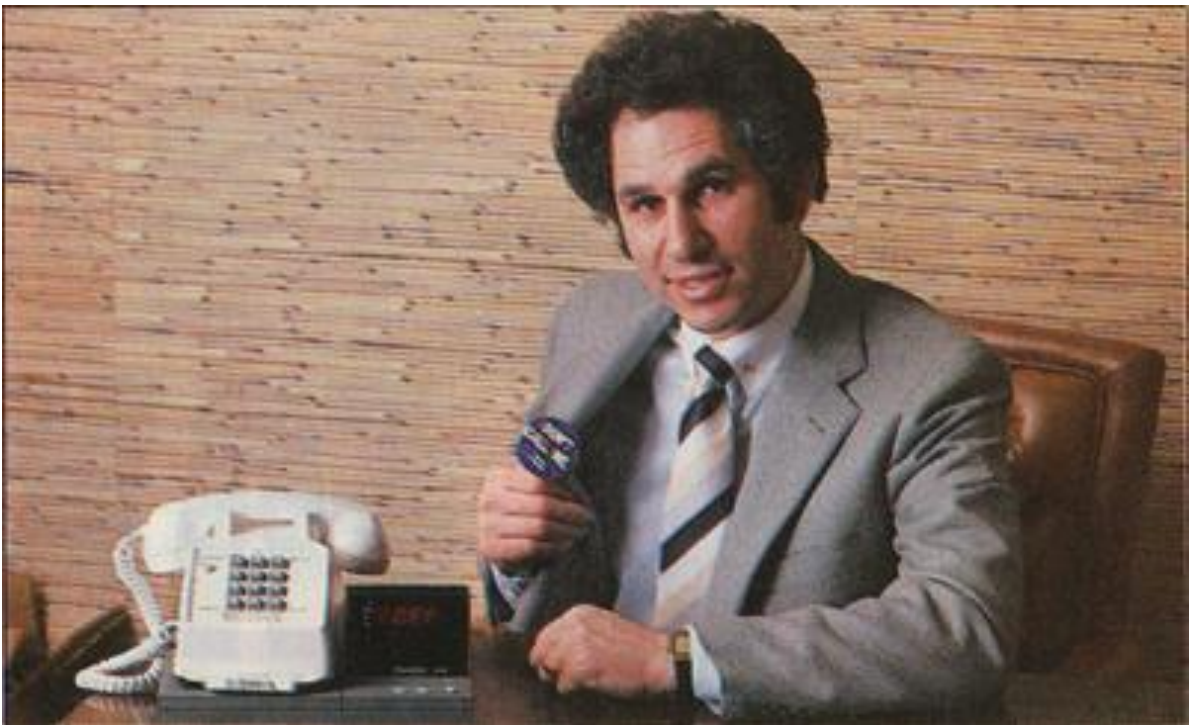
**Paul Magriel, former Backgammon World Champion.  
Magriel endorsed Chafitz's electronic Backgammon.**

**Interviewer:** When you started selling computers and consumer electronics you were chosen as an exclusive distributor by so many of the big manufacturers. Why did they trust Steve Chafitz?

**Steve Chafitz:** Simply, when we said we were going to do something, we did it. We made sure that all our business dealings were done honestly. When we marketed their products it was in the most professional way possible. We always did the best job we could and we created relationships.

**Interviewer:** Some of the headlines from the 70's and 80's are: "From 1 Man Show to Multi-Million Dollar Retail and Mail Order Electronics Business", "A Special Look at Steve Chafitz and his Personal Touch", and "The Personal Touch Pays Off."

**Steve Chafitz:** Yes, very personal and professional, that's how we built Chafitz, and my philosophy is still the same today. Recognize opportunity, creatively educate our clientele, provide the best service they can get and do it honestly, while always trying to exceed their expectations. "Integrity, responsibility and our love for nature has just compelled us to do the right thing."



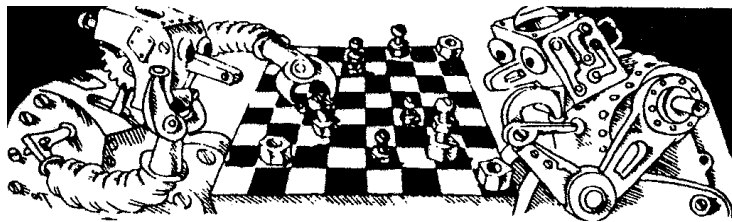
**Steve Chafitz, as appeared in the March 28, 1983 issue of Forbes.**

**Interviewer:** Yes, when I talked to people about Steve Chafitz, these same values and convictions kept popping up. The first was your ability to think ahead of the market and second, your concern and personal touch for your customers. In the early 70's you said that electronic devices would be created that were not in even in people's heads. Now you've looked ahead and started e-End<sup>USA</sup>, why?

**Steve Chafitz:** Arleen and I like to say we've come full circle. We obviously introduced a large variety of products which are commonplace today. Integrity, responsibility and our love for nature has just compelled us to do the right thing. When we saw how much electronic equipment was being discarded carelessly, it was shocking how it was hurting the environment and it was evident that the opportunity was there to be at the beginning of a new business wave. It gives us a chance to give back. Some of these products we helped create and we want to make sure that they don't hurt the environment.

**Interviewer:** The press carried legendary stories of fantastic customer service...fixing digital watches, serving customer's coffee, escorting them, and wrapping packages. This was first class wooing of customers, which was way, way ahead of it's time.

**Steve Chafitz:** That's how we stood out. The basic thing is you have to be responsive to the needs of the customer, you have to know a lot more than your clients about what you're doing, and you have to be transparent. If they have a problem, you say, that's not a problem; we're here to fix it. My philosophy is to always give them service above and beyond what they get with others and they always know that if we tell them we're going to do it, we're going to do it. Here's an example. A phrase used today in retailing which I coined was "counselors." At Chafitz we didn't have sales people. We wanted to counsel them, educate them, find out what would solve their needs and they would make the decision. At the time we called our sales staff "calculator counselors", since electronic calculators where our first major electronic product.



**Interviewer:** Steve, you began your career by educating people on new, interesting and unique electronic items, equipment people didn't even understand. Many people, corporations, organizations, don't have a concept of what to do or even if they should do anything with their end of life electronics. So once again, you've found yourself in a very specific spot in time.

**Steve Chafitz:** Yes, I know that there is a need for recycling and for destroying data, even if there weren't any legal regulations but most professionals don't have any knowledge of what to do. There's a difference between educating someone and trying to sell someone something. I like to think of myself as someone who can educate and solve problems.

When I explain what they need and the potential risks and problems if they don't dispose of their electronic waste properly, they are able to make an educated decision. And I'm a business man, the last thing I want to do is to get myself in trouble and I know other professionals don't either. Trouble comes when you don't dispose of obsolete electronics properly.

Something as minor as getting data taken off a computer which seems so innocuous can put a company out of business. I have to explain that carefully, they can have other people come and cart their e-waste away but I'm confident that my background, track record, reputation and the systems we've put in place, should convince them that e-End<sup>USA</sup> can do it better and safer than they or anyone else ever could.

**Interviewer:** Thanks Steve.

NB: This article was online for a long time (<http://www.eendusa.com/history.php>), but has been taken offline. Fortunately, I made a copy in time...

# SANDY ELECTRONIC

Postfach 440246  
8000 München 44  
Telefon 089/39 82 46

## ARISTOTELES - WELTMEISTER BACKGAMMON COMPUTER - DER SIEGER

Dieser Computer besiegte den Backgammon Weltmeister bereits 1979 in Monte Carlo 7:1.

Nach langen Verhandlungen konnten wir endlich erreichen, dass dieses absolute Spitzengerät in streng limitierter Auflage auch bei uns in Deutschland erhältlich sein wird.

Der aufwendige Herstellungsprozess und die Verarbeitung in echtem Edelholz mit Spezialglas-Spielfläche machen dieses Luxusmodell zu einer Rarität für Kenner, die bereit sind, mehr als 5000 DM für ein ganz exklusives elektronisches Schmuckstück mit fast menschlicher " Intelligenz " auszugeben.

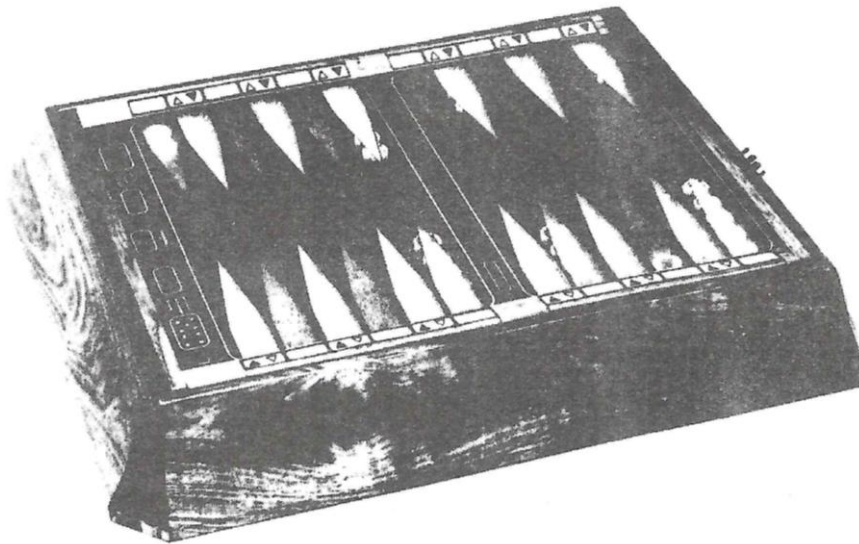
Die Auslieferung erfolgt NUR auf Vorbestellung. Mit langen Lieferzeiten muss gerechnet werden.

Das Programm wurde von dem weltbekannten Computer-Experten DR. HANS BERLINER unter Mitwirkung von KIM BRAND und PAUL MAGRIEL entwickelt.

336 Anzeigeelemente ( Neon Gas ) ersetzen die sonst üblichen Spielchips, gewürfelt wird elektronisch und das Spielfeld wird mit 48 Sensorschaltelementen bedient. Weitere 17 Schaltelemente befinden sich an der Zentralen Kontrolleinheit. Spielstandsanzeige 3 stellig.

Aristoteles analysiert und bewertet jeden Zug zuerst, bevor er in weniger als 1 Minute , je nach Stellung bis zu 1 Sec. , reagiert. Aristoteles kann für beide Seiten, gegen sich selbst, und ganz normal gegen den Spieler spielen und macht auch Zugvorschläge.

Masse: ca. 74x64x10 cm Gewicht: ca. 16 kg Preis: ca. DM 5500.--



## **Aristoteles – world champion backgammon computer from 1979**

### External Links

- <https://afflictor.com/tag/luigi-villa/> - Programming a computer to beat the world backgammon champion
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qDh3238nJRU> - 2006 World Backgammon Championships, Part 4
- <https://bkgm.com/articles/Bishop/ComputerBeatsChampion/> - Computer Beats Backgammon Champ
- <https://www.bkgm.com/articles/Berliner/ComputerBackgammon/index.html> - Computer Backgammon
- [https://www.chessprogramming.org/Hans\\_Berliner](https://www.chessprogramming.org/Hans_Berliner) - Hans Berliner
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luigi\\_Villa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luigi_Villa) - Luigi Villa
- <http://electro-gammon.net/chafitz-aristotle/> - Nice backgammon website!