

## VENEZIA – Venice survey by [Jan van Reek, endgame.nl](#)

The first series of international invitation Italian tournaments (before Reggio Emilia and later in the 1970/80s Rome were launched) has been played in Venice.

Preliminary events happened in 1929 (inaugural edition of the series) and in 1930 (five players, not numbered), then restarting in 1947, played annually the first four editions, afterwards held unregularly until 1974. Tartakower took clear first in 1947, O'Kelly and Canal joint runners-up, followed by Monticelli, and Grob (14 players).

Najdorf won ahead of Canal, Barcza and Euwe in 1948. Szabo triumphed in 1949 above 2. Rossolimo, 3. Prins, 4.-7. Golombek, Gligoric, Barcza, Foltys, 8. Paoli, 9. Kottnauer, etc. (16 players).

The tournaments were played in fine buildings each time. Venice 1950 became a great event: Kotov won before Smyslov, Rossolimo, and Pachman. Enrico Paoli won the brilliancy prize for a famous game he played against Soviet grandmaster Kotov.

→ Replay with background comments in Chessgames: [Kotov vs E Paoli, 1950](#).



Hotel Lido Tournament hall in 1929



Salone delle feste dell'Ala Napoleonica  
Tournament hall in 1947



Sala delle Colonne di Ca' Giustiniana Hall in  
1948, 1949, 1950 and 1953

In the next Venice edition in 1953 succeeded Esteban Canal, legendary Peruvian player domiciled in Italy (for a biographical portrait of Canal, see next page).

After a longer break, the event moved to the Casino Municipale in the 1960s. Ivkov won in 1966. A great Dutch success happened in 1967 when Donner surpassed the then *reigning world champion Petrosian*, who shared second place with Evans.

In 1969, Hort won two full points ahead of joint 2.-7. Robatsch, Taimanov, Tatai, Lengyel, Benkő, and Dr. Saidy, followed by 8. Matulovic, 9. Ivkov 10./11. Unzicker and Medina, 12. Paoli, 13. Zichichi, etc. (16 players). Browne took Venice in 1971, ahead of surprising Mariotti, surpassing amongst others Hort, Kavalek, and Gligoric.

The last winner of the major series at Venice was Liberzon in the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of 1974, winning outright, ex-World Champion Smyslov was clear runner-up in a field including Andersson, Timman, Savon, Suttles, Benkő, Tarjan, Bilek, and Ostojic (14 players).

**The event has been an elite tournament from 1947 until 1974.** The closed series definitely ended with a minor master in 1980, won by Karaklajic ahead of Nemet. Later Venice hosted small, national closed tournaments, and some Open Festivals.



Casino Municipale  
Tournament hall in 1966, 1967,  
1969, 1971 and 1974



Ca' Flangini (at the left)  
Tournament hall in 1980.  
(All photos taken from Jan van Reek, endgame.nl)

Albo d'Oro

*Preliminaries:*

**1 1929 Pitschak** In occasione del 6° Congresso della FIDE  
**1930 Miseses** (five players, not numbered in the series)

*Master tournaments:*

**2 1947 Tartakower**  
**3 1948 Najdorf**  
**4 1949 Szabo**  
**5 1950 Kotov**

**6 1953 Canal**  
**7 1966 Ivkov**  
**8 1967 Donner**  
**9 1969 Hort**  
**10 1971 Browne**  
**11 1974 Liberzon**

*Minor:*

12 1980 Karaklajic

Three World Chess Champions competed at Venice – **but all were not winning!** **Euwe** failed in 1948, **Smyslov** in 1950 & in 1974, and **Petrosian** as reigning WC in 1967.

Botvinnik, Tal, Spassky, Fischer, and Karpov as well as Korchnoi and Keres never took part at Venice.

Sources:

[http://www.torneionline.com/loto\\_albi.php?path=albi/06\\_Grandi\\_Tornei\\_e\\_Festival/&link=95\\_Venezia.htm](http://www.torneionline.com/loto_albi.php?path=albi/06_Grandi_Tornei_e_Festival/&link=95_Venezia.htm)

<http://www.endgame.nl/paoli.html> (historical survey by **Jan van Reek**, no longer available)

<http://www.kwabc.org/index.php/17-latest-news-and-reports/235-in-memoriam-jan-van-reek>

→ watch out <http://www.cci-italia.it/ving/ivoro.htm>, the first chess clock is invented at Venice in 1499



Esteban Canal, winner at Venice in 1953

Photo: <http://storiascacchi.altervista.org/storiascacchi/foto/canal.jpg>

Canal Esteban (19.04.1896 - 14.02.1981)

Peruvian Grandmaster Hon. (1977 at eighty-one years) and IM since 1950, born in Spain of a Spanish mother and a Peruvian father, he lived the youth years of his life in Peru but from 1923 onwards, Canal was domiciled in Italy. He died in Varese, Italy.

Champion of Leipzig in 1916. **Winner of the Hungarian Championship in 1933 hors concours\***.

**Best results:** **2<sup>nd</sup> Trieste Internazionale 1923** (Paul Johner, Switzerland, won the top group ahead of 2. Canal, then 3. Yates, 4. Tarrasch, etc.), = **2<sup>nd</sup> Merano 1926** (Colle won), **2<sup>nd</sup> Budapest 1932** (Maroczy won, international championship), **1<sup>st</sup> Budapest (international championship) 1933**, compare the footnote below\*, **1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> Reus 1936** (joint with Silbermann), = **2<sup>nd</sup> Venice 1947** (Tartakower won), **1<sup>st</sup> Reggio Emilia (Prequel) 1947**, 1<sup>st</sup> Bari (national) 1948, **1<sup>st</sup> Venice 1953**.

Canal played in one Chess Olympiad, representing Peru on board 1 at Dubrovnik in 1950.

\*Biggest success: From April 8-26, 1933, the 11<sup>th</sup> Hungarian National Championship was held in Budapest as International Tournament and won by Esteban Canal, who scored 10 out of 14 points, followed by Pál Réthy (9½), Andor Lilienthal (9), Lajos Steiner (8½), and Erich Eliskases (8). According to the French Wikipedia, Esteban Canal and Erich Eliskases played *hors concours* concerning the national title of the Hungarian Federation, stipulating that Pál Réthy was awarded as national champion of Hungary. Certainly, Canal was clear first in a very strong tournament.

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