

# LIFE IN ARMENIA

FOR DIGITAL NOMAD FAMILIES

SEPT, 1ST 2025 | NO. 30 | LIFE IN ARMENIA

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SWITCH FROM 4G TO 5G IN ARMENIA?

THE UNSEEN IMPACT OF 5G ON THE ARMENIAN ECONOMY AND SOCIETY

## FROM ALAVERDI WITH LOVE

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A REMOTE WORKER IN ARMENIA'S DEBED CANYON

## TECH, TRAVEL & COWORKING IN ARMENIA

A 10-DAY PROGRAM FOR DIGITAL NOMADS IN ARMENIA THIS OCTOBER

## ARMENIA

THE UPCOMING DIGITAL NOMAD DESTINATION

## HOSPITALITY INVESTMENT FORUM YEREVAN 2025

HOW INTERNATIONAL PLAYERS ARE VALIDATING ARMENIA'S INVESTMENT POTENTIAL

## ARMENIAN SKY IS THE NEW HIGHWAY

THE IMPACT OF ARMENIA'S DRONE COMPETITION ON LOGISTICS

## THE DILIJAN MASTER PLAN

A LOOK AT THE INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY OF ARMENIA'S REMOTE WORK CAPITAL

## A TOAST TO COLLABORATION

OFFERING ARMENIAN WINE AT COWORKING SPACES





# MATHEW ZEIN

## EDITOR'S LETTER

When my wife and son left for a two-month trip abroad a few weeks ago, I couldn't join them! I'm staying behind to get everything ready for our first digital nomad meetup in Armenia this October.

As I dropped them off at the airport, my three-year-old son asked me, "Papa, when are we going back home?" By "home," he meant Armenia. This is the place he now calls his home, the place where he feels a sense of belonging, a neighborhood where he feels safe enough to run around and where people know him by name and greet him with hugs, and he blows kisses back. He learned to be kind because the community around him was kind to him first.

If you're a digital nomad with kids, consider Armenia. It might not be as flashy or famous as other countries, but it's a family-oriented, child-friendly place. Your children can play safely and freely here, and that, in my opinion, is the most important thing a parent can ask for.

*Mathew Zein*



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While 5G promises speed and connectivity, current 4G infrastructure in Armenia might seem good enough for the unsophisticated. But beyond the hype, what does 5G truly mean for the nation's future?

## FROM ALAVERDI WITH LOVE A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A REMOTE WORKER IN ARMENIA'S DEBED CANYON

What if you could work from a place that has the power to inspire and ground you? Journey to the heart of Armenia's Debed Canyon and discover the city of Alaverdi, a natural digital nomad pit stop between Georgia and Armenia.

## TECH, TRAVEL & COWORKING IN ARMENIA A 10-DAY PROGRAM FOR DIGITAL NOMADS IN ARMENIA THIS OCTOBER

Ready to combine work with an unforgettable adventure? Discover Tech, Travel & Coworking in Armenia, a 10-day program designed for international remote workers. Attend different events and explore Yerevan, the Armenian capital city, and Dilijan, the remote work capital.

## HOSPITALITY INVESTMENT FORUM YEREVAN 2025 HOW INTERNATIONAL PLAYERS ARE VALIDATING ARMENIA'S INVESTMENT POTENTIAL

Ever wondered what it takes for a new market to catch the eye of global investors? Step inside the Hospitality Investment Forum Yerevan 2025, where established international players are giving Armenia their stamp of approval.

## ARMENIAN SKY IS THE NEW HIGHWAY THE IMPACT OF ARMENIA'S DRONE COMPETITION ON LOGISTICS

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WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SWITCH FROM 4G TO 5G  
IN ARMENIA?

# THE UNSEEN IMPACT OF 5G ON THE ARMENIAN ECONOMY AND SOCIETY



**MATHEW  
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF





# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SWITCH FROM 4G TO 5G IN ARMENIA? THE UNSEEN IMPACT OF 5G ON THE ARMENIAN ECONOMY AND SOCIETY

Walk into any Yerevan café and you'll see freelancers on Zoom calls, students streaming lectures, and entrepreneurs pitching to investors over video. Everything works. 4G does the job. So **why does Armenia need 5G?** When your current technology works "well enough," it's hard to see what you're missing. Thinking of 5G as simply "faster 4G" is a logical but fundamentally incorrect assumption.

In the 1990s, most businesses had fax machines and landlines. They worked fine. Email seemed unnecessary; **who needs instant messages when you can call someone?** Early adopters of email didn't just communicate faster but reorganized their entire workflow, while late adopters were left behind. History repeats itself. The lesson to be learned is that **disruption comes not from serving existing needs better**, but from enabling entirely new categories of value creation. This is exactly what 5G does!

## What Does It Mean to Switch from 4G to 5G in Armenia?

While 4G networks typically deliver 25-40 Mbps across Armenia's urban centers, the true impact of 5G isn't about speed. The real changes happen in **latency and capacity**.

4G networks have a response time of about 50 milliseconds. That's fast enough for video calls and web browsing. **5G drops that to under 5 milliseconds**, and in ideal conditions, close to 1 millisecond. Those few milliseconds unlock completely new possibilities.

Remote surgery becomes feasible; **a doctor in Washington could operate on a patient in Gyumri** using robotic equipment. Autonomous vehicles can coordinate with each other and traffic systems in real-time.



“But wait,” you might say. “We don’t have autonomous cars or remote surgery. Why do we need this now?” The thing is, that’s **the same argument that would have kept Armenia from adopting 4G**. We can’t wait for technology to arrive and then try to catch up. The world is moving, and we need to move with it.

4G networks support a few thousand connected devices per square kilometer. That’s fine when we’re talking about phones and laptops. But **5G supports up to a million devices in the same space**. This isn’t theoretical. It means every piece of farm equipment can have sensors. Every factory machine can report its status in real time.

And for those of us who live in Yerevan, it means **every single parking spot could tell us if it’s free**. The frustration of circling the block for a parking space would end, making small but important daily tasks, like taking your kids to school, a whole lot easier.

But when will we feel the difference? Armenia’s 5G rollout is happening faster than most people realize. Don’t expect immediate transformation! **Consumer adoption typically lags network deployment by 12-18 months**. However, real economic and social transformation unfolds over 5-10 years as network coverage expands, applications mature, and business models evolve.





# Rolling Out the Red Carpet

Over the past few weeks, I've been driving on weekends to the furthest points in Armenia, measuring 5G signals and marking remote-friendly towns on the map. When Ucom, one of the leading telecom operators in Armenia, learned about this, they reached out to me, and I met their General Director, Ralph Yirikian, and suggested a special tariff plan at Zvartnots airport for digital nomads.

Most telecom companies roll out new networks in capital cities first, then slowly expand to rural areas. Ucom is doing the opposite; **they've started with Armenia's regions before bringing 5G to Yerevan.**



**Ralph  
Yirikian**

General Director  
at Ucom

“Armenia has 10 regions and the capital city. A shepherd in the rural Armenian mountains deserves the same access to services as a developer in central Yerevan. You give everyone the same tools and let them decide how to use them.”



Ucom's move has the potential to decentralize the tech industry, **which is currently heavily concentrated in Yerevan.** With the right infrastructure, residents in the regions can become part of the global digital economy without ever having to leave their homes.

Add to that, global tech giants are looking beyond traditional urban hubs. By bringing 5G to these cities first, Ucom is essentially rolling out a red carpet for companies looking for alternatives to overcrowded, expensive urban centers.

While researching this article, I spoke with several international experts who follow infrastructure development in Armenia to get their thoughts on the impact of 5G. My first call was to John Ho, the founder of the world-renowned Alt Co-living in Thailand, who is visiting Armenia next May to analyze the potential for similar projects. John shared a valuable insight about Thailand's 5G rollout, which has led me to believe that Armenia could experience a similar impact, especially since it's emerging as a destination for remote workers.



### **John Ho**

Remote Work Community  
and Digital Nomads  
Ecosystem Builder

Thailand's 5G infrastructure is among the most advanced in Southeast Asia—with nationwide coverage reaching approximately 95%, compared to just over 80% in many neighboring markets, and speeds regularly exceeding 200 Mbps (and even 300 Mbps in major cities). This level of connectivity not only enhances remote productivity but also encourages digital nomads to extend their stays across Thailand.



Extending 5G access to these areas is a clear invitation, positioning Armenia as an attractive new destination for investment and innovation.

Technology ecosystems develop around available infrastructure. Armenia's startup ecosystem has already produced notable successes in software development. 5G deployment could accelerate this ecosystem by enabling new categories of technology businesses that weren't economically viable under 4G constraints.



Jonah Gunter relocated to Armenia from the United States last October and co-founded KapTek with Andrew Lott. KapTek is an employer of record that hires Armenian professionals for the U.S. market. For them, having 5G makes their mission easier, as it helps connect Armenia to international job markets and increases its appeal as a remote hiring destination.

5G technology will also create entirely new jobs that don't currently exist and, most importantly, **these opportunities won't be limited to Yerevan!**



**Jonah Gunter**

Co-founder of KapTek

“As an employer hiring remotely for American companies, both from Yerevan and the regions, we at KapTek are closely watching the rollout of 5G in Armenia. Faster, more reliable connectivity will allow Armenians everywhere to contribute fully to U.S. teams and the global economy, and it's helping us advance KapTek's aim of “showcasing Armenia's tech prowess to the world.”

Brett Hershman is a U.S. journalist who has covered several international events in Armenia over the past couple of years, including WCIT 2024 and Digitec, and has become well-versed in Armenia's development.



**Brett Hershman**

Journalist and Public Relations Specialist

“To compete you must also try to level the playing field. While it may go overlooked, the transition to 5G is an important and necessary step in the evolution and growth of Armenia's technology ecosystem.”



**Ralph Yirikian**  
General Director  
at Ucom

“5G is the current trend, and as an Armenian telecom service provider, we must follow it. Our job is to bring the latest technologies to Armenia, from 3G and 4G to 5G and future upgrades. People in Armenia must always have access to the latest technology.”



From my meeting with Ucom's General Director, Ralph Yirikian, at Ucom's headquarters in Yerevan

## What Can Armenia Learn from South Korea?

Economic studies from early 5G adopter countries suggest GDP impacts ranging from 0.6% to 1.2% annually once deployment reaches critical mass. Given that Armenia's economy is now approximately \$25 billion, this translates to potential annual gains of \$150-300 million from productivity improvements alone.

South Korea's 5G deployment focused heavily on industrial applications, particularly smart factories. Early implementations showed 15-20% productivity gains in manufacturing facilities.



Armenia's manufacturing sector, while smaller than South Korea's, could experience a similar transformation. 5G could make Armenia an attractive **hub for multinational corporations**

**looking to set up factories.** Armenian textile manufacturers and food processors could implement smart factory tech to increase competitiveness globally.



The choice isn't really about technology, but about Armenia's economic future. **5G is infrastructure!** In today's economy, it's as essential as roads and water systems were to industrial development a century ago. Just as cities without proper transportation networks fell behind during the industrial revolution, regions without robust 5G connectivity will not compete in the digital economy.



FROM ALAVERDI WITH LOVE

# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A REMOTE WORKER IN ARMENIA'S DEBED CANYON



**MATHEW  
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF





FROM ALAVERDI WITH LOVE

## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A REMOTE WORKER IN ARMENIA'S DEBED CANYON

Even though I call Yerevan home, I can't help but keep exploring this country whenever I get a chance. I have this pull to discover what each place has to offer in the Armenian regions. I've worked remotely from corners of Armenia that most digital nomads have never even heard of, and honestly, it's been incredible! There's something magical about opening your laptop in a small mountain town where you're probably the first remote worker they've ever seen.

When I visit these places, I don't just pass through like a typical tourist. I actually live there, even if it's just for a week or a few days. I'll wander through the local market in the morning, grab coffee at the neighborhood coffee shop where the owner starts recognizing me by day three, and hunt down anyone working in tech.



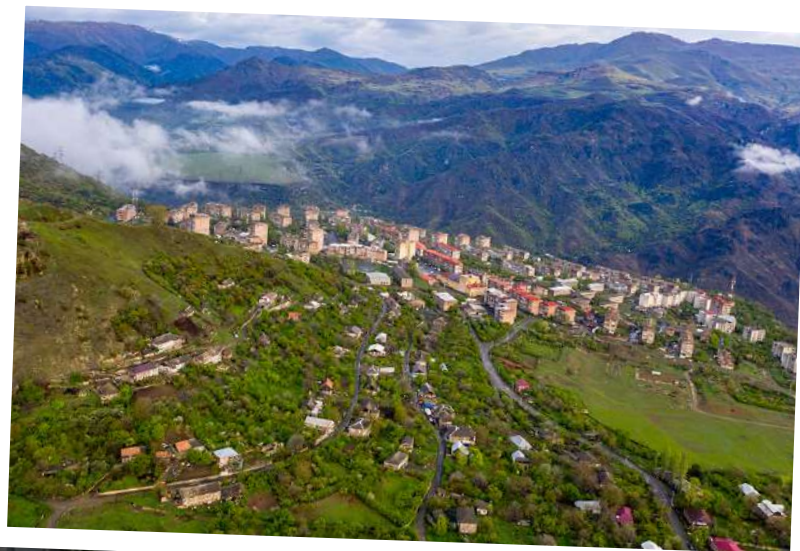


# A Natural Digital Nomad Pit Stop

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In my nine years in Armenia, the small city of Alaverdi in the Lori region has always caught my eye with the way it sits right in the Debed Canyon, [completely surrounded by mountains and cliffs on all sides](#). I still remember the first time I saw it on Google Maps. I was browsing around, planning another trip, when I came across Alaverdi. [The way it's hidden there between all those peaks](#); it's like the mountains are hugging the city. I found myself zooming in and out, trying to get a better sense of how dramatic that landscape really is. It's one of those places that [makes you stop and appreciate how beautiful Armenia's geography can be](#).

If you're one of those digital nomads doing the Armenia-Georgia circuit, [Alaverdi is perfectly positioned as a natural pit stop](#). When you're driving down from Georgia, maybe feeling a bit road-weary, here's this charming mountain city just waiting for you. Instead of pushing straight through to Yerevan, which is still a solid two-hour drive from here, you can actually take a breather, stretch your legs, maybe work from a local coffee shop for a day or two. It's especially [perfect if you're traveling with family](#).







The cafe and restaurant scene is pretty limited. You'll find a few spots scattered around the small city (I was able to count four or five) and about half of those are tucked inside hotels. **Despite the good 5G signal in Alaverdi**, there are no coworking spaces to speak of. This isn't a surprise, as there isn't a remote work community there yet. This is exactly why I'm bringing it up, though. Alaverdi has incredible, untapped potential for remote workers. **The**

**nature here is truly out of this world.**

And this is exactly why I'm proposing it as a digital nomad pit stop between Georgia and Armenia for now.

While you're in Alaverdi, make sure to visit the Sanahin and Haghpat monasteries, two of Armenia's UNESCO World Heritage sites, dating back to the 10th century. The city is also home to the Sanahin Bridge, built over the Debed River in 1195.

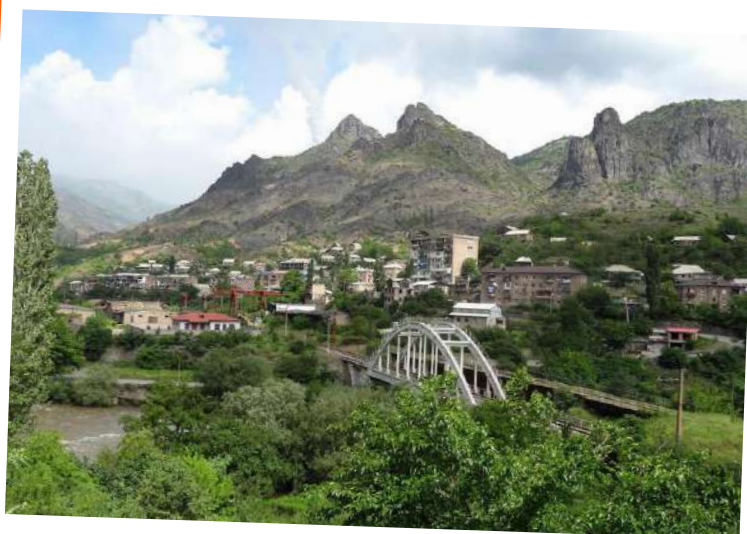
## Finishing Over My Book

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I spent some time walking around and checking out different places before deciding to stay at the [Vallex Garden Hotel](#), which was 5 minutes walk from the historical Sanahin Bridge. It had a great view, the staff spoke English, and I was able to get some work done at their little outdoor cafe.

After an overnight stay, I felt this amazing energy and inspiration in the morning, which I'm pretty sure is connected to the city's unique location. [That feeling was so strong that I decided to finally finish my book, \*My Life in Armenia\*](#), right there in Alaverdi. I've been putting this off for almost a year, mostly because of my busy lifestyle in Yerevan and around the country. But I think I've found the perfect quiet spot. [I'm planning to come back for a week or two at the end of the month](#) to just focus on finishing my long-awaited book.

Photo taken at Vallex Garden Hotel in the city of Alaverdi, Lori Region, Armenia



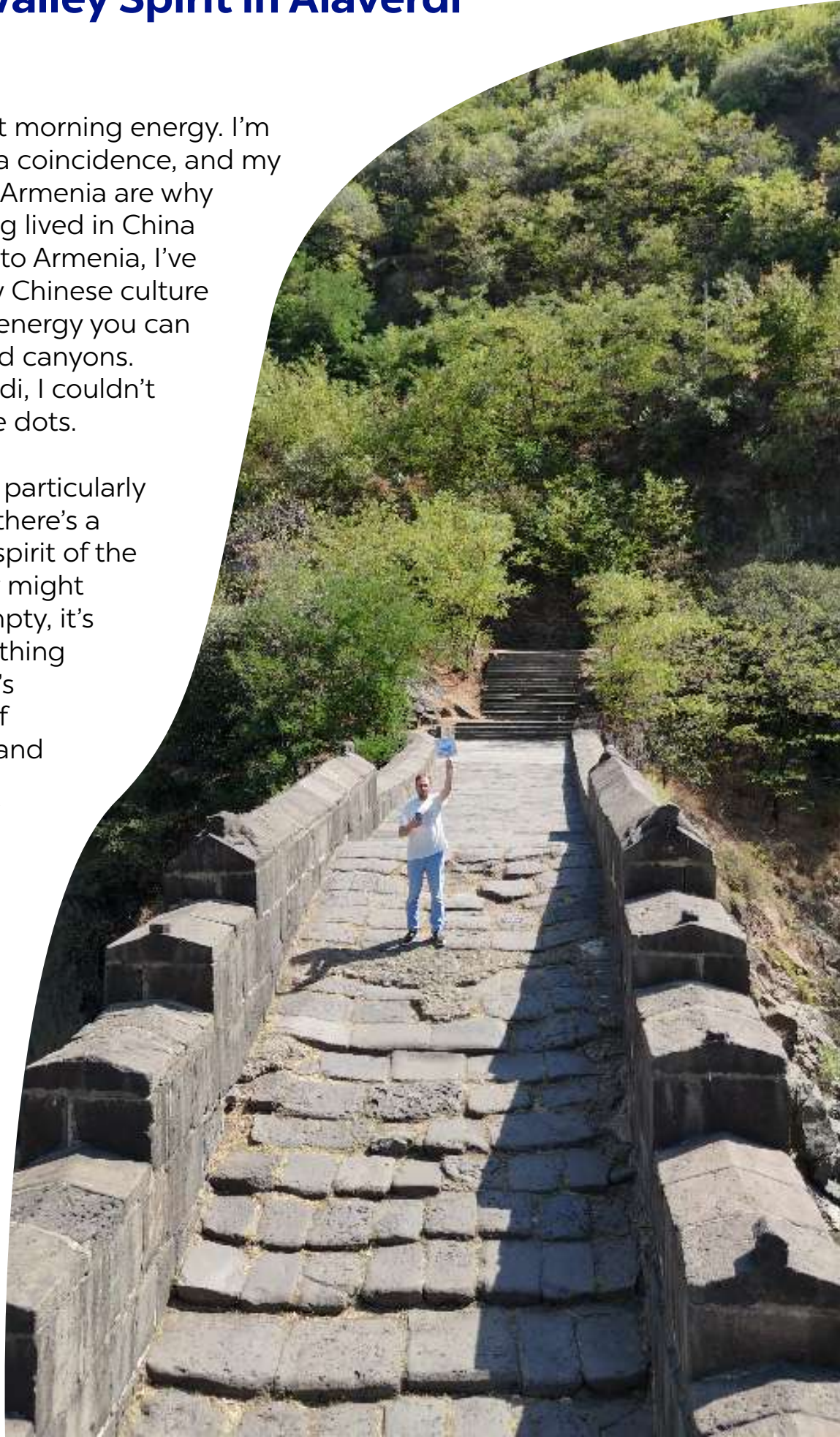


# Finding the Valley Spirit in Alaverdi

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Let's get back to that morning energy. I'm pretty sure it wasn't a coincidence, and my experiences outside Armenia are why I feel that way. Having lived in China right before moving to Armenia, I've read a lot about how Chinese culture explains the unique energy you can feel in mountains and canyons. When I was in Alaverdi, I couldn't help but connect the dots.

In Taoist philosophy, particularly in the Tao Te Ching, there's a concept called the "spirit of the valley." While a valley might be low and seem empty, it's actually where everything gathers and flows. It's a powerful symbol of receptive, feminine, and nurturing energy. It represents a state of being that is open and in perfect harmony with the natural flow of the universe. This "valley spirit" isn't an aggressive force; it's the source of a gentle, immense, and unbroken power.

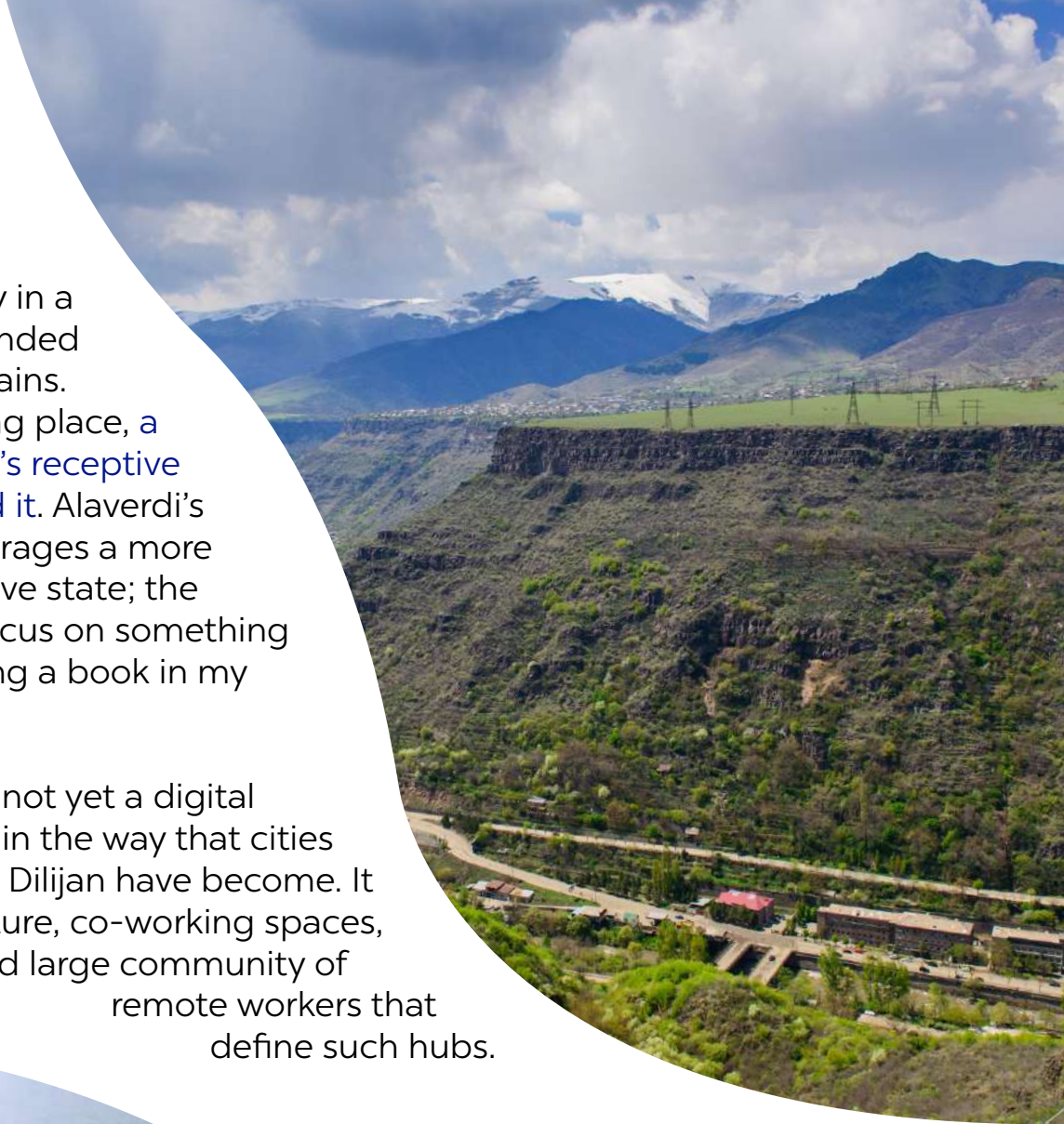
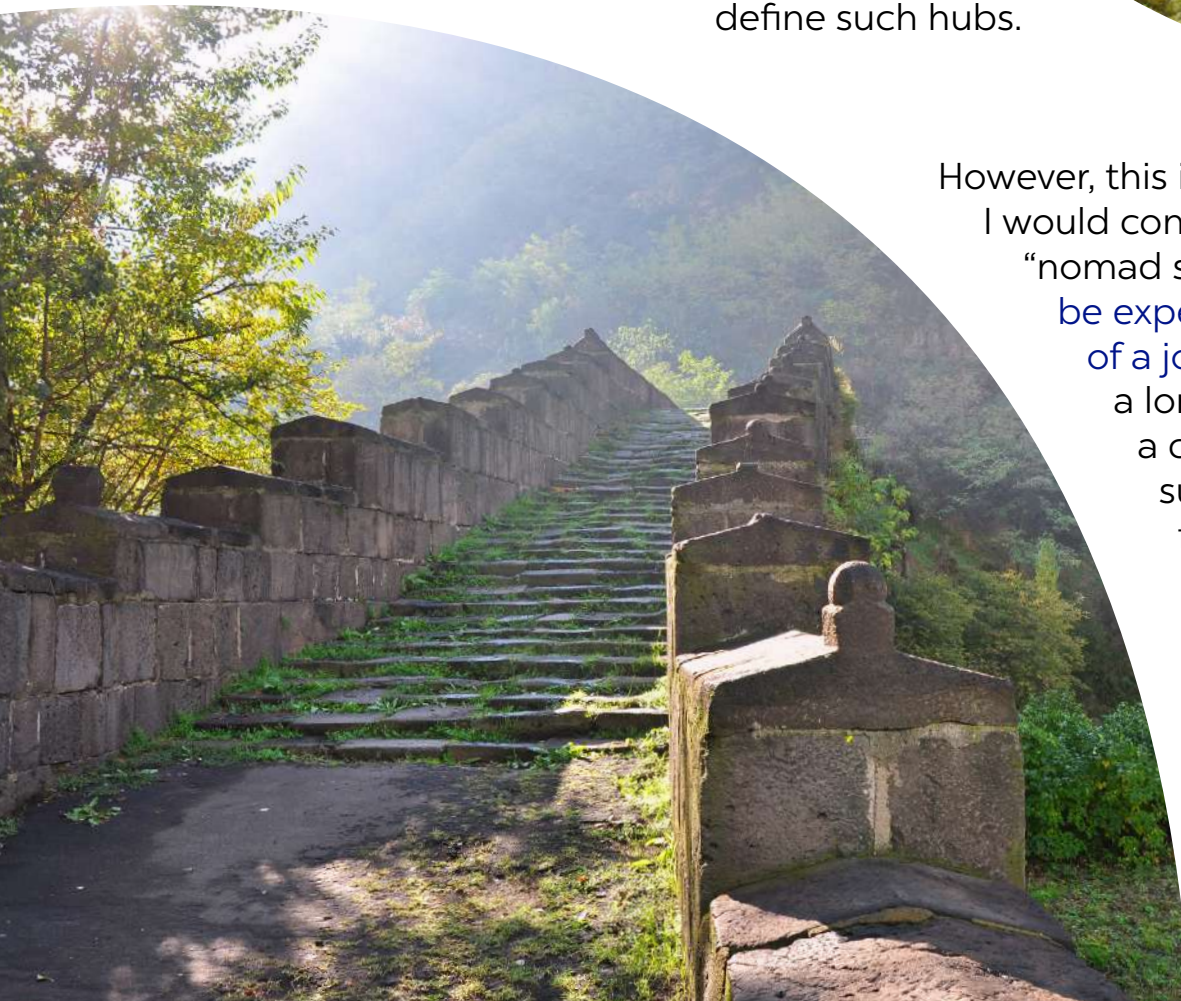




This idea perfectly describes what I was feeling in the morning. The city itself is tucked away in a deep gorge, surrounded by towering mountains. It's a quiet, humbling place, a natural "valley" that's receptive to the world around it. Alaverdi's environment encourages a more introspective, creative state; the kind you need to focus on something creative, like finishing a book in my case.

Alaverdi is, for sure, not yet a digital nomad destination in the way that cities like Yerevan or even Dilijan have become. It lacks the infrastructure, co-working spaces, and large community of remote workers that define such hubs.

However, this is precisely why I would confidently call it a "nomad stop," a place to be experienced as part of a journey rather than a long-term base. It's a city to explore for sure and to consider for a few nights of quiet reflection or creative work to truly absorb the canyon's energy.







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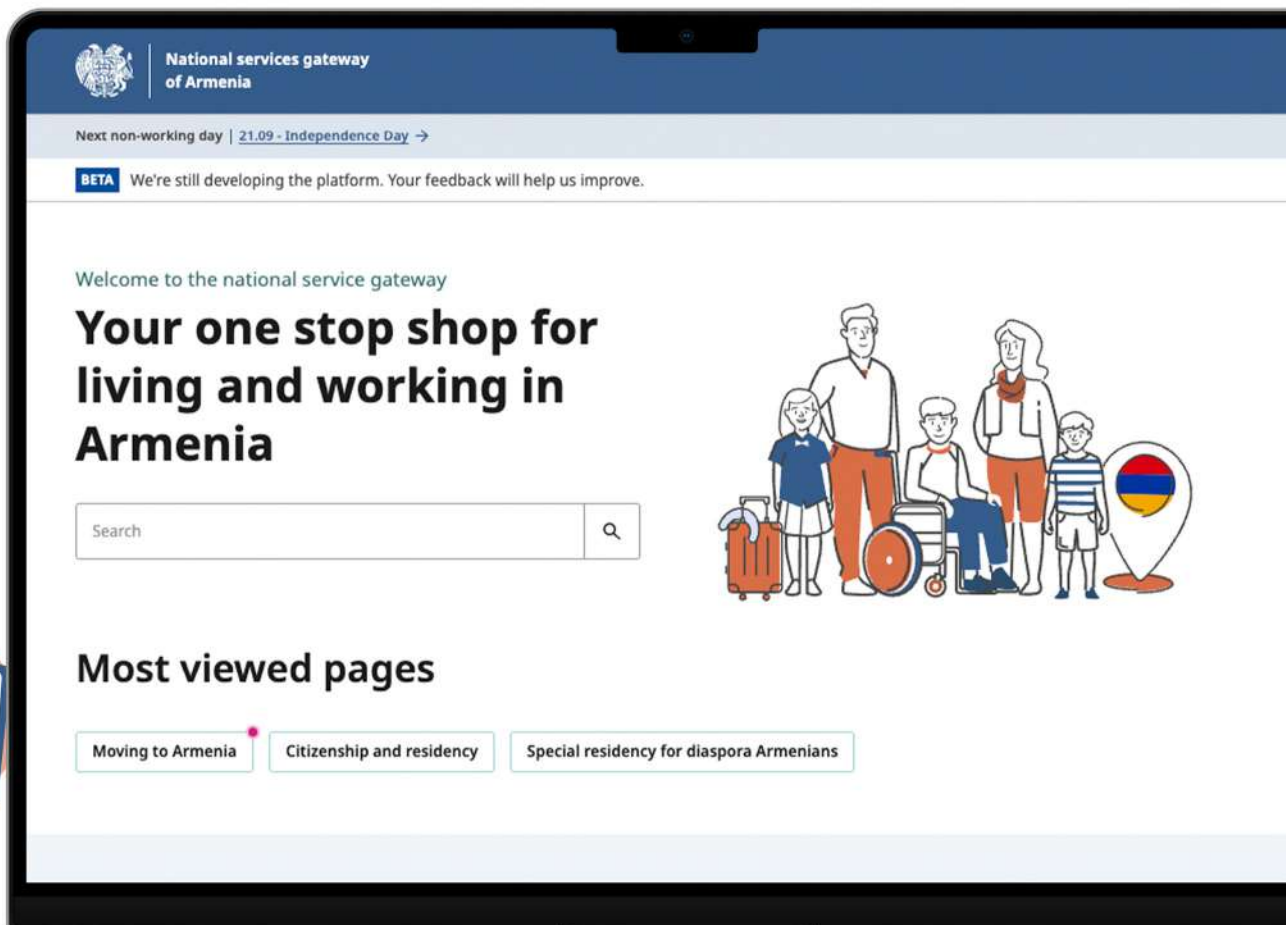
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TECH, TRAVEL & COWORKING IN ARMENIA

# A 10-DAY PROGRAM FOR DIGITAL NOMADS IN ARMENIA THIS OCTOBER

in



**PAUL  
VATISTAS**

CO-FOUNDER OF NOMAD ARMENIA





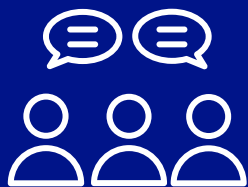
## TECH, TRAVEL & COWORKING IN ARMENIA

### A 10-DAY PROGRAM FOR DIGITAL NOMADS IN ARMENIA THIS OCTOBER

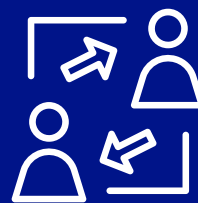
This October, Mathew and I are organizing a 10-day workation in Armenia designed for remote workers and tech professionals. The program coincides with the 20th-anniversary edition of DigiTec, where you can join over 30,000 tech professionals in the largest tech expo in the region.



Access the inner circle of Armenia's growing tech and fintech startup ecosystems.



Attend tens of expert panel discussions and keynote speeches from global leaders.



Connect directly with the country's top startup founders, investors, and innovators.



Our workation program will give you the opportunity to network, find inspiration, and understand the powerful business engine driving modern Armenia. Beyond the tech community, **we will provide the blueprint to extend your stay as a digital nomad in Armenia.**

Explore the benefits of registering your tech company in Armenia.

Learn how to work remotely from Armenia tax-free for up to 6 months.

Learn how to obtain a one-year residency status with benefits.

We've planned diverse events for remote workers and digital nomads from October 3rd to October 12th. Our events are spread out in three unique locations:



**Yerevan:** The capital city, offering a vibrant urban atmosphere.



**Dilijan:** The remote work capital in Armenia, located in the scenic mountains.



**Lake Sevan:** An emerging coworking destination with stunning lakeside views.







Our program was created by remote workers, for remote workers, so you can easily combine your remote job with a memorable travel experience. You'll find a mix of professional and recreational activities, including:



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Our multilingual team will be with you from the moment you arrive at the airport in Armenia until the moment you depart. We'll **ensure your successful integration with the Armenian tech** community in just 10 days, including arranging hotel accommodation options, food and beverage recommendations, coworking spaces, 5G internet and banking, facilitated events, domestic transportation, and everything else you might need! In one way or another, it will feel like **you have a well-connected best friend in Armenia.**



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HOSPITALITY INVESTMENT FORUM YEREVAN 2025

# HOW INTERNATIONAL PLAYERS ARE VALIDATING ARMENIA'S INVESTMENT POTENTIAL



**MATHEW  
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF



FEATURING

**KARINE  
MUSAILOVA**

MANAGEMENT EXECUTIVE AT HIF YEREVAN  
AND CFO AT STONE DEVELOPMENT





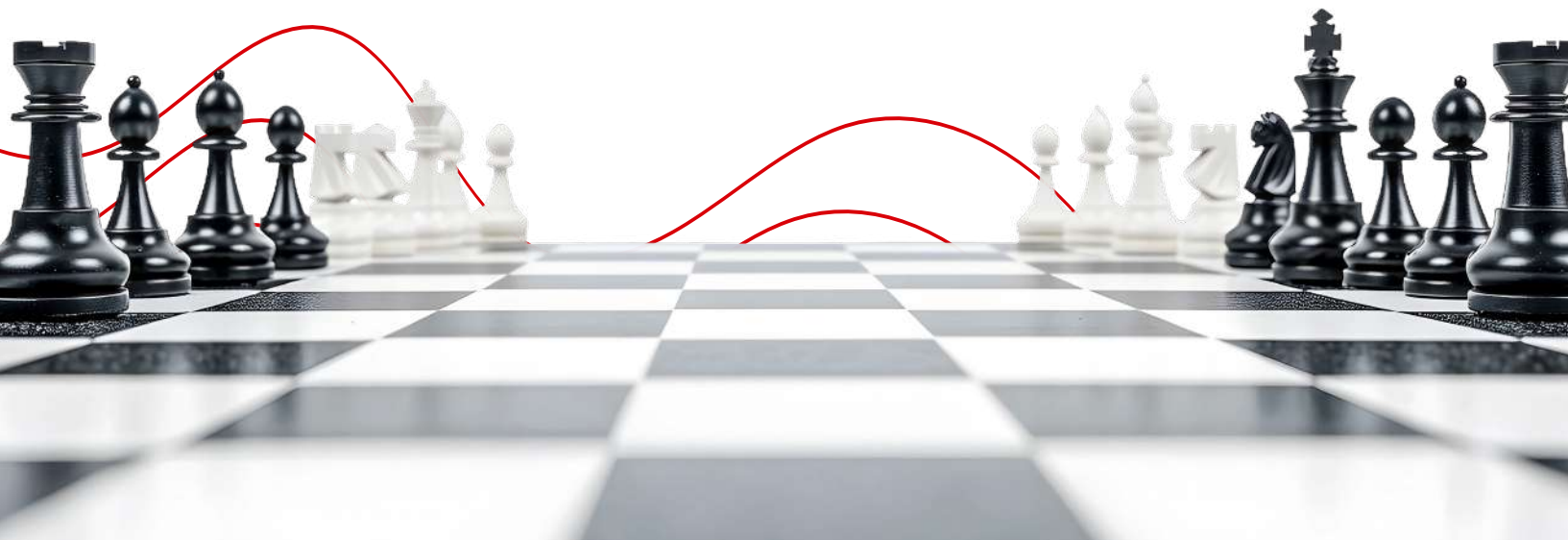
## HOSPITALITY INVESTMENT FORUM YEREVAN 2025

### HOW INTERNATIONAL PLAYERS ARE VALIDATING ARMENIA'S INVESTMENT POTENTIAL

Not too long ago, Armenia started seeing a rise in residential projects and apartment hotels, which brought new investment opportunities. Through my contact with many Armenians abroad via Life in Armenia magazine, one question that keeps coming up is **whether these different investment opportunities are actually legitimate**. To answer that question, you have to understand how the global hospitality investment game really works.

Hospitality investment is a chess game, and the established players have long dominated the center squares. Like chess masters who've memorized every opening, **these players know exactly where to deploy their capital**. They understand the tourist flows, the business travel patterns, and the seasonal rhythms that drive profitability. Meanwhile, the edges of the chessboard, those emerging markets that don't make it into the standard investment presentations, remain largely unexplored territory. **And Armenia is one of them!**

But chess, like global investment, rewards those who recognize shifting dynamics before they become obvious. Consider how Dubai was once dismissed as a desert outpost, or how Vietnam was considered too risky **just two decades ago**. Today, Dubai hosts over 16 million visitors annually, while Vietnam's hospitality sector attracts billions in international investment. **It's here, in the spaces between the obvious moves**, that opportunities exist for those willing to think outside the box.





## The Validation Game

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Two months ago, I was invited to speak at [The Hospitality Investment Forum Yerevan 2025](#), which was the first of its kind in Armenia last year and exceeded all expectations with over 1000 attendees from both the public and private sectors.

This year's forum aimed to **bring established international players**, such as Cushman & Wakefield, Hyatt International, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts, and Booking.com, under one roof in Armenia. STONE Development, the organizer, wanted to demonstrate that Armenia had reached a new threshold, **moving from theoretical investment opportunity to practical consideration**.



Mr. Gevorg Papoyan, RA Minister of Economy



With this forum, in chess terms, Armenia was making its opening gambit; not a flashy queen's sacrifice, but **a strategic pawn advance that signals serious intent**. When Marriott first entered mainland China in 1998 with a single hotel, skeptics questioned the move. Today, Marriott operates over 400 properties across Greater China.



Mr. Akim Pohosian, CEO of Stone Development

Edge territories only become viable investment squares **when they gain the implicit endorsement of established players**. When a recognized international hospitality brand evaluates an emerging market seriously enough to send executives, conduct due diligence, or **participate in investment forums**, they're essentially validating that market's fundamentals and creating a pathway for larger capital flows to follow.

This validation works like a domino effect in the investment world. Institutional investors who might never have considered putting Armenia on their radar suddenly take notice when they see a **global player like Cushman & Wakefield engaging with local developers**. It's not just about the specific deals being discussed; it's about the signal that serious operators have **done their homework and found something worth their time**.

The forum became the moment when Armenia's edge-of-the-board positioning transformed into a legitimate square **where global players were willing to make their moves**.





## Building Trust

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International investors often approach new markets with a “show me, don’t tell me” mentality. Armenia’s challenge wasn’t just demonstrating opportunity; it was proving that opportunities could be realized.

By bringing together speakers, including the RA Minister of Economy alongside international hospitality leaders, the forum created a credible narrative of **governmental support combined with private sector execution capability**.

Today’s institutional investors don’t just evaluate individual projects; they assess entire investment ecosystems, the full board position, not just isolated piece movements. **They want to see local partners with international**

**credibility**, government alignment with private sector objectives, infrastructure development that supports long-term returns, and a pipeline of opportunities, not just isolated deals! HIF Yerevan 2025 showcased the full market picture and addressed each of these concerns by creating a **demonstration of Armenia’s ecosystem maturity**.

This kind of international validation is a major factor for more than just big-time investors; it also influences individuals in the Armenian diaspora. With nearly 8 million Armenians living abroad, it can be a challenge to **shift their perception of Armenia from a homeland to a legitimate investment market**. This is where the endorsement of major international players makes all the difference.



Just a few years ago, Georgia underwent a similar transformation, establishing itself as an investment-ready destination. Cities like Batumi and Tbilisi are now home to large-scale hospitality projects, proving the effectiveness of this approach.

Armenia has a chance to follow its neighbor's lead, leveraging this proven model and adding its unique touch.

When the diaspora sees industry leaders showing interest and staking their reputations on residential complexes and apartment hotels in Armenia, it transforms an emotional decision into a logical investment. HIF Yerevan sent a message that projects have already undergone expert discussion and are therefore perceived as more reliable investment opportunities.

The true test of the forum's impact will be measured not in immediate deal flows but in institutional behavior changes. When international hospitality groups begin including Armenia in

their standard market reviews, when investment committees add Armenian opportunities to their regular consideration sets, and when the country appears in global hospitality investment reports as a standard comparator, these indicators will confirm that the forum achieved its deeper objective.

HIF Yerevan was the starting point for international hospitality investors and projects entering Armenia. It has just announced "Check" but it's still a long journey before it's "Checkmate" It's one move closer to the center squares where the real action happens.



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ARMENIAN SKY IS THE NEW HIGHWAY

# THE IMPACT OF ARMENIA'S DRONE COMPETITION ON LOGISTICS



**MATHEW  
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF





## ARMENIAN SKY IS THE NEW HIGHWAY THE IMPACT OF ARMENIA'S DRONE COMPETITION ON LOGISTICS

The drone logistics market is a billion-dollar industry, driven by last-mile delivery applications and the integration of advanced AI systems. For a country like Armenia with a tech ecosystem that ranks 51st globally, this represents an opportunity! While these systems may not be deployed here, the underlying technology can absolutely be developed and programmed here and sold worldwide.

The challenging geography of Armenia, with elevations ranging from 400 to over 4,000 meters, makes traditional ground-based logistics highly inefficient. These natural barriers are a major hurdle, particularly for the last mile, turning what should be a simple delivery into the most complex and expensive part of the process.

This gives Armenian tech teams the opportunity to develop solutions and test them in one of the world's most demanding real-world laboratories. Any drone system that can navigate Armenia's terrain becomes immediately valuable for mountainous regions worldwide.



In July 2025, Armenia hosted its first international e-commerce and logistics expo and conference, [e-LogiFest25](#), and I got to be part of it! For three days, I was invited to moderate international panel discussions in the main conference hall. Right next door was a massive hall where **26 teams and over 100 people were competing** in a nonstop, 24-hour competition called the RoboDrone Hackathon.



ՌոբոԴրոն

«Ցամաքային և օդային լոգիստիկայի  
նորարարական լուծումներ» հաշարոն

Օրեր՝ Մայիսի 30-31  
Տևողություն՝ 24 ժամ

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Every now and then, I'd slip out of the conference hall to see what was happening outside. The gathering had turned into something far more interesting than I thought, with **teams from the public and private sectors competing alongside local schools** on the very same challenges.

Given my relationship with the organizers, I couldn't help but question this competition and why they decided to make it part of Armenia's first e-commerce and logistics expo and conference.

## Why Armenia, Why Now?

Recently, Armenia's tech ecosystem has quietly built the necessary infrastructure for this evolution. [The country is actively deploying 5G networks across its regions](#), creating the high-speed, low-latency connectivity that drone operations demand. Local tech companies have already developed drone-based solutions for agriculture, surveillance, and other specialized applications, proving that the technical expertise exists. [But scattered innovations don't create an industry](#). What was missing was a focused effort to mature this sector from isolated experiments into a cohesive capability.



The RoboDrone Hackathon wasn't about trying to reinvent the wheel or make Armenia the next drone capital of the world. The goal is to build capabilities that [connect Armenia to global opportunities while solving local challenges](#).

Teams that cut their teeth on Armenian agricultural problems can scale their solutions to similar regions worldwide. Emergency response innovations developed here [can find markets anywhere with challenging terrain](#).





## The Challenge

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The hackathon wasn't just "control a drone and see what happens." The organizers had different plans for it. They created three specific challenges that hit different pieces of the logistics puzzle.

**Payload Delivery Drone Prototype (HW):** A physical drone and its hardware components built to test and refine the ability to autonomously transport and deliver a specific payload.



**Situational Awareness Center for Drone Delivery Services (SW):** A software system that provides real-time, comprehensive monitoring of a drone delivery fleet and its operating environment for safe and efficient management.

**AI-based Optimization of Route Planning and Logistics Processes (SW):** A software solution that uses artificial intelligence to automatically plan and adjust the most efficient and cost-effective delivery routes for a fleet of drones.

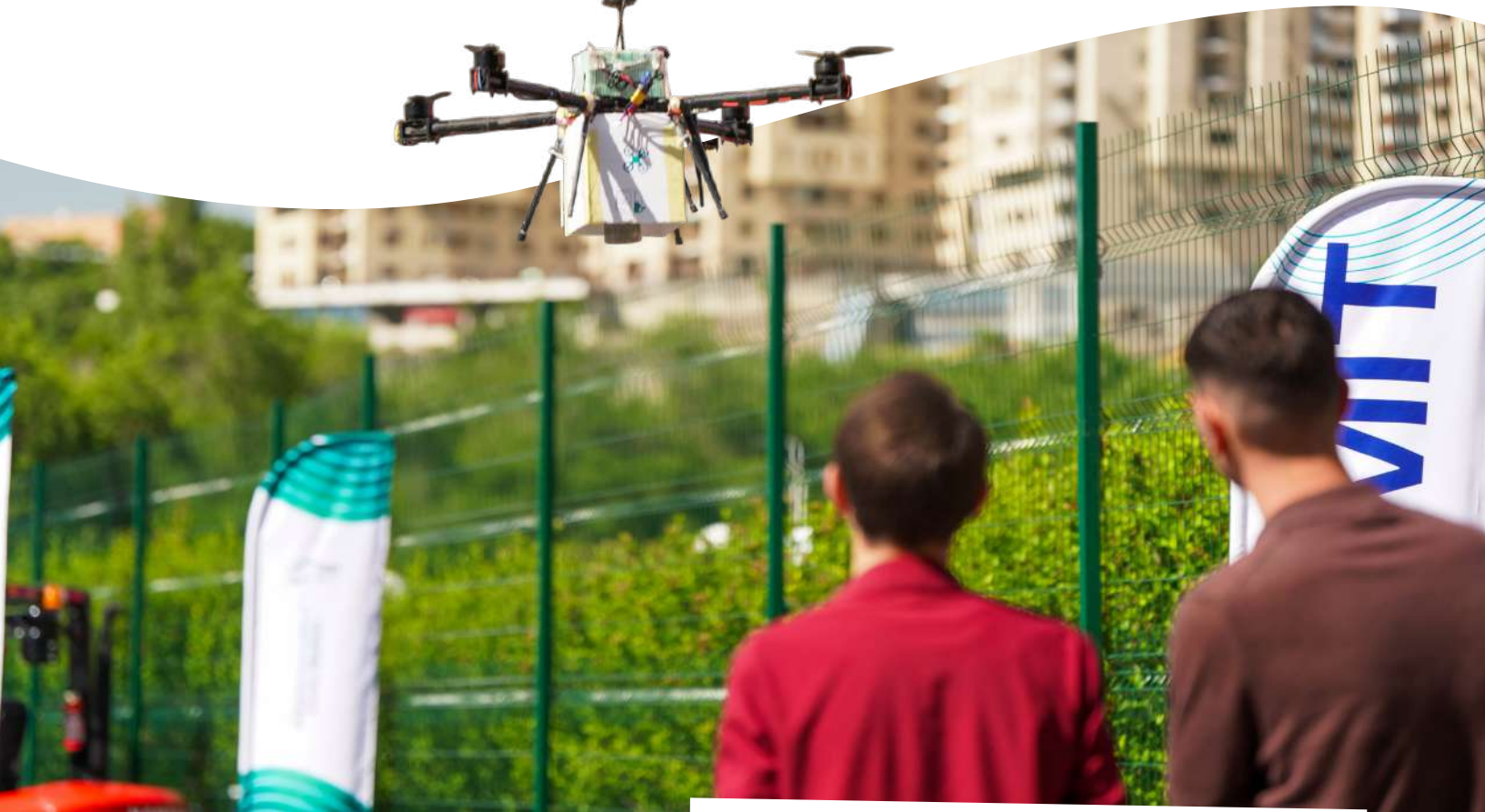




## Real Victory isn't Technical

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The hackathon ended, the prizes got handed out, and everyone went home. But the real impact is just starting. Sure, seven teams won prizes, but the bigger win was less obvious. Government agencies that normally move at bureaucratic speed spent 24 hours [working alongside private companies that normally move at startup speed](#). That's not something you can usually make happen, even with good intentions and meeting rooms.





The junior category participants, actual school kids, are growing up in a country that's actively reimagining its logistics infrastructure. By the time they're in college, drone delivery might be as normal as ordering pizza online. That's how you build an industry: **start with the people who will inherit it.**



Armenia's sky might become a new highway, but that's not the point. The point is that a small country with big geographical challenges just proved that innovation competitions can create something more valuable than solutions; **they can create ecosystems.** And ecosystems, unlike individual innovations, **tend to keep growing long after the cameras stop rolling.**





ARMENIA

# THE UPCOMING DIGITAL NOMAD DESTINATION



**MILOŠ  
PELUCHA**

CO-FOUNDER OF DESTINOVA





## ARMENIA

# THE UPCOMING DIGITAL NOMAD DESTINATION

I'm [Miloš Pelucha](#), and I have been a digital nomad for over 4 years now. In that time, I've [traveled and worked in 30+ countries](#). My passion for tourism, lifestyle travel, and community led me to [advise businesses](#) and destinations on how to capture the next generation of visitors. [Digital nomads and remote workers](#) included. I recently visited Armenia, and here is my perspective after spending 1 week in Yerevan.

The South Caucasus has risen in popularity as a digital nomad region. But for a single country, Georgia. While its southern neighbor has nothing less to offer. I'm talking about Armenia, a country I first wanted to visit 8 years ago. Due to the pandemic and my digital nomad journey, I never got to do it. Until two months ago, when the guys from [Nomad Armenia](#) were adamant about giving Armenia a week and seeing how it feels for remote workers.



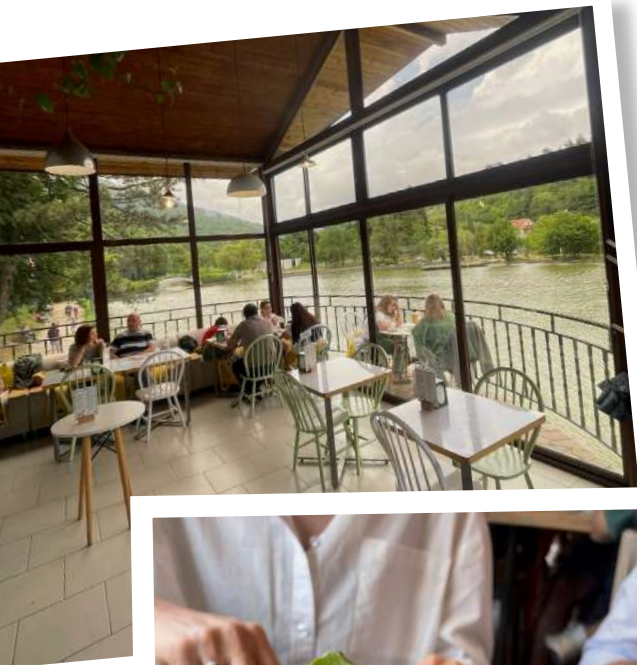
# Armenia In a Nutshell

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Armenia is a country situated in the South Caucasus. Some locals told me Armenians are proud of their country being landlocked. Something I'm familiar with, as my homeland, Slovakia, is also a landlocked country. While living without access to the sea makes life, business, economy, and development generally harder, there is something special about countries that accept that fact.



Armenia might not have ocean access, but it has other perks. A giant, high-altitude lake, Lake Sevan, is situated an hour's drive from Yerevan. While the area seems still rather underdeveloped, **the potential and natural beauty of this lake are not to be questioned.**



If you feel like nature, but not necessarily water, you can always make your way to Dilijan. A town located in the middle of green forests, historically known as the Soviet retreat center, and **today home to over 500+ digital nomad families living there.** From what I've seen and heard, Dilijan has a lot of development in progress, and it seems the digital nomads and remote workers are the strong segment there. If you ever get tired of Armenian food (**which I found impossible**) and feel like eating ramen, Korean BBQ, or visiting authentic Neapolitan cuisine, you will find all of it and much more in Dilijan.



# Where to Stay in Armenia?

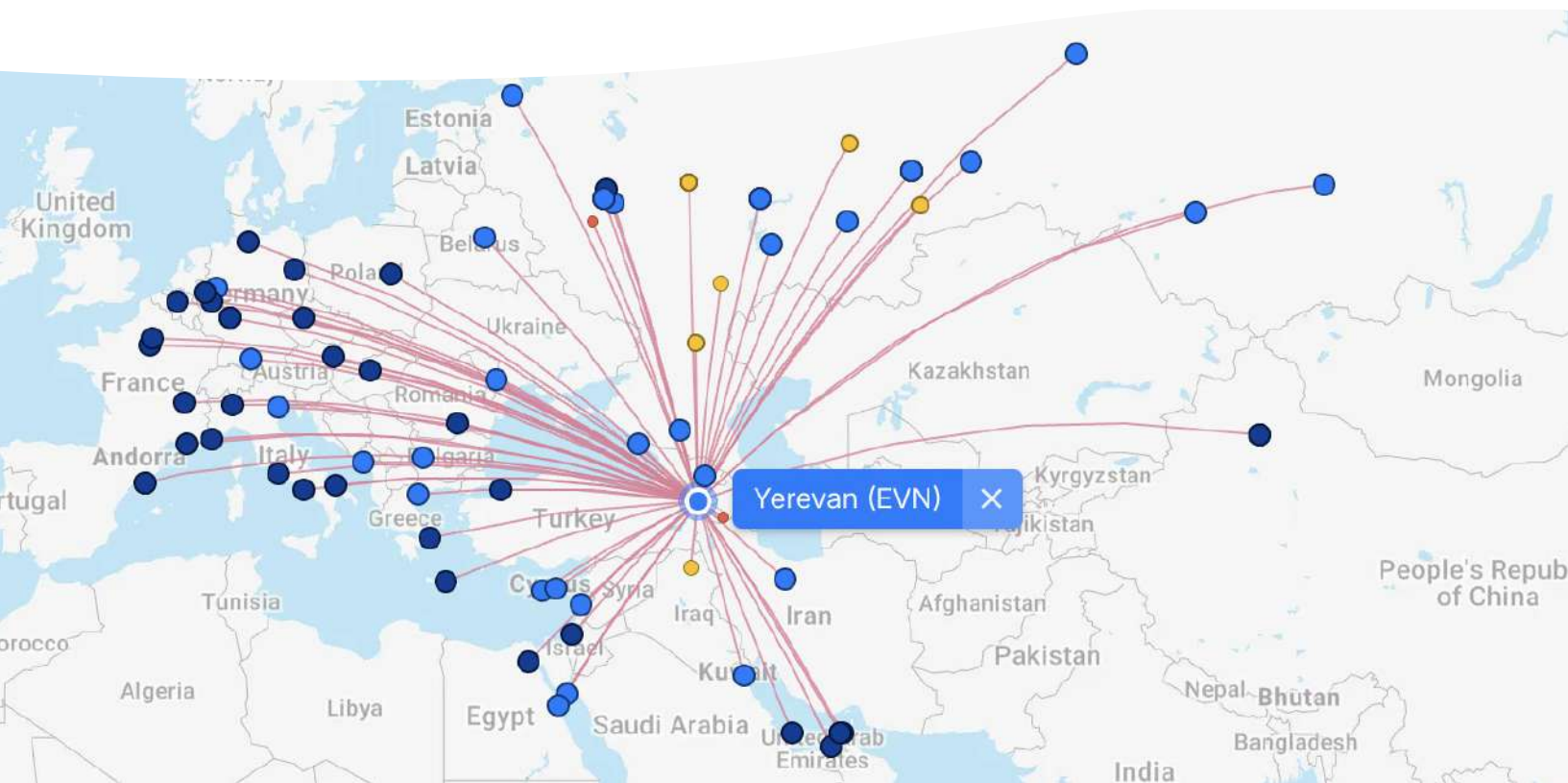
Our base for the week was the Tufenkian Historic Hotel in the center of Yerevan, near the Republic Square. While Yerevan is a large metropolis with almost 2 million inhabitants and an accessible subway network, if you choose to stay in central Yerevan, **you will likely be able to access all the city's monuments by a walk.**

That's a big benefit, as it makes you flexible. If you don't wish to walk in the hot summer days, you can always take an electric scooter or Yandex, a local version of Uber. Yerevan is a unique city, full of semi-circular buildings designed by Alexander Tamanyan in the 1920s to build a radial circular city. Most of the buildings were built from tuff, a pinkish volcanic stone. (Speaking of, Armenia has over 300 volcanoes.)

## How to Get to Armenia?

Getting to Armenia is not difficult. It's very easy. **Many European cities are offering direct connections with low-cost carriers.** So in the shoulder season, it's also fairly affordable. Yerevan

(EVN) Zvartnots Airport has a **direct connection to 69 airports worldwide.** For non-fliers or slow travelers, Armenia is perfectly accessible from Georgia by a short drive or a bus ride.



## Who is Armenia For?

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A remote worker or a nomad tired of the classic over-gentrified and busy destinations. A nomadic family that seeks a peaceful, safe, and family-oriented environment. Freelancers and start-up founders in tech; the local talent pool is large. Christians since Armenia adopted Christianity as the state religion in 301 AD. World citizens looking for new residency opportunities. Outdoor people who like to spend their time hiking, running, horseback riding. Entrepreneurs located in Dubai are looking for a quick getaway for a change of scenery.

## Who is Armenia Not For?

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Anyone looking for partying and one-night-stand culture. **In Armenia, people date for marriage.**

People who don't like to experience cosmopolitan and multicultural places on their travels.

People who are afraid to drive in chaotic traffic or those who don't trust local drivers.

Honestly, I cannot think of anyone else, as there is a wide range of offerings that Armenia brings.







## Misconceptions of Armenia

I also had a surprisingly large number of “ideas” of what Armenia was going to be like, but I have to say most of them have been miles from the truth. So here are some that I heard some friends of mine, fellow nomads and travelers, say:



A lot of people think that it's not safe on the street - It's some of the safest places I've visited, with kids running in the city fountains at 1 AM.

A lot of people thought about Armenia's lack of infrastructure for digital nomads and remote workers, while there are already 500+ digital nomad families living in Dilijan, and Yerevan is full of remote workers.

A lot of people thought Armenia was underdeveloped, but there are hundreds of tech/ fintech companies operating worldwide that have turned into unicorns.

A lot of people have no idea of how delicious Armenian food is, with its fusion of Armenian, Slavic, Persian, and even Syrian tastes.





## Why is Armenia so Underrated While Georgia Is Popular?

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Something every nomad at Bansko Nomad Fest asked as soon as we started talking about Armenia: How come Georgia got so popular while Armenia did not, when they are neighboring countries? TLDR: Programs, visa schemes, marketing budget.

Georgia: 95 + nationalities can walk in visa-free for a full year, plus the “Remotely From Georgia” digital nomad program, introduced in 2020, targets long-stay spenders.

Armenia: 60 + nationalities get 180 days, but no dedicated nomad visa. Visitors from key Asian markets (e.g., China, India) still need e-visas or invitations, adding friction.

Within 9 years, Georgia grew their visitor numbers by 350%, with tourist arrivals increasing from 1.4 million in 2010 to over 5 million by 2019. Georgian government was very strategic about the programs they set up; the visitors they were aiming to bring in were high-spending individuals, and the programs, like low-tax residency, spoke to the right audience.







## Best Season to Visit Armenia?

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While there is a newly built mountain resort, and apparently Armenia offers great skiing, I cannot quite testify to that, and let's say my standards are set high. I would suggest the **Spring and Autumn seasons are great for Yerevan**, as summers may get hot in these volcanic-stone jungles. Dilijan, on the contrary, would be perfect also, including the summer. The light breeze, fresh air, and **green hills all around make it a very pleasant getaway from big-city life.**

## Food, or All the Zhingyalov Hats

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In short, Armenian cuisine is an interesting fusion of Caucasus, Persian, and Levantine recipes and herbs, combined with some Eastern European comfort food. My absolute personal favorite was the local cheese khachapuri bread made in a hot oven and the Zhingyalov Hats, **a super thin lavash bread filled with up to 50 different local herbs.** Drink tan (ayran/kefir) afterward, and you will be set for a true gourmet experience.



# What Are The Locals Like?

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I wanted to finish talking about locals. Being a traveler, a visitor, or a nomad, there has hardly been a time in history when we were portrayed as more of an enemy than now. Even in places that have seen better days and times, thanks to the incoming visitors.

Armenia is not like that. **It feels like everyone is welcoming you.** People are genuinely happy that you took your time and money and made your way to their country. I say that after 1 week in Yerevan, **my network over there is 5x what my network is in Bratislava**, the capital of my homeland.

Cannot wait to come back in a few months and a few years. **To see how Armenia has changed since my last visit.** I'm pretty sure I will be blown away.

If you enjoyed my insights into tourism and nomadism, follow my soon-to-be-opened [coliving space](#) in the Azores, learn more about [life in the Azores](#) for digital nomads, or read more about my travels from all around the world at [milosh.online](#).





THE DILIJAN MASTER PLAN

# A LOOK AT THE INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY OF ARMENIA'S REMOTE WORK CAPITAL

in



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EDITOR IN CHIEF

in



**KATERINA  
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CEO AT GREEN ROCK

in



**NARE  
HAROYAN**

COO AT GREEN ROCK



FEATURING

## THE DILIJAN MASTER PLAN

### A LOOK AT THE INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY OF ARMENIA'S REMOTE WORK CAPITAL

Dilijan City has transformed the remote work scene in Armenia, emerging as the country's **first regional remote work capital beyond Yerevan**. This small mountainous city represents something far more different than just another co-working destination; it's becoming **the role model for a nationwide transformation** that could redefine how we think about economic development in the Armenian regions.

The city already has what digital nomads actually need, **not just what people think they need!** Yes, there's the obvious appeal of working remotely surrounded by forests and lakes, but walk into any coworking space or café and you'll hear Armenian, Russian, and English being spoken. **Signs throughout the city are often posted in three languages.** But language is just one piece!

The city has quietly built out the full ecosystem, including proper gyms where you can

maintain your routine, restaurants that serve food you'd actually want to eat regularly, entertainment options that **keep you engaged beyond the initial honeymoon period** with a new place, and festivals and events that give you reasons to stay connected to the community. Then there's the real tell, an international kindergarten and school opened recently, signaling that this isn't just about attracting solo travelers; **entire families are starting to see Dilijan as home.**





This matters because most places trying to attract remote workers get it backwards. They focus on the flashy stuff, the coworking spaces with ping pong tables and kombucha on tap, while missing what people actually care about **when deciding where to live and work long-term.**

When families start relocating to a place, everything changes. You're not just passing through anymore; **you're investing in the community.** Your kids are learning alongside local children. You're dealing with the same municipal services, shopping at the same stores, and **facing the same day-to-day realities as everyone else.** You become part of the place instead of just visiting it.



Paul Vatis and Alex Dantziguian in Dilijan City, Tavush Region, Armenia

## The Big Bet on Dilijan

Last month, I toured Dilijan with [Paul Vatis](#), my co-founder at [Nomad Armenia](#), and our first investor, [Alex Dantziguian](#). We were invited by [Green Rock](#), and what we saw was impressive in its scope and ambition. They're **investing a hundred million dollars into twenty-two different projects across the city**, including a hotel, a residential complex, a restaurant, a sports center, a startup incubator, a coworking space, and much more. But the real story isn't the dollar amount or even the project count. It's that **every single one of these investments talks to the others.** It's all designed to work together as one ecosystem.

Most importantly, Green Rock gets something that many investors don't; you can't build a remote work destination by just adding amenities to an existing place. **You have to rethink how the whole place works.** They're thinking like urban planners all the way to actually collaborating with the local authorities to develop an entire city master plan. **That's rare. And expensive. And risky.** But it's also the only way to create something that actually works instead of just looking good in marketing materials.

## Why This Matters Beyond Dilijan

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I keep calling Dilijan the first domino! Once this model works, and it's already working, other Armenian cities will start copying it. Right now, Dilijan is absorbing most of the remote workers and digital nomads who want to live outside Yerevan. But cities have natural capacity limits. Eventually, Dilijan won't be able to house everyone who wants to live there. Housing gets expensive, coworking spaces fill up, and restaurants get crowded. That's when the spillover begins.



The nearest towns start looking attractive to people who love the Dilijan model but can't get in. Maybe it's Ijevan, maybe it's Stepanavan, maybe it's Alaverdi, **maybe it's smaller places that nobody's talking about yet.** But here's the key: these second-wave cities won't have to start from scratch. They'll have Dilijan's proof of concept. **They'll see exactly what worked and what didn't.** Local investors who were too nervous to bet on an untested idea will suddenly see the playbook right in front of them.



This is already happening in other countries. Portugal started with Lisbon, then Porto, then smaller cities most people had never heard of. Mexico began with Mexico City and Playa del Carmen, then spread to dozens of smaller places. Estonia went from just Tallinn to having **digital nomad programs in towns with populations under ten thousand**.

The beautiful thing about the domino effect is that it gets easier as it spreads. **The first city has to convince** investors, government officials, and local businesses that remote work destinations are real. And guess what? **Armenia is small enough that this could happen fast.**



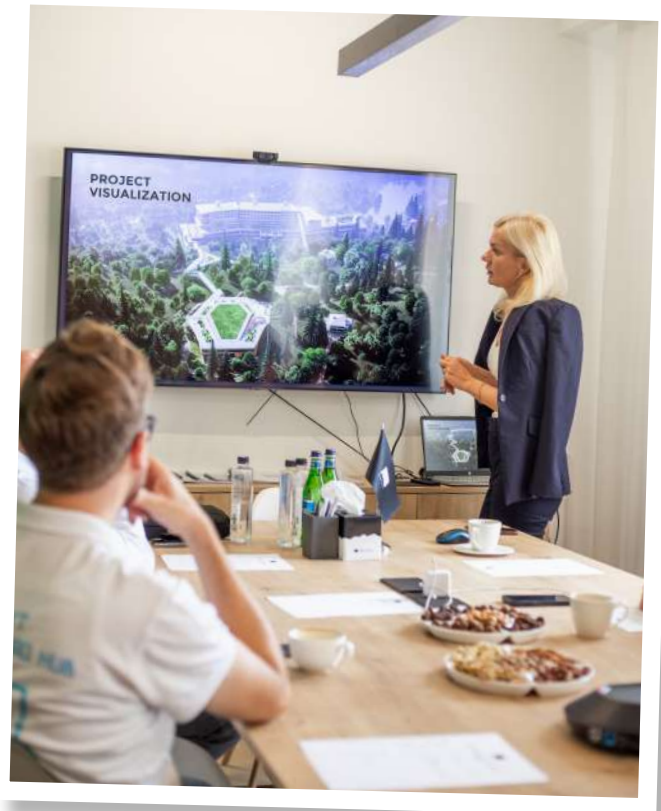
However, none of this happens without someone being willing to go first. Digital nomads won't come to places without proper infrastructure. Meanwhile, investors won't build that infrastructure without proof that nomads will actually show up and pay for it. So nothing happens. Towns with incredible potential, beautiful locations, low costs of living, and interesting local cultures **just sit there being "promising" year after year** while everyone waits for someone else to make the first move.

Nomad Armenia and Green Rock have already found common ground on a long-term plan to attract and keep international digital nomads in Dilijan. In fact, Green Rock has started from something as simple as **offering global nomads rental desks in their HQ in Dilijan** to help them feel welcomed and connected.

# Leading by Example

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During our meetings with [Katerina Danekina](#), Green Rock's CEO, and [Nare Haroyan](#), their COO, one thing really impressed me. Despite having luxury offices in Yerevan, **they based their entire team of seventy people in Dilijan**. Every single employee either had to be in Dilijan in the first place or relocate there with their families. They're not just investing in Dilijan; **they're betting their own company's daily operations on it.**



They're learning firsthand what works and what doesn't when you try to run an international business from a small Armenian mountain town. They're also proving to locals and potential residents that yes, **you really can do serious work from here.**

The talent they're attracting backs this up. I met Sona Kourtian, who joined as a project manager after working on NEOM in Saudi Arabia. When someone goes from one of the world's most high-profile development projects to Dilijan, it **says something about what's happening in Armenia's remote work capital.**



# Building from the Ground Up

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What I really appreciate about Green Rock's approach is how they're thinking about the local community. They've set up a foundation that improves local sports facilities, brings in environmentally friendly municipal services, and helps local businesses upgrade their operations. **This isn't charity; it's smart business.**

Too many development projects create resentment because locals see international visitors getting all the benefits while they get pushed aside. Green Rock is making sure the community improves alongside the international facilities, so **everyone wins as the city grows**. It's a cycle that feeds itself once you get it started.



One thing we discussed with Green Rock was to **focus on developing local remote work talent**. Instead of just importing international workers, they're training young people from Dilijan to join the global remote work market while staying in their hometown. And it builds natural **bridges between international visitors and the local community**.

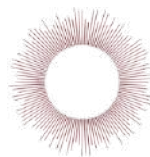
The domino is starting to fall. The question now is how far the effects will spread.







**KARMRAKHAYT PLAYGROUND**  
**THE LARGEST FREE PUBLIC**  
**PLAYGROUND IN YEREVAN**



**KERON**  
foundation

The largest free public playground in Yerevan is set to open this September! Covering 2,000 m<sup>2</sup> in the Circular Park, “Secrets of the Hidden River - Karmrakhayt” will be a magical, inclusive world for children aged 0 to 12.







This is the first of three next-generation playgrounds developed by the Keron Development Foundation in partnership with the Kentron Administrative District. Each playground is a story-driven environment designed to inspire movement, exploration, and inclusive play for all.

A TOAST TO COLLABORATION

# OFFERING ARMENIAN WINE AT COWORKING SPACES

in



**MATHEW  
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF





## A TOAST TO COLLABORATION OFFERING ARMENIAN WINE AT COWORKING SPACES

How do you enter the world's biggest market with the world's oldest wine? It's simple; you **find the most interesting people in the room and hand them a glass!** Let me rephrase the question to how do we get Armenian wine onto the phone screens of millions of potential wine lovers in China on WeChat? Do we drop \$100,000 on paid ads that everyone will just scroll past? How about we utilize **the network of Chinese digital nomads right here in Armenia?**

Coworking spaces could **collaborate with wineries to offer wine tasting experiences** to their communities on certain days or even

offer a glass of wine at certain times every day for remote workers. This is a powerful way to leverage community to **drive experience-based marketing.** It moves both businesses beyond selling a commodity (desk space, bottles of wine) and allows them to **sell an aspirational lifestyle and a curated community,** which is far more valuable in today's market.

The strategy moves away from the old model of interruption marketing (paying to put your ad in front of a million disinterested people) and towards influence marketing and community building (finding 100 influential

people who will authentically share you with their 10,000 engaged followers).

While I've used the Chinese market as a specific example here, this strategy is not geographically limited. The core principle is bypassing expensive, impersonal ads to instead leverage **the authentic voices of culturally connected digital nomads.** This approach of building trust through community and storytelling can be effectively applied to enter any market, **from North America to Europe and beyond.**



# Do it The Selina Way

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Remote workers document their travels on social media platforms and travel blogs. The global digital nomad community has grown into 40 million travelers in 2025 and is expected to reach 60 million in 2030, the majority of whom are passionate about sharing their unique experiences online.



The model for this strategy is already proving successful elsewhere. Selina Coworking in Lisbon and Porto began organizing local wine tasting events for its community of remote workers. As a result, global travel blogs and social media feeds were flooded with genuine posts, stories, and articles praising Portuguese wine. This wasn't paid content; it was **authentic advocacy from a trusted source**, travelers sharing their experiences.

This **wine-and-coworking collaboration is a growing global trend**, and it's one Armenia is uniquely positioned to capitalize on.



## 6,100 Years in the Making

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So why should the cradle of winemaking be left behind? [Armenian coworking spaces and wineries](#) have a [golden opportunity](#) to team up and create memorable events. This could range from exclusive, curated tastings with winemakers to a simple, weekly “Wine Wednesday” where remote workers can unwind with a glass.

Several coworking spaces in Yerevan have started offering wine to their members, [with some even launching their own private labels](#).



A1 Art Space on Abovyan, founded by an Italian expat, Fabio Lenzi, is taking it to the next level. They run regular wine events and even hold a biennial competition to design their custom wine bottles. Ground Zero Venture Café, founded by an American-Armenian, Karén Gyulbudaghyán, has been on this wave for a while. And by the way, this is where I met those Chinese digital nomads.

# Why Wine and Work Actually Work

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The success of this model isn't just anecdotal; it's supported by principles of psychology and neuroscience that make the combination uniquely powerful:

Remote work can increase cortisol, the stress hormone, because of the isolation. The ethanol in wine potentiates GABA, a neurotransmitter that reduces anxiety and promotes relaxation, making it a perfect fit for an end-of-day unwind.

Our limbic system, the brain's center for memory and emotion, prioritizes experiences tied to smell. The complex bouquet of wine creates a strong, lasting memory anchor.

The psychological Von Restorff Effect states that an item that stands out from its surroundings is more likely to be remembered and shared. A wine tasting in a work environment is a distinctive event that breaks the routine, making it highly memorable and shareable.



The promise of wine after work triggers a release of dopamine, the motivation and reward chemical. This can be a powerful tool to encourage members to stay longer and engage more deeply with the community.

If we put together all the above-mentioned facts, we can easily conclude that a wine event in a coworking space is neurologically optimized to be an experience that is enjoyed, remembered, and shared.

The formula is clear and proven. For wineries, it offers direct access to a global, influential, and affluent audience. For coworking spaces, it provides a premium perk that builds community and enhances member retention. For Armenia, it represents a sustainable and authentic marketing strategy that leverages its greatest historical asset.

It's not rocket science; it's a simple concept waiting to be fully embraced. The roots of wine are here. The modern workforce is here. The pioneering spaces are already leading the way. Now is the time for a concerted effort to pour a glass for the world and let them taste 6,100 years of history.



# TECH EVENTS



with

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TECH BLOGGER

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**SEPT 7**

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Datafest



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**SEPT 12-14**

"Push the Limits of GenAI" Hackathon



**SEPT 14**







Software Engineering Meetup

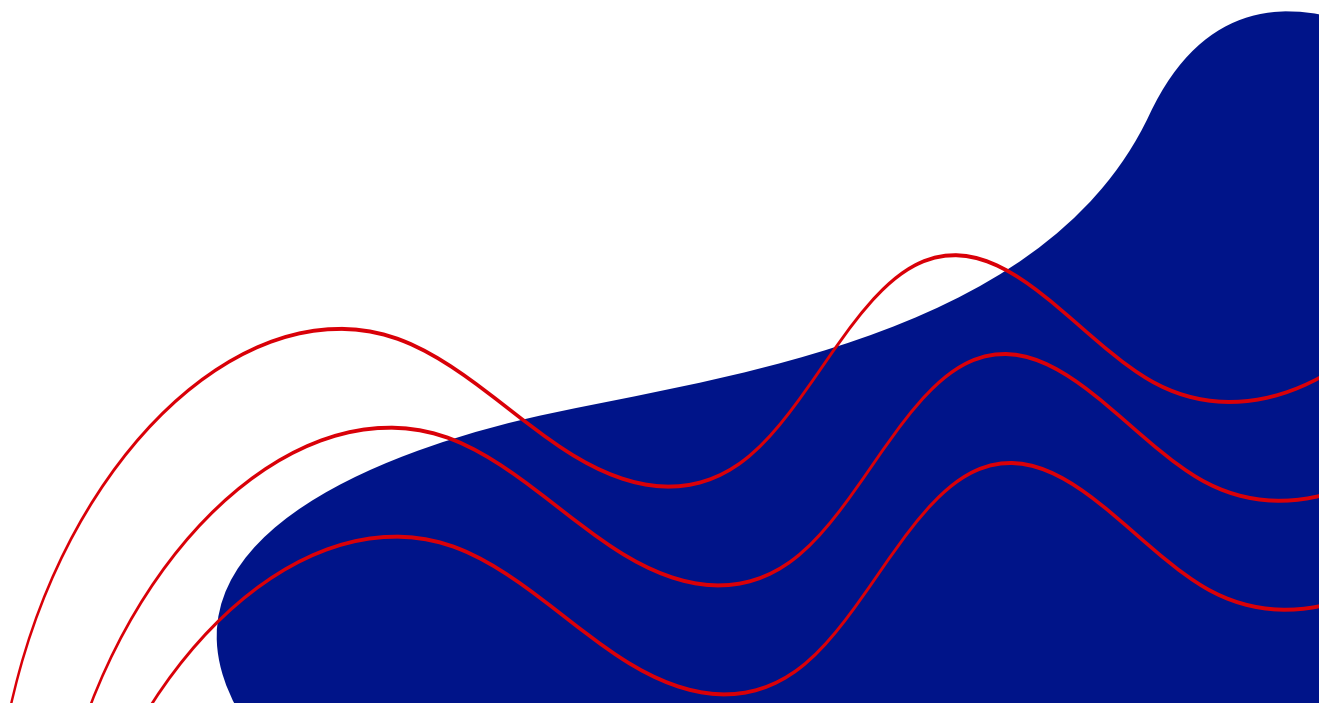


**SEPT 18**

AI translation and verification



<b>SEPT 18</b>	GEN AI meetup	
<b>SEPT 15-19</b>	Observatory and Big Data	
<b>SEPT 16</b>	Attract Financing Through Alternative Investment Instruments	
<b>SEPT 18</b>	GEN AI meetup	
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WAR AND WINE

# HOW HUMANITY PRESERVED ITS OLDEST DRINK THROUGH ITS DARKEST HOURS



**DIANA  
KHANDILYAN**

FOUNDER OF GLASS NOMAD



## WAR AND WINE

# HOW HUMANITY PRESERVED ITS OLDEST DRINK THROUGH ITS DARKEST HOURS

Winston Churchill

“Remember, gentlemen, it’s not just France we are fighting for; it’s Champagne.”

When war breaks out, people rush to save their children, their homes, and their lives. But in every corner of history, there have been those who also rushed to save something else: **their wine**.

From the caves of Armenia, where the world’s oldest winemakers pressed their grapes, to monasteries hiding barrels from invaders; from Burgundy’s cellars walled off against Nazi looters to Lebanon’s Bekaa Valley harvested under sniper fire; to Armenian vintners pressing grapes while shells fell overhead, **humanity has always risked everything to protect its oldest drink**.



It is something stranger, deeper; a drink of memory, identity, and survival. In the darkest hours of history, when everything else could be lost, people chose to save their vintages.



# Wine Against the Elements

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Long before massive wars, nature tested humanity's devotion to wine.

When Mount Vesuvius erupted in 79 CE, Pompeii's vineyards were buried alongside its people. Yet archaeologists later uncovered amphorae sealed with resin, still carrying traces of Roman vintages. *In those blackened jars, wine quite literally outlived the city that made it.*

Earthquakes toppled villages and cellars from Armenia to Italy, spilling amphorae and shattering barrels. But vines, deep-rooted and stubborn, almost always grew back. Each replanting was an act of defiance, a refusal to let catastrophe erase culture.



In the 19th century, phylloxera, a tiny louse, devastated Europe's vineyards, killing millions of acres. Entire wine regions stood on the brink of extinction. And yet, people found a way forward by grafting European vines onto American rootstocks.

What makes this perseverance remarkable is that wine is not like wheat or potatoes. Potatoes can be planted and harvested in months; wheat renews quickly. But a vineyard is an act of patience. New vines take years to yield usable grapes and nearly a decade before expressing their true character in wine.

So when people replanted after volcanoes, earthquakes, and plagues, they weren't feeding themselves for tomorrow. They were planting for a harvest they might never taste, bottles their children or grandchildren would one day open and remember.



# Wine Against Invaders

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If nature tested wine with fire and quakes, human history tested it with conquest. Armies destroyed more than cities; they ripped out vines, drained cellars, and outlawed winemaking altogether. Yet time after time, the vine, and the wine, endured.

When Muslim conquests spread across Europe and the Middle East between the 7th and 15th centuries, vineyards were uprooted in the name of faith. Wine, declared forbidden, might easily have vanished. And yet it did not. Across the Mediterranean, monasteries and churches became guardians of the vine.

In Spain and Sicily, monks disguised vineyards as orchards or raisin farms. In Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon, monasteries produced sacramental wines for Christian rites, traditions that survive to this day. These cloisters became living archives of pressing, fermenting, and storing through centuries of prohibition and conflict.

Closer to home, in Armenia and Georgia under Ottoman rule, vineyards were taxed heavily, sometimes uprooted outright. Yet villagers replanted, often hiding vines among fruit trees. Because in the Caucasus, wine was never just a drink; **it was sacrament, memory, and defiance bottled together.**

Even Western Europe bore scars. Viking raiders looted monasteries that held Burgundy's oldest

vineyards. Later, wars between kingdoms saw barrels seized as spoils and vines burned as symbols of conquest. Burning a vineyard was never just destruction; it was humiliation, an attempt to erase culture itself.

And yet, the vines always returned. To protect a cellar was to whisper to the future: we are still here, and we will drink again.





# Wine Under the Third Reich

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Isn't it curious that although Adolf Hitler never drank wine, he worshiped it? Across occupied Europe, his armies seized the finest vintages, sending them to Germany or up into the Bavarian Alps, where the Kehlsteinhaus, the "Eagle's Nest," became a fortress not just of stone, but of stolen culture.

But wine was not surrendered easily. The book *Wine and War* (Donald and Petie Kladstrup) tells how French families fought back. In Burgundy, vintners built false walls in their cellars, hiding bottles behind decoys. In Bordeaux, barrels were buried in the ground. In Champagne, producers relabeled grand cuvées as ordinary table wine, tricking Nazi officers into overlooking treasures.

One story recalls winemakers who, when German soldiers demanded to taste the best, deliberately served thin, acidic wines, saving the true vintages for the future. Protecting a bottle from 1929 wasn't about profit. It was about pride, heritage, and refusing to let an occupier erase centuries of tradition.

When Allied troops reached the Eagle's Nest in 1945, they found the dictator's stolen treasure: row after row of wines he never drank. Soldiers opened the bottles and drank them on his terrace. It wasn't just celebration. It was defiance, a way of saying, "You tried to take everything, but even the wine doesn't belong to you anymore."

## The Bekaa Valley: Vintages Under Fire

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War tested wine again in the late 20th century, this time in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. For fifteen years, the country was torn apart by civil war. Artillery thundered in the mountains, bullets cracked across the fields, and yet the vineyards kept producing.

At Château Musar, winemakers risked their lives to bring in the harvest. Grapes were picked under sniper fire and rushed to the cellar as shells rained down. Barrels trembled with every blast, yet fermentation never stopped. Year after year, the winery bottled its vintages.

# All But One!

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1984 became known as the “impossible vintage.” That year, fighting was so intense grapes could not be transported from the Bekaa Valley to the winery in Ghazir. Officially, the vintage was never released. And yet, despite all odds, a small quantity was made, not for market, but for

memory. Today, if you have good connections or the winery chooses to share, you may taste this elusive 1984, kept like a relic of survival.

A vintage never meant to exist, and yet it does. A liquid reminder of how fragile, and how enduring, wine can be.

## Harvest Under Fire

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If France showed us defiance and Lebanon showed us endurance, **Armenia reminds us of origins**. This is where winemaking began, six thousand years ago in the Areni-1 cave, the world’s oldest known winery. From the beginning, wine was more than agriculture. **It has been ritual, memory, and identity.**

That truth came sharply into focus again in 2020, during the war. In the highlands of Khachik, the team at Keush Sparkling Wine faced a harvest unlike any other. The vineyards stood within earshot of shelling. Farmers picked grapes as artillery echoed in the distance. Trucks carried fruit under skies clouded with smoke. At times, it was not clear whether the winemakers or the harvest would make it back.





And yet, they brought in the vintage. They pressed the grapes, bottled the wine, and refused to break the chain. Just as French families bricked up their cellars in WWII and just as Musar bottled during Lebanon's war, Keush made wine in the middle of conflict, not for profit, but for continuity. **For identity. For the promise that Armenia's story, like its vines, cannot be uprooted.**

In every glass of Armenian wine, you taste not only volcanic soils and high-altitude sun, but also defiance, **the determination of a people who have carried their wine through fire, famine, invasion, and war.**

## A Toast to Survival

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From France's hidden cellars to Lebanon's bomb-shaken barrels to Armenia's highland vineyards, wine has endured what few other creations ever could. War has taken lives, land, and monuments, but never the vine. Again and again, **people risked everything to save their vintages**, not because wine was necessary for survival, but because it was necessary for meaning.



And here in Armenia, that meaning is as close as your next glass. The 2020 vintage carries not just flavors of altitude and volcanic soil, but the echoes of a harvest brought in under fire.

So seek it out. Open a bottle. And when you drink it, think about what people endured so that you could sit here, safely, with a glass in your hand. Be kind, be grateful, and let every sip remind you of the sacrifice and love poured into that wine.

Because in the end, wine is never just drink. **It is survival, memory, and identity, bottled for you to taste.**

*Skip the post-summer blues.*

# Work, connect, and explore Essaouira this October!

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BUILDING A BRIDGE TO ARMENIA

# MAKING LIFE ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL



**RUBEN  
SAMARYAN**

FOUNDER OF JACK BOT





## BUILDING A BRIDGE TO ARMENIA MAKING LIFE ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL

My friend Andranik lost both of his legs. For him, a simple trip to a coffee shop or a walk through the city isn't simple at all. It's a frustrating maze of obstacles most of us don't even have to think about. I've watched him deal with this every day here in Armenia, and it's heartbreaking. It's more than just a physical challenge; it's the constant, heavy feeling of being left behind.



Andranik's story is what drives me. If we want Armenia to be a true home for everyone—from digital nomads and their families to people with disabilities—we can't just talk about being welcoming. We have to prove it by building a country with everyone in mind.

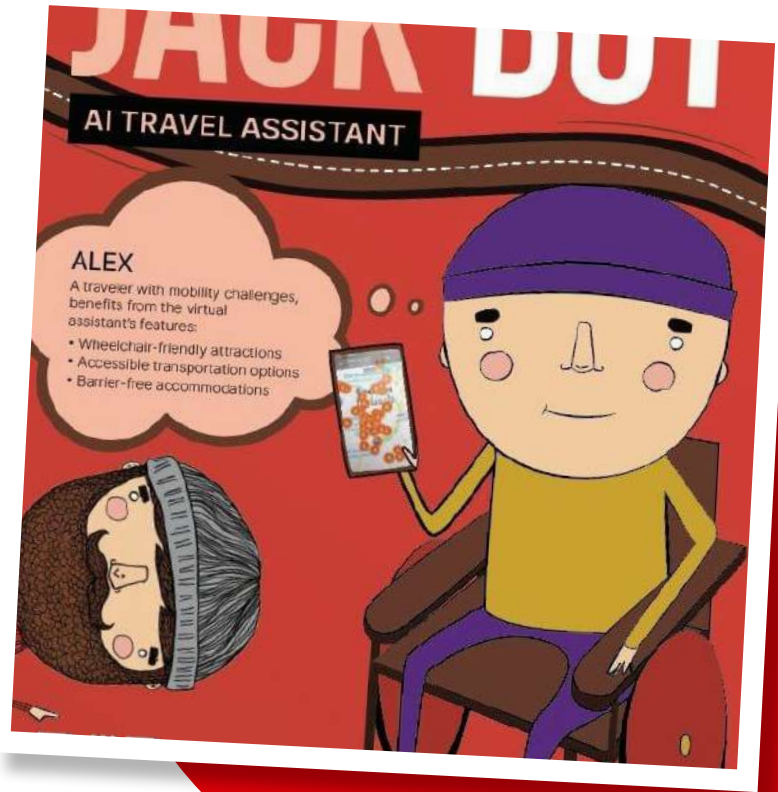
That's why we created Jack Bot



Think of Jack Bot as a guide to a more inclusive life. We're building an "accessibility layer" for Armenia, a digital tool that gives people the support they need not just to get by, but to truly live.

Imagine a map that shows you child-friendly parks, accessible schools, and safe neighborhoods for your family. A resource that tells you exactly where to find reliable medical care or connects you with your community or a place of worship.

And for people like Andranik, we're creating a tool that helps him navigate the city, find a job, get government services, and connect with companies that genuinely want to welcome him.



This isn't just about helping a few people. It's about making Armenia a more robust and welcoming place for everyone. When a country shows it can take care of its most vulnerable citizens, it becomes a home where anyone, from anywhere, can feel safe.

Our mission is to help people not just visit Armenia but to truly live here. We're building that future, one accessible step at a time.



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Helping Children and Young Adults on their Journey  
of Conquering Cancer in Armenia

*Barev it means hello!*



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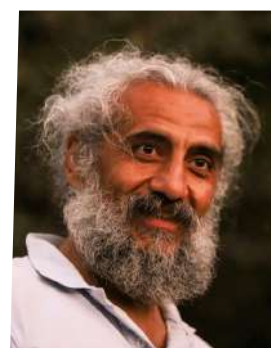
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# CREDITS AND SPECIAL THANKS



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MINISTRY OF ECONOMY OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

**ArMEniA**  
The Hidden  
Track



SPECIAL THANKS TO THE TOURISM  
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# LIFE IN ARMENIA

FOR DIGITAL NOMAD FAMILIES

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