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## *Antique Bakery*

by [Kat Avila](#)

*Reviews may contain information that could be considered 'spoilers'. Readers should proceed at their own risk.*

### **Publisher**

**Digital Manga Publishing**

<http://www.dmpbooks.com>

### **Credits**

Writer: Fumi Yoshinaga

Artist: Fumi Yoshinaga

Distributor: Digital Manga Publishing

Translator: Sachiko Sato

ISBN: 1-56970-946-7

### **Grade: 7**

*Antique Bakery* by Fumi Yoshinaga is centered on an unlikely trio of guys who staff a combination bakery and coffee shop, reminding me of similar places in Tokyo where I would park myself with a friend to sample dainty French pastries wrapped in foil. The manga cover is unique in that if you scratch the center strawberry it smells just like the pictured freshly made strawberry pie. On my copy the scent has somewhat faded, but you can still sniff it faintly.

The manga, promoted as a winner of the Kodansha Manga Award, opens up chaotically because all the characters are introduced at once in unrelated short sequences. It jumps from one character memory to another, one from 14 years ago, another from 13 years ago, and so on until the present

day. The main story starts on page 21. The diverse characters are linked to Antique Bakery as employees or customers, and gradually Yoshinaga reveals how the memories bear on what's happening now.

Mr. Tachibana, the owner, also serving as waiter and counter help, delivers flavorful monologues about the shop's tempting menu. Even if you don't know what a *fraisier* or a *choux* is, Tachibana will explain before you even ask the question. He is supported by an exceptional gay pastry chef Yusuke Ono and Ono's enthusiastic taste-tester and apprentice, the former world champion boxer Eiji Kanda.

"At our store, dessert presentation is complimentary for our dine-in customers," says Tachibana, highlighting the art of not only creation but food service. On page 55, former classmates Ms. Ito and Ms. Urushihara are enjoying an afternoon tea set with a sandwich of the day, pumpkin scones, and cake. You want to take a seat with them to marvel over the exquisite dishware and to help clean their plates.

Nicely drawn panels include detailed dessert snapshots throughout the manga. What a sweet display on page 41! An amusing contrast can be found on page 93 between a cake connoisseur's rare grin and the surprised look on his wife's face to see it.

Dieters beware! Really the best way to enjoy **Antique Bakery** is with a steaming cup of my favorite royal milk tea and a glazed slice of classic European cake.

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