2002 issue of Architectural Design faced just such a challenge, as it attempts to bring food and architecture together as mutually illuminating fields.

A Wiley-Academy publication, Architectural Design follows the formula of inviting a guest editor for each issue. Topics focus on architecture plus something else—Architecture + Art, Fame + Architecture; or on a specific aspect of architecture, such as surface; or on architecture outside of western Europe and North America. Over the years, the series has made valuable, much-recognized contributions to the literature of architecture. The lavishly illustrated publication is well designed, with striking color photographs and, in this particular case, few architectural plans.

Guest editor Karen A. Franck, Professor of Architecture at New Jersey Institute of Technology, defines the focus of this issue as “the public spaces of food that make up so much of the contemporary streetscape.” Along with several articles about restaurant design in specific places, the issue also includes studies of food created to imitate architectural forms, artistic presentation on the plate, working lunches, museum cafés, and city markets. Every reader, whether food historian, architect, or amateur, will have some familiarity with such topics, as we have all eaten in restaurants, shopped in markets, and therefore have a frame of reference for analysis—in short, every reader has some claim to be a critic.

Many of the authors don’t seem to have kept this in mind, as they present their ideas as if to an audience completely unfamiliar with the places described or with general food history—perhaps to someone from the planet Mars. In Franck’s all-too-summary historical introduction, the text is too brief to really be illuminating, and many readers may quarrel with the selection of turning points. Gabrielle Esperdy’s essay on markets includes a discussion of the redevelopment of Faneuil Hall in Boston; while this is a well-chosen example of a market redesigned and reinvented, the author does not add anything substantial to the many articles that have already appeared in general-interest publications. The articles describing notable restaurant designs in New York, London, Sydney, and Tokyo don’t tell us enough about why certain contemporary restaurants were selected and others not; while reading, it seems impossible not to develop a mental list of other restaurants that could have been substituted for the ones selected. In short, most readers will want more detail, more meat, to support the choices made and the ideas presented by the authors.

The selection of cities and restaurants also feels conventional and elitist. An article on new restaurants in smaller cities that have had a recent architectural renaissance (such as Manchester, England) or restaurants built on alternative traditions, such as the innovative (and beautifully designed) upscale soul food restaurants in the United States might have offered a good balance to the presentation of places in major urban centers. Also, some of the premises presented as universal truisms seem strange; writing about museum restaurants, Stephen Marc Klein begins by explaining that in a museum “we expect beauty, certainty, truth.” Not so, in a whole range of museums.

More successful are the articles that focus on specific individuals or topics. Helen Castle’s interview with Alan Yau, the innovator behind Wagamama and several other restaurants in London, offers insight into how this entrepreneur brings together ideas from such disparate sources as the fast-food concepts of McDonald’s to holistic and healthy ideas about eating from the Far East. A solid series of single-page presentations about particular restaurants in the highlighted cities also offers insight into certain architects and their approaches. Sarah Wiggleworth’s essay comparing similar terms used to describe processes in architecture and cooking opens the door to a deeper look at how both architects and chefs share vocabulary—think about cutting, grinding, and slicing—and Mark Morris’s article on edible architecture—largely desserts—presents some spectacular examples, though unfortunately too many of the photos are from one particular chef.

Food + Architecture is ultimately café reading, targeted more for architects than for culinary historians, an enjoyable entrée (in the French meaning of first course), presented in a well-designed format with dramatic photographs. The photographs do a lot to make one want to see the various restaurants discussed, and maybe even stay for a meal—thus perhaps stimulating our appetite for a richer dialogue across disciplines. A future issue, with writers from both architecture and food studies working together, could go deeper into the topic and give us even more food for thought.

—Gwendolyn Owens, Canadian Centre for Architecture

Fried Butter: A Food Memoir
Abe Opincar
165 pp. $18.00 (cloth)

A few years back the New Yorker ran a memorable cartoon. If memory serves, a woman is carrying a tray loaded with steaming platters into her dining room. Her husband—or perhaps a child, I don’t quite recall—greets her: “What, food as a metaphor for love again?”
That cartoon came often to mind as I read Abe Opincar’s *Fried Butter*, a collection of short essays, most of which he originally published (under the pseudonym of Max Nash) for the *San Diego Reader*, the usual venue for his work. Opincar prefaces his book with a citation from the Babylonian Talmud in praise of garlic: its ability to sate the hungry and warm the chilled, its potency in arousing love and desire and in eliminating jealousy. Thus he deftly introduces the themes that run through these feuilletons: Jewish traditions and lore, sexuality, filial love and romantic love and friendship, passion and guilt.

Opincar is a journalist, and he knows how to bait a hook. The first chapter opens, “I baked a chicken the night I left my wife” (p. 1). Another chapter, equally tantalizing, begins, “Rain and waiting come to mind whenever I taste black radishes.” In neither case does Opincar spell out the precise connections, but he trusts his readers to understand, telling the stories that follow these seductive opening lines in a ruminative voice that amply suggests emotional substrata. He accepts his failure to make his wife happy with resignation and sadness; he recognizes with gratitude that the contours of his mother’s life, filled with housewifely chores when he was young, constituted not constraints but demonstrations of love. Brutal time strips his aunt of her lucidity, an old friend of his memory, but amid their disorientation each retains the taste of love, in his aunt’s case the Romanian *mamaliga* (cornmeal) prepared according to the ways of her beloved late husband, in his friend’s the wretched stew prepared by his wife as a bride a half-century earlier.

Often Opincar’s tales involve places he has lived or visited—France, Mexico, Japan, England, Israel—where the foods he ate served as guideposts to customs and culture. He recalls with rueful humor the tuition he, a barbarous California teenager, received from a wealthy Bordeaux family with whom he spent a year: how to speak proper French, of course, but equally, how to wield cutlery appropriately. On display at an elaborate Sunday dinner toward the end of his stay, he did his hosts proud—until the peach he attempted to peel popped out from under his knife and fork, sailed into an adjacent crystal goblet, and spewed a flood of rich red wine all over the damask tablecloth. In Manchester the vegetarian parents of a girlfriend proselytized with such fervor, and plied him with such largesse (“Had I, on all fours, grazed an entire meadow, I couldn’t possibly have consumed more fiber than was contained in one bowl of Leorah’s mother’s museli” (p. 68)) that he felt a kinship with the innocent lambs against whose slaughter his host fulfilled.

From Opincar’s scholarship, presented without pedantry, we learn the varied nomenclature and history of turmeric and basil, of saffron and avocados and chorizo. We learn that Christians incorporated into their anti-Semitic stereotypes the Jewish prohibition against pork: they claimed that Jews ate no pork because they were “pigs in disguise,” whence the term “Marranos” (swine) for Jews forced to convert to Christianity in fifteenth-century Spain, and the medieval image of the *Judensau* (Jew Pig) that became popular in German-speaking lands. We learn how “something that tastes sweet in one person’s mouth, in another person’s mouth can taste so bitter” (p. 110): because of history, like the famines recalled by a Chinese friend whose American husband cannot understand her aversion to the yams she once survived on; because of love destroyed, because of faith betrayed.

*Fried Butter* is not a young man’s book; memoirs rarely are. With a wary if hopeful eye on the future, Opincar has learned to savor the past, its gains and losses, and to share those memories with us in an often elegiac and occasionally poignantly evocative tone that serves well this lovely, evocative work.

—Josephine Woll, Howard University

*Pane e Salute: Food and Love in Italy and Vermont*  
Deirdre Heekin and Caleb Barber  
Montpelier, vt: Invisible Cities Press, 2002  
278 pp. $29.95

Deirdre Heekin and Caleb Barber’s love affair with Italy began the day after they were married when they set off, with one-way tickets, to live in a small town southeast of Florence. Once ensconced in Tuscany, they fell ever more deeply in love with each other and the place. But of all the beguiling attributes Italy had to offer the couple—history and literature, art and architecture, food and wine—the most affecting was the Italian way of life.

So when Heekin and Barber eventually came home to Vermont, they knew they wanted to recreate what they could of their Italian experience. They opened a restaurant as a way to preserve not only part of their past together, but a larger historical past they believe is still important to the present. They called their restaurant *Pane e Salute*, which in Italian means “Bread and Health.” In their inviting cookbook of the same name, *Pane e Salute: Food and Love in Italy and Vermont*, they propose that bread and health are the essence of living. “We returned to the United States informed by our hunger. We wanted to feed and refresh our own memory, our nostalgia for the Italian way of life that had affected us so. We wanted to return the hospitality and