

Sell it to the Americans, they'll eat anything

Over the years, countries have had political differences, settled their arguments one way or another, and have often found enough common ground to become allies.

For instance, we founded this country by winning a war with England, which is now one of our strongest trading partners and political supporters. Well . . . they were until a few months ago. Now, I must admit the relationship is a little iffy. However, I think you get the idea.

I also thought we more or less mended our fences with France and Japan after a few bitter struggles until our crack research team, the 'Googlamanics, looked into the matter and brought forth some interesting facts. The following truisms came from hundreds of nanoseconds of intense brain-busting labor. I promise, these are not products of my imaginings.

The French needed to replenish the royal coffers after we beat the snot out of them in a couple of wars over the last couple of centuries, and they decided we should help foot the bill. So, in their sophisticated passive-aggressive style, they introduced us to French wine. Either this was a classic practical joke, or they were still upset about losing the conflicts, and this is their version of payback.

After diplomatic relations were restored, the French entertained American tourists in their upscale restaurants and bistros and introduced them to the finest wines and spirits their country had to offer. Then they started an export business to the good old US of A and charged us exorbitant prices for what they touted as their finest libation. Not so. I assure you the wine tourists drank in France was far superior to that which they exported to this country.

First, they gathered the grapes that didn't meet their standard and ordered peasants to stomp on them with dirty feet. Then they let the



You can't beat a system you can't understand

By Sam Bari

fruit rot before adding sulfates, nitrates, and other chemicals I can't spell, as well as sugar and salt. This disgusting liquid was allowed to get old and even staler before it was poured into bottles sealed with cheap corks and decorated with fancy labels. When the labels were loosely translated they meant things like "Red Dog," Sneaky Pete," and "Ripple." Cases of the stuff were shipped over here in vast quantities at prices that would choke a truffle pig.

France built up a market that was so big they couldn't fill the orders, so they sold us cuttings from their allegedly "best" vines and told us to grow our own. While we were cultivating the plants from our French friends, they cut loose some of their private stock and started shipping that across the Atlantic to hold us over until our harvest was ready. That took about ten years. Meanwhile, the price of French wine shot up like a cold war missile. And now, judging from the way they treat tourists, I think their losses from the wars have been recouped several times over. Apparently, they don't need or particularly want our business.

Our conflicts with Japan were handled similarly. With smiles on their faces, much bowing, and ceremony to the max, they took over our car business, make all of our electronics and good cameras, and recently took control of the video game market.

While they developed these businesses, they played the ultimate practical joke. First, they invaded our fishing grounds and depleted our supply. Then they sold

it back to us at sky high prices by actually convincing North Americans that it was healthy and sophisticated to eat slimy fish, raw, served with a salty sauce that is a cardiologists dream, and dipped in a mustard hot enough to destroy our sinuses and strip paint. Then they wrapped the stuff in seaweed that we rake off our beaches in disgust, and make us eat it with two little sticks. That, ladies and gentlemen, is marketing at its best.

The aforementioned scenarios force us to ask the question: "Who really lost the wars?" By the way, now this is just a tiny thought that crept into my little brain without much prodding, but have you noticed how the price at the gas pump has, shall we say, escalated? I wonder what it takes to convince our government that the cost of war should not always be measured on the battlefield. I suppose it's just part of that system we can't understand.

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