

LIFE IN ARMENIA

FOR DIGITAL NOMAD FAMILIES

NOV, 16TH 2025 | NO. 32 | LIFE IN ARMENIA

THE COUNTRY OF 'FIRSTS'

WHY ARMENIA IS THE FIRST PLACE TO BUILD A CAREER (& SO MUCH MORE)

THE NEW INFRASTRUCTURE OF HOPE

WHY ARMENIA'S 6G LABS TODAY MEAN YOUR GRANDCHILDREN STAY TOMORROW

AND THAT'S THE PROBLEM ...

YOUR BUILDING MANAGER IN ARMENIA IS PROBABLY A FIREFIGHTER!

10 DAYS IN THE DEBED CANYON

THE LEED ADVANTAGE FOR TECH COMPANIES IN ARMENIA

DATA DIASPORA, AND THE VINES THAT BIND

WHAT GRAPE TELLS US ABOUT THE BIRTHPLACE OF WINE

THE SMALL COUNTRY THINKING BIG

HOW YEREVAN'S STARTUPS, FOOD, AND CULTURE RESHAPED MY IDEA OF POST-SOVIET PROGRESS

ORGANIC DOMINATION ON LINKEDIN

STRATEGIES OF ARMENIA'S #1 AND #2 LINKEDIN CREATORS

ARMENIA IS NOT WHAT YOU THINK!

THE 3-MILLION-USER MARKET THAT PUSHED A 60-MILLION-USER APP TO GO ENGLISH



MATHEW ZEIN

EDITOR'S LETTER

Last month, I was invited to give a keynote speech about Life in Armenia magazine at the World Tourism Communication Forum. As I took the stage, I was worried about a million things! This time was unlike any other! International media representatives, including the BBC and Forbes, were in the audience. What could I possibly have to say to impress them? It was just me and my Life in Armenia!

I told the story from day one, from 0 readers back in 2023, all the way to the 25,000+ we have today. I explained exactly what, why, and how I did it. By the time I said "Thanks for your attention," I got a standing ovation.

That moment felt like the end of "Chapter 1" in my journey with the magazine and the beginning of "Chapter 2" to go beyond the expectations in 2026.

Mathew Zein



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Customer support reimagined

5G
Ucom



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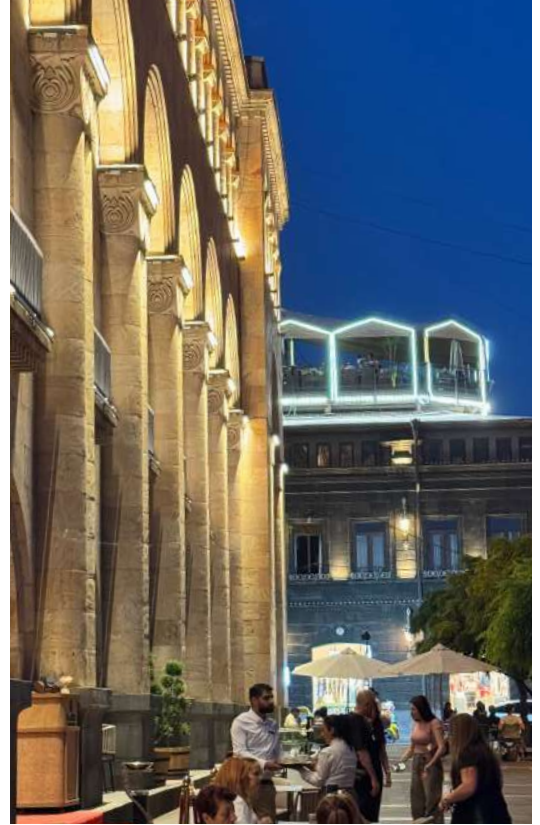
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THE COUNTRY OF 'FIRSTS'

WHY ARMENIA IS THE FIRST PLACE TO BUILD A CAREER (& SO MUCH MORE)



Customer support reimagined



**HARMICK
AZARIAN**

CO-FOUNDER AND CEO AT [Gampr.ai](https://gampr.ai)

THE COUNTRY OF 'FIRSTS'

WHY ARMENIA IS THE FIRST PLACE TO BUILD A CAREER (& SO MUCH MORE)

I can still picture the piles of watermelons along the side of the bumpy highway as we drove from Yerevan airport to the city center. Stall after stall of watermelons, at 5 am, the darkness of unlit streets was occasionally broken by a small light bulb on an open market stall.

I was speechless. I had never seen unlit streets. Or potholed, bumpy roads. Or watermelon stalls on the side of a road, for that matter. It was 2001, I was 14 years old, and it was my first trip to Armenia.

I was a typical British-born teenager - into skateboarding, making

music, weird hairstyles, and hanging out in parks with my friends - far away from contemplating state building or the effect of poverty on future generations.

But even then, I wasn't prepared for an Armenia that wasn't perfect. Like many millennial teens, I kept a diary, and as my diary entry from this day confirms, "[This wasn't the Armenia I imagined...](#)"

As we continued along the road, a member of our group decided to stop and buy a watermelon. We got out of the car, and the couple at the stall welcomed us with warm smiles. To my bemusement, they offered us all a coffee,

and before we knew it, we were drinking warm Armenian coffee on the side of the road around a tiny table and chairs, with the sun rising slowly in the background.

More than Garni, Geghard, or even the first view of Ararat - this moment was most memorable for me. How incredible, I thought, that despite me or my family members not being in Armenia for hundreds of years, I was able to talk to this couple, at the side of the road, in a language both they and I understood. In fact, we spoke so much that despite meeting as strangers, when we left them a half hour later, they felt like old friends.



My 14-year-old self was motivated. A further diary entry 3 months later proves it. “**I just want to stop everything and go back to Armenia and help build it**”. That’s some intense career coaching.

Of course, I did not stop everything and go. That would have been a little strange at 14. I stayed in the UK, I studied, built a career travelling the world and doing what seemed like very important work. But that trip in 2001 stayed with me. In a kind of parallel job track, Armenia became a place of unexpected firsts for me - in so many ways, but particularly for my career.

It started in 2005. I was studying music & software engineering at a University in the UK. The Armenian pop music scene was having a renaissance. A new song called “Qami Pchi” was taking the world by storm (some of you might know this), before iTunes, Spotify...Qami Pchi was in fact the first Armenian song ever to be sold digitally, online, for \$0.99 per download - I know because I made the website that sold it. We had tons of downloads from all around the world. The team was happy. I was proud to help - and this is how I first learned about e-commerce technology.

Like many music students, I had a side gig as a DJ at the time, and during that same summer visit to Yerevan, some friends suggested we organise a ‘club event’ on the newly built North Avenue, a chance for diaspora visitors to get together and have fun. It was huge. There was a line for entry (the likes of which I have never seen in Armenia since). Almost 500 people came. After the event, we couldn’t believe what had happened. On top of that, we made money. **The first time I ever made money for myself was not in London, it was in Armenia.** I was able to buy my first car. (Thank you again to everyone who paid the entry fee.) The most interesting part for us was that we had some cool tech that let visitors send SMS messages and see them live on a big screen. (for the first time in Armenia, if I am not mistaken). This is where I first learned about SMS marketing technology and content moderation.



The firsts continued, in 2007, together with friends, we held the first Armenian youth forum in the world - in Manchester - where we held seminars on topics like the potential for repatriation to Armenia and its associated income tax rates...(to a room full of many blank stares). It was formal, but it was a first. This is where I first learned about organising events and conferences.

During the post-forum party, a stranger mentioned to me that I should start an Armenian music TV channel. It seemed difficult, TV is expensive, I thought. But thanks to the wonders of technology, in 2014, Toot TV was born - the first global Armenian music TV channel, based in London and broadcasting in a futuristic 1080p HD quality. It started in my bedroom, but we soon moved to a server room and built a small studio team that quickly expanded to cable networks around the world - and in 2016, we started our first broadcasts in Armenia itself. This is how I first learned about using cloud technologies to do things that would traditionally cost huge amounts of money.



Harmick Azarian and Vahagn Zakaryan, co-founders of Gampr.ai at Digitec 2025 in Yerevan, Armenia

Fast forward to 2025, and the firsts have continued to this day. In 2017, after finally moving to Armenia, I was lucky enough to head the software engineering team at TUMO, as we opened the first TUMO center in Paris, (notably Armenia's first international education export product, thanks to its wonderful founders) then further on, working at Armenia's information systems agency, where with the help of Estonian experts, we created Armenia's first national portal of public services (<https://hartak.am>) - including an English version, with information on how to be a digital nomad in Armenia.

Then, finally, after much reflection & soul searching, 4 months ago, I gained the confidence, belief, and energy to co-found and create my first tech start-up (gampr.ai), where we hope to revolutionize the world of boring customer support systems.



Harmick Azarian and Vahagn Zakaryan,
co-founders of Gampr.ai at Digitec
2025 in Yerevan, Armenia

To these words, I can bring many technical counterarguments, like low rates of tax, safety and security, dynamic growth, freedom, burgeoning tech ecosystem, and, of course, what I can only describe as an open-air theme park for restaurant lovers.

But I would rather suggest this: **there is a small piece of land called Armenia, and despite all odds, it is still here.** It is ready to welcome you in 2025, to listen to you, to teach you, and to learn from you. It is ready to drink coffee with you, to share a story, and to support and nurture you. It is ready to welcome you just like I was welcomed when buying a watermelon in 2001. It is ready to let you experiment with cloud technologies, music events, and forums, and it will not judge you if you mess up. It is ready to show you its tech start-ups that are building software and sending satellites to space. It will show you its companies that process payments for businesses all around the world, or it will

introduce you to the next generation of Armenian teens learning AI at places like TUMO. Be sure that after all this, you might meet Armenia as a stranger, but definitely leave as an old friend.

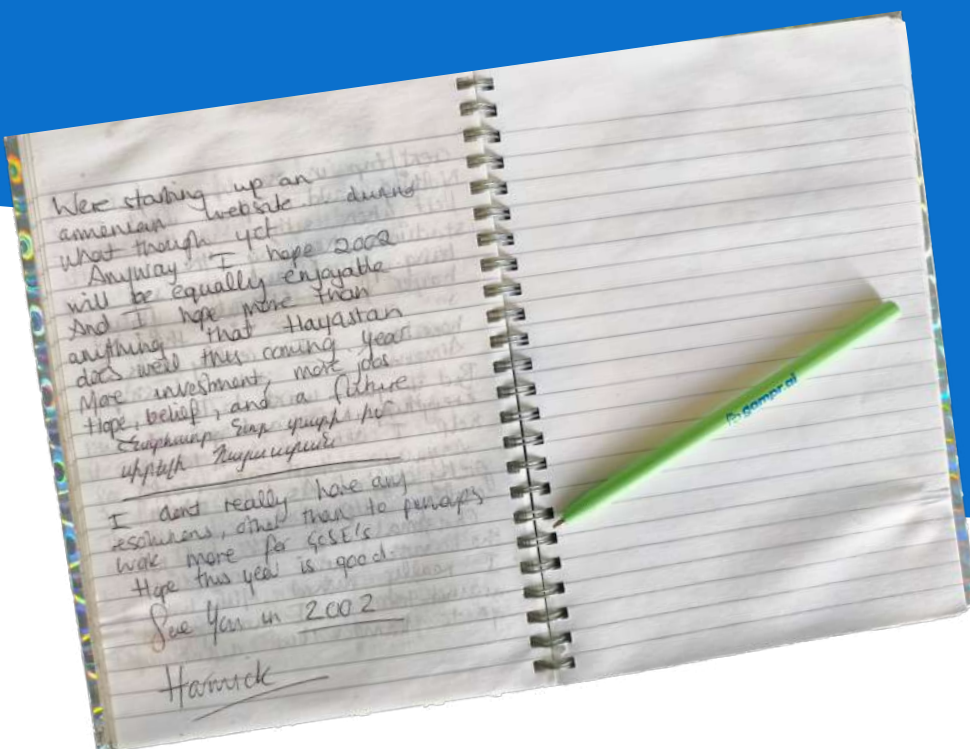
And for anyone who says to you that Armenia is the 'last place to think of when building a career', I hope that this small story (and the story of many others) might remind you that in many unexpected, strange & purposeful ways...it can actually become the first place to learn about e-commerce, cloud technologies, event planning, but most importantly, to learn about yourself.

And as the year 2025 draws to a close, I will leave you with some last words from the diary entry of my 14-year-old self that oddly, still ring true today:

31.12.2001.

"We're starting up an Armenian website...dunno what though yet....Anyway, I hope that 2002 will be equally enjoyable, and I hope more than anything that Armenia does well this coming year, more investment, more jobs. Hope, belief and a future. Happy new year, my dear Armenia".

This was my final diary entry. I guess I got busy,



THE NEW INFRASTRUCTURE OF HOPE

WHY ARMENIA'S 6G LABS TODAY MEAN YOUR GRANDCHILDREN STAY TOMORROW

5G
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**MATHEW
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF

CASE STUDY

WHY ARMENIA'S 6G LABS TODAY MEAN YOUR GRANDCHILDREN STAY TOMORROW

There's a map that exists nowhere but in the minds of ambitious young people everywhere. On this map, some places glow with possibility while others fade into the margins. This map is why many leave their hometowns **in search of better infrastructure and opportunities**. Armenia is no exception!

On October 14, 2025, Ucom and Nokia signed a memorandum of understanding that **barely made headlines outside telecom circles**. The technical language described the joint development of 6G networks, collaborative research, and knowledge transfer. But buried in that terminology was a blueprint for **making staying in Armenia competitive with leaving**.

I rarely cover agreements signed by different organizations, but this one is an exception because of the impact it will have on **the country I've chosen as my home away from home** for years to come.



Ռալֆ Յիրիկյան

Ռոլֆ Վերներ

Attracting Nokia to Armenia

We all agree that Nokia is a telecom giant, and a company of this stature didn't wake up one day, spin a globe, and randomly decide Armenia looked interesting. Nokia doesn't operate by chance. They move toward capability, toward proven partners who can execute on crucial infrastructure, and **toward markets where the groundwork has already been laid.** And this time, that market is Armenia!

[Ucom](#) contributed to creating those conditions through years of methodical infrastructure development that transformed Armenia from a country with connectivity to **one where connectivity could be taken for granted.**



There's a massive difference between those two states, and that difference is what **makes international partnerships possible.**

As I explained in a previous article, Ucom's 5G coverage rollout wasn't just about faster phones or better streaming. It **was about proving execution capacity.** It demonstrated that Armenia could absorb, implement, and optimize advanced telecommunications technology **at the pace of developed markets.** That kind of proof matters when a company like Nokia is deciding where to invest research and development resources.



A partnership for the joint development of 6G networks. **Not deployment.** Not purchasing. Development. That single word contains worlds of meaning. It means Armenia stops being a customer and becomes a participant in defining what comes next in global telecommunications. It means Armenian engineers get their hands on problems that haven't yet been solved, **working alongside the people inventing the solutions.**

For those unfamiliar, keep in mind that Armenia is quite small, with a population of only about 3 million. I'm confident that knowing this might entirely change your perspective on this topic!

Defining Tomorrow's Telecom

Let's be clear about what infrastructure actually solves. It doesn't fix poverty. It doesn't eliminate corruption. It doesn't automatically create jobs or reverse brain drain. Infrastructure is not a panacea, and anyone selling it as one is selling fantasy.



Ralph Yirikian

General Director
at Ucom

"Infrastructure solves the fundamental barrier. It eliminates the baseline excuse."

The telecom infrastructure gap drives migration in both obvious and subtle ways. The obvious version: you can't build certain kinds of companies in places without reliable connectivity. The subtle version: even when connectivity exists, if it's at a tier below what's available elsewhere, every ambitious person **doing math about their future is calculating that differential.**



That constant, grinding awareness of the opportunity cost of staying is what hollows out countries. Not all at once. Just one brilliant mind at a time, making perfectly **rational individual decisions that collectively drain a nation** of the human capital it needs most.

When connectivity in Armenian regions matches that in First World countries, **one variable drops out of the equation**. Armenia is positioning itself at the edge of what's next. That positioning matters, not because 6G networks will suddenly make Armenia a paradise, but because being part of the conversation about what comes next is **different from always being two steps behind**.



Ralph Yirikian

General Director
at Ucom

“Ucom is building infrastructure that makes staying in Armenia competitive with leaving. Not superior; that’s not the claim, and making that claim would be dishonest. But competitive. Viable.”



What the Partnership Actually Means

Customers buy solutions to problems that have already been solved. Development partners work on problems that haven't yet been solved. Customers implement existing technology. Development partners shape emerging technology. The Ucom-Nokia partnership positions Armenia in the second category. **This is a joint development.**

That context matters more than it might seem. Technologies don't just drop into markets and work identically everywhere. They require adaptation, optimization, and sometimes fundamental rethinking based on local conditions, geography, population distribution, usage patterns, and existing infrastructure. Armenia's terrain, mountainous and with a population concentrated in specific areas, but with connectivity needs across diverse geography, **creates unique challenges that require unique solutions.**



The memorandum of understanding, signed on October 14, outlined specifics: collaborative research into 6G network technologies, knowledge-transfer programs, and joint exploration of use cases tailored to Armenia's needs and opportunities.

But beyond the specifics, it represents something that seemed improbable even five years ago, a major global telecommunications company viewing Armenia as **a place where meaningful development work can happen**, where the partnership will be mutual rather than one-directional.

What Your Grandchildren, Inherit

The real test of any infrastructure investment is measured in generations. The question isn't whether 6G development makes Armenia more connected in 2025. The question is whether the knowledge

transfer, the capability building, the positioning within global technology networks, creates conditions where, in 2045 or 2055, a young Armenian engineer with a brilliant idea **doesn't automatically start mapping routes elsewhere**.

Your grandchildren won't care about memorandums of understanding or 5G rollout timelines. But they will live inside the consequences of whether Armenia in the 2020s **built infrastructure that enabled staying** or infrastructure that slowed leaving.

And that's why 6G labs today mean your grandchildren might stay tomorrow!



A DECADE APART

THE WILD BEAUTY AND QUIET REVIVAL OF ARMENIA



**CHRISTOPHE
CASILLAS**

COMMUNITIES BUILDER & WRITER

A DECADE APART THE WILD BEAUTY AND QUIET REVIVAL OF ARMENIA

We arrived in Armenia beginning September 2020. I had already been in Armenia for a week on a tourist trip back in 2010. During that short stay, I was amazed to find that outside Yerevan, there were almost no cars. Unploughed mountainous lands with no fences and few people except sheep keepers and their dogs barking at the flock were the only things you could see outside the capital.

Sometimes, the road would be blocked by hundreds of sheep, each flock being recognizable by a taint of spray paint on the back of the sheep. I remember pinkish, red, and green colours. Often, around the moving flock, a horseman looking serious and calm, sometimes a young lad on a horse gone wild, struggling to keep his balance. Dogs were huge and reminded me of a dog I had as a child. I called it Milord, and it looked like a polar bear. It was a Pyrenean mastiff, while those from [Armenia](#) are a local breed called Gampr.



A Greek Temple in the Highlands

Already then, I knew Armenia was the ideal country for hiking. Another great memory I had was the Garni Zoroastrian temple and its splendid surroundings. It was so unique to see a Greek temple in good shape, built in the local grey stones. The canyon underneath is surrounded by mountains and a flat elevation, looking so beautiful with its contrasts of greenish, brown, and then bright green yellowish colours. Looking further, you notice parts of the canyon seem like columns sculpted by some giant, and indeed this is the case, as near Garni is the Symphony of stones, columns of basalt sometimes a hundred meters high; some are straight, others look as if they had been bent by some Hercules.



What I remembered of the capital was that people were all in black, wearing black leather pointy shoes that seemed disproportionate and gave them an even gayer look. None spoke English, and the conversation I could grasp in a park between two chess players was about communist history going back to the nineteen fifties. Everything seemed dark and sad at that time in Yerevan. However, a decade later, we came back to Armenia, but this time it was a different Armenia.



My Armenian Hikes in 5 Years



E-mail me

This time, we arrived in Armenia during COVID. Everyone who was in Yerevan during that period will tell you the situation was far more relaxed than in Europe, which made it easier to cope with. Soon after arrival, I heard about a hiking group for expats, and by the beginning of November or so, I joined the Sunday Hike group, with whom I did about 100 hikes during the five years I spent in Armenia.

These hikes with our great guide Artur Hakobyan (WhatsApp: +37493984877), who was always calm, discreet, and modest, would take me to all regions of Armenia. Almost all its mountains and peaks, including Azhdahak (3598 m), Khustup (3214 m), and Aragats, a dormant volcano and the highest peak in Armenia, which we did together at least four times, and its southern (3,879 m) and western (4,001 m) summits. The highest summits we reached in the spring of 2023 were during training to climb Ararat (5165 m) in neighbouring Turkey, which I climbed on 7 July 2023. Amongst the many incredible hikes in Armenia, my favourites were Angel Canyon, the canyon surrounding Garni temple, and all the hikes near Dilijan.



What is special about hiking in Armenia is that you can do it all year, except maybe August. No dangerous cliffs, no natural vegetation too dense to be crossed, no cold rains. With altitudes generally of 1500 meters, no mountain seems too high or difficult.

According to me, the best hikes were in winter, when walking on fields covered with snow as far as you could see, making you feel like the first man to step on the moon or so. I was surprised when doing a hike in July by the 37 degrees Celsius and not feeling the heat, as a gentle, fresh breeze was running over our feet.

Armenians often warned us about snakes, but during all the hikes mentioned above, I only saw three. More impressive was to walk on a water pipeline, three meters above a rocky river, and notice freshly made marks of a teddy bear preceding you by no more than half a day or so, or see fresh poo of bears while you climb a mountain on the track you will follow.

The only real danger, in fact, is gampr surrounding you as a wolf pack, as they feel you are getting too close to the flock of sheep they protect. The whistle of the sheep keeper, calling them back, is always thanked from the bottom of one's heart, as our protective formation of hikers in a hedgehog shape loosens up and we can lower our walking sticks and gently wave a hand in their direction while saying "Barev Dzes" (hello).



The Rise of Armenian Wine

Besides hiking, other things you can do in Armenia include **discovering the best wines of the Caucasus** (sorry, neighboring Georgia). In Soviet times, it was decided Georgia would specialise in wine and Armenia in brandy. Hence, Armenian wine was only a side product of brandy makers for their own consumption.

Gorbachev's Perestroika and its fight against alcoholism did not help, as Armenia, acting as an obedient satellite region, removed a number of vineyards. Then, like all post-Soviet countries, Armenia went through the dark period of 1990 to 1993 when gas pipelines and the Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant stopped functioning, leaving no heating or electricity, which led to massive burning of any wood you could find, including in vineyards.



From that Glossom period, Armenia needed some miracle or some miracle man to start the wine industry. Miracle man was Vahe Keushguerian, a wine entrepreneur and founder of Keush Winery in the Vayots Dzor region of Armenia. Vahe, also called the baron of wine, according to the legend, arrived from California in 2009 and approached small brandy producers and wine makers. He told them he would explain how to make wine, advise them on the machinery they needed, and make the final product mix.

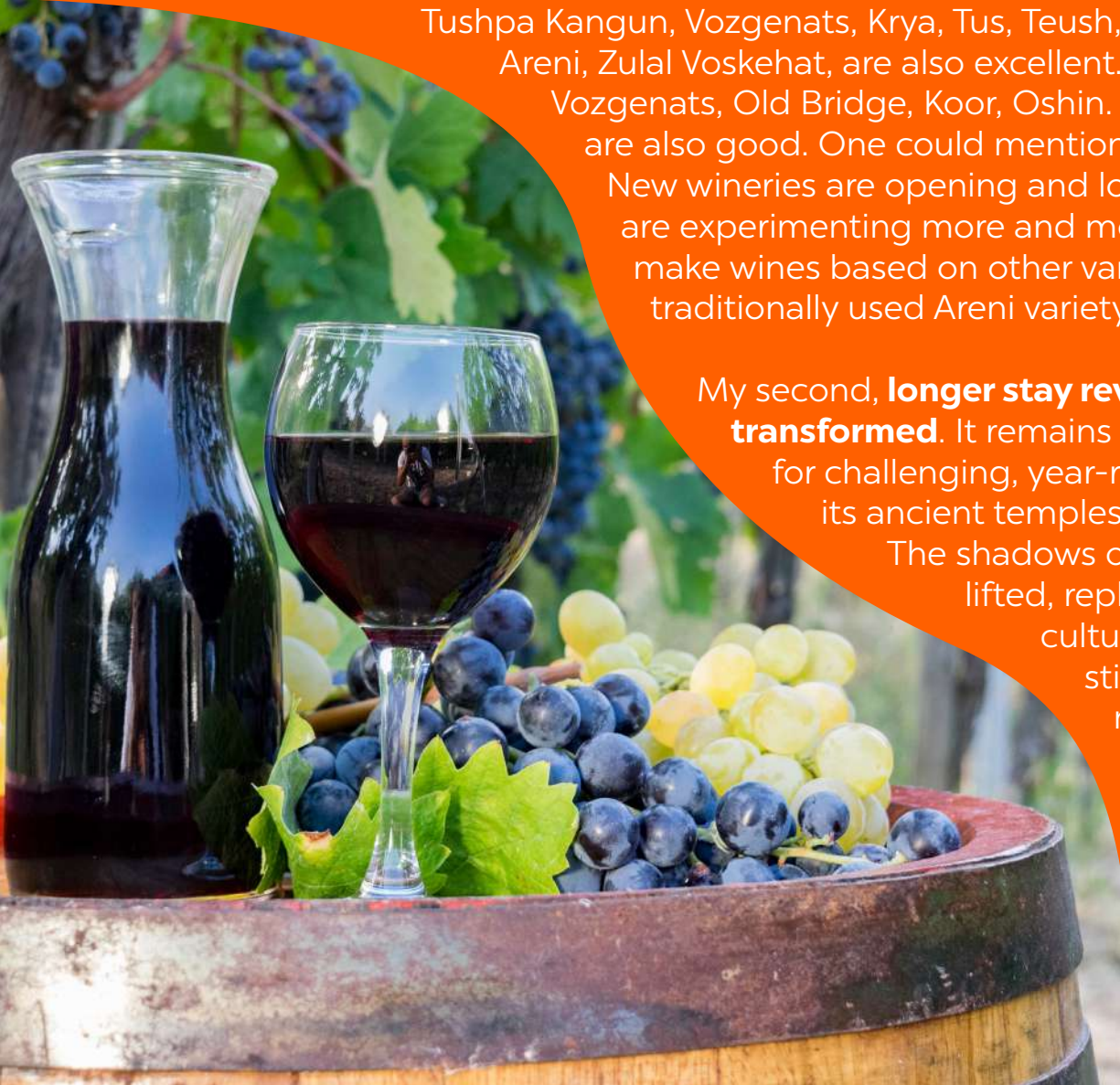
When asked how much it would cost them, he would answer: "Nothing." Then he would add, "It will cost you no money, I just want a small share of your (worthless by then) firm and a few acres of land". In the coming years, European oenologists will come and give the final touch to what has now become an emerging sector of the Armenian economy.

Despite being overpriced, Armenian wines sell well among expats, Armenians, the diaspora, and International consumers seeking **the thrill of new tastes and sensations**. My favourite white wine brand is Malahi, but Kataro,

Tushpa Kangun, Vozgenats, Krya, Tus, Teush, Hekiat, Old Areni, Zulal Voskehat, are also excellent. For reds, Hovaz, Vozgenats, Old Bridge, Koor, Oshin. Sparkling wines are also good. One could mention Keush and Tus. New wineries are opening and local wine producers are experimenting more and more, starting to make wines based on other varieties than the traditionally used Areni variety.

My second, **longer stay revealed an Armenia transformed**. It remains a wild, ideal country for challenging, year-round hiking among its ancient temples and high peaks.

The shadows of the past have lifted, replaced by a confident cultural revival that is still taking shape and needs more time, best exemplified by the exciting, **new world of its sophisticated local wine industry**.



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AND THAT'S THE PROBLEM ...

YOUR BUILDING MANAGER IN ARMENIA IS PROBABLY A FIREFIGHTER!



**MATHEW
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF



**ARMEN
ANMEGHIKYAN**

Co-Founder and Executive
Director of Hestia Facilities
Management



**HAYK
TER-TACHATYAN**

Operations Director
at Dalan Technopark

INTERVIEWING



AND THAT'S THE PROBLEM ... **YOUR BUILDING MANAGER IN ARMENIA IS PROBABLY A FIREFIGHTER!**

Who saves more lives: the firefighter who rushes into a burning building to rescue a trapped family, or the fire inspector who **identifies faulty wiring before the building ever catches fire**? The firefighter gets the medal, the news coverage, and the gratitude of survivors. Children dress up as firefighters for Halloween. Movies are made about their courage. Their heroism is visible, dramatic, and undeniable.

The fire inspector gets a clipboard and **complains about being too picky!** Nobody makes movies about proper electrical code compliance. The inspector's greatest achievements are invisible; the fires that never happened, the families never endangered. Success looks like nothing at all. Yet, objectively and mathematically, **the inspector saves more lives. It's not even close.**



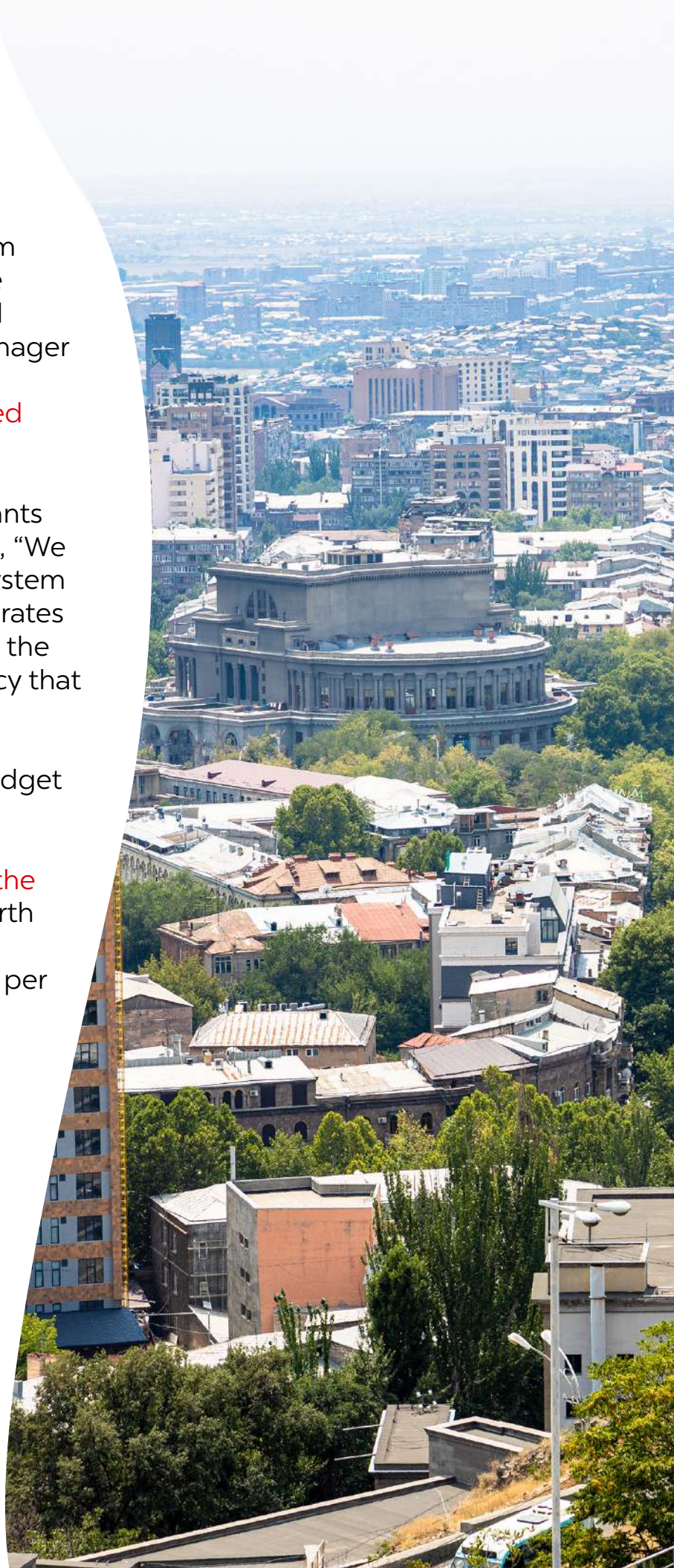
Most commercial building managers operate like firefighters; waiting for things to break, then mobilizing resources, disrupting tenants, and eventually restoring normal operations. Each crisis resolved feels like a victory. Building managers collect these stories like medals: "Remember when the main water line exploded and I had it running again in four hours?" It feels productive. It looks busy. It generates visible results and grateful tenants. But it's a sign of failure because if **you're constantly solving problems, something isn't working the way it should.**

Real facility management happens in the moments when nothing appears to be happening at all. It's the maintenance schedule that replaces a valve before it leaks, not after. It's the predictive algorithm that flags a decline in elevator cable tension before anyone gets trapped between floors. It's the building manager who goes home at 5 PM because **tomorrow's problems were prevented today.**

This work generates no drama! Tenants never send thank-you emails saying, "We really appreciate that the heating system didn't fail this winter." Nobody celebrates the elevator that didn't break down, the pipe that didn't burst, the emergency that remained hypothetical.

Any building with a phone and a budget can eventually fix what breaks. The question is **whether your building prevents problems from existing in the first place**, and that difference is worth far more than most tenants realize when they're comparing rent prices per square meter.

This is the fundamental divide in Armenia's commercial real estate market; not between old buildings and new ones, not between expensive and affordable, but between buildings that move from crisis to crisis, and buildings where **crises are so rare that tenants forget buildings require management at all.** One approach feels active and responsive. The other actually works.



Where Armenia Started

To understand where Armenian facility management is heading, we must acknowledge where it began. The Soviet legacy left Armenia with a particular approach to building maintenance: **centralized, bureaucratic, and fundamentally reactive.** Buildings had custodians and basic maintenance workers who responded to problems as they arose. The concept of preventive maintenance was limited to scheduled tasks dictated by outdated manuals.

This mentality persisted well into Armenia's years of independence. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, as the country rebuilt its economy, **commercial real estate development focused on construction rather than operations.** Developers built buildings and handed keys to tenants with minimal ongoing management infrastructure. A building administrator handled everything from collecting rent to calling plumbers. **Professional facility management, as understood in Western markets, simply didn't exist.**

The result was a commercial real estate market where the concept of "total cost of occupancy" was foreign to both landlords and tenants; there was no competitive pressure to change because **nearly all buildings operated under the same model.**



Foreign Investment and International Standards

As international companies established operations in Armenia throughout the 2010s, they brought expectations formed in **markets where professional facility management was standard**. This created a market opportunity. Developers who could deliver internationally recognized standards gained access to premium tenants willing to pay premium rents.

Traditional buildings wait for equipment to fail, then scramble to fix it. Buildings with preventive maintenance perform scheduled inspections and replacements, **catching problems before they cause disruptions**. The most advanced buildings use predictive maintenance, in which sensors and algorithms identify declining performance patterns and trigger interventions before failure.

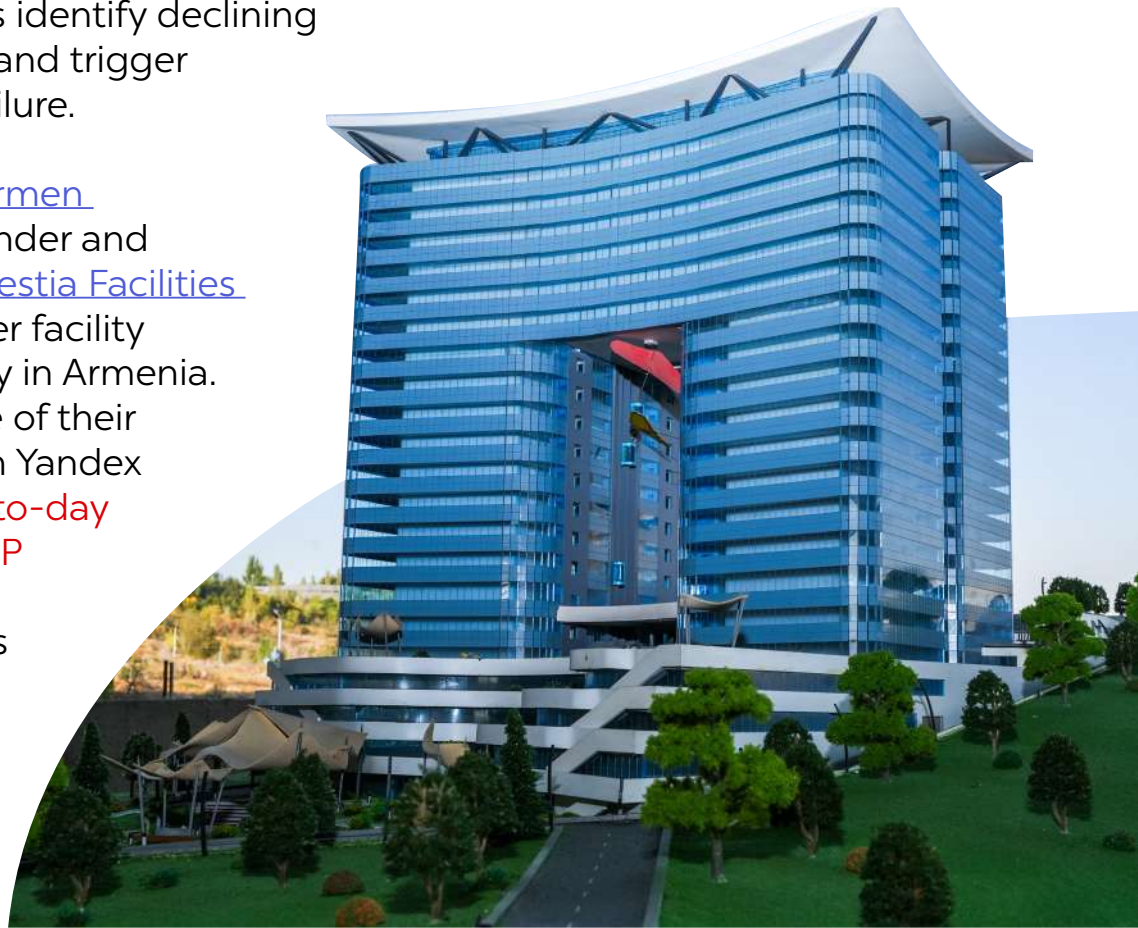
I recently spoke with [Armen Anmeghikyan](#), Co-Founder and Executive Director of [Hestia Facilities Management](#), a top-tier facility management company in Armenia. He shared the example of their recent partnership with Yandex in Yerevan, where **day-to-day management of all MEP (mechanical, electrical, plumbing) systems** was a key component of the service.



Armen Anmeghikyan

Co-Founder and
Executive Director
of Hestia Facilities
Management

At Hestia, we've seen the transformation ourselves. When we take over a building that didn't have professional management before, the results become noticeable within months: fewer breakdowns, better energy efficiency, and happier tenants."



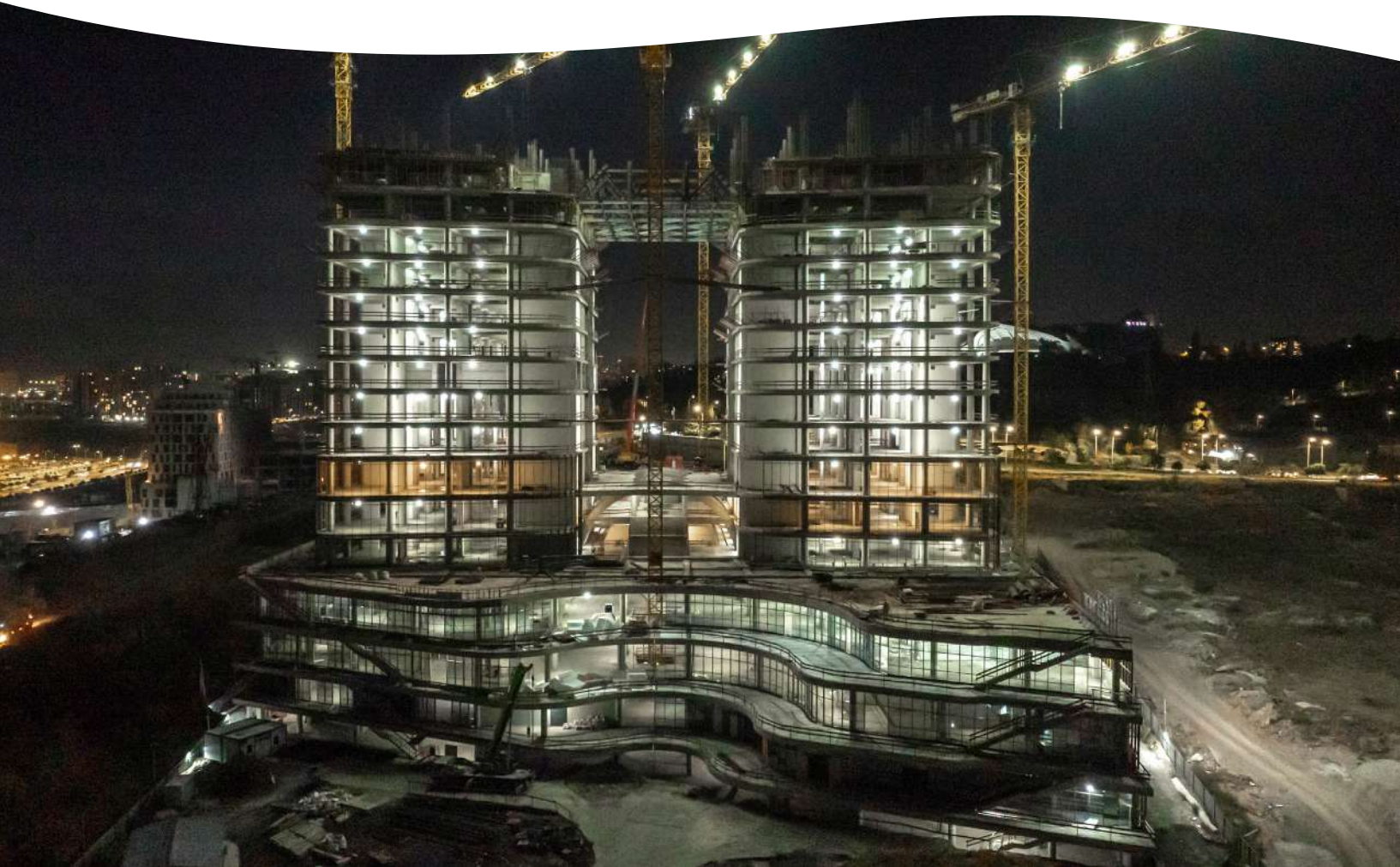
According to Armen, international tenants train their sights on data, compliance, and scalability. They prefer buildings where facility management is not just reactive but proactive. He explained that when a building is properly managed, everything runs more smoothly: the air is comfortable, the lighting is consistent, and systems like elevators and cooling systems work without interruption. That's **because there's structure behind the scenes**: preventive maintenance, trained staff, and data-driven monitoring that helps predict and prevent issues before they happen.



Armen Anmeghikyan

Co-Founder and Executive
Director of Hestia Facilities
Management

Newer, higher-end buildings and international tenants increasingly look for professional facility management partners who can take care of everything under one roof, and companies like Hestia are helping drive that change by introducing structured, proactive management that turns buildings into well-performing, sustainable environments.”



Green Buildings and Energy Efficiency

Energy efficiency and environmental sustainability have emerged as unexpected **drivers of professionalization in facility management in Armenia**. While initially driven by cost reduction rather than environmental concerns, energy management has become a key differentiator between professional and traditional building operations.

Some forward-thinking developers have pursued international green building certifications, though this remains rare. So far, Dalan Technopark is the first commercial building in Yerevan to aim for BOMA compliance and LEED certification, which require **sophisticated facility management systems and practices**, and provide third-party validation of building quality and operational excellence.

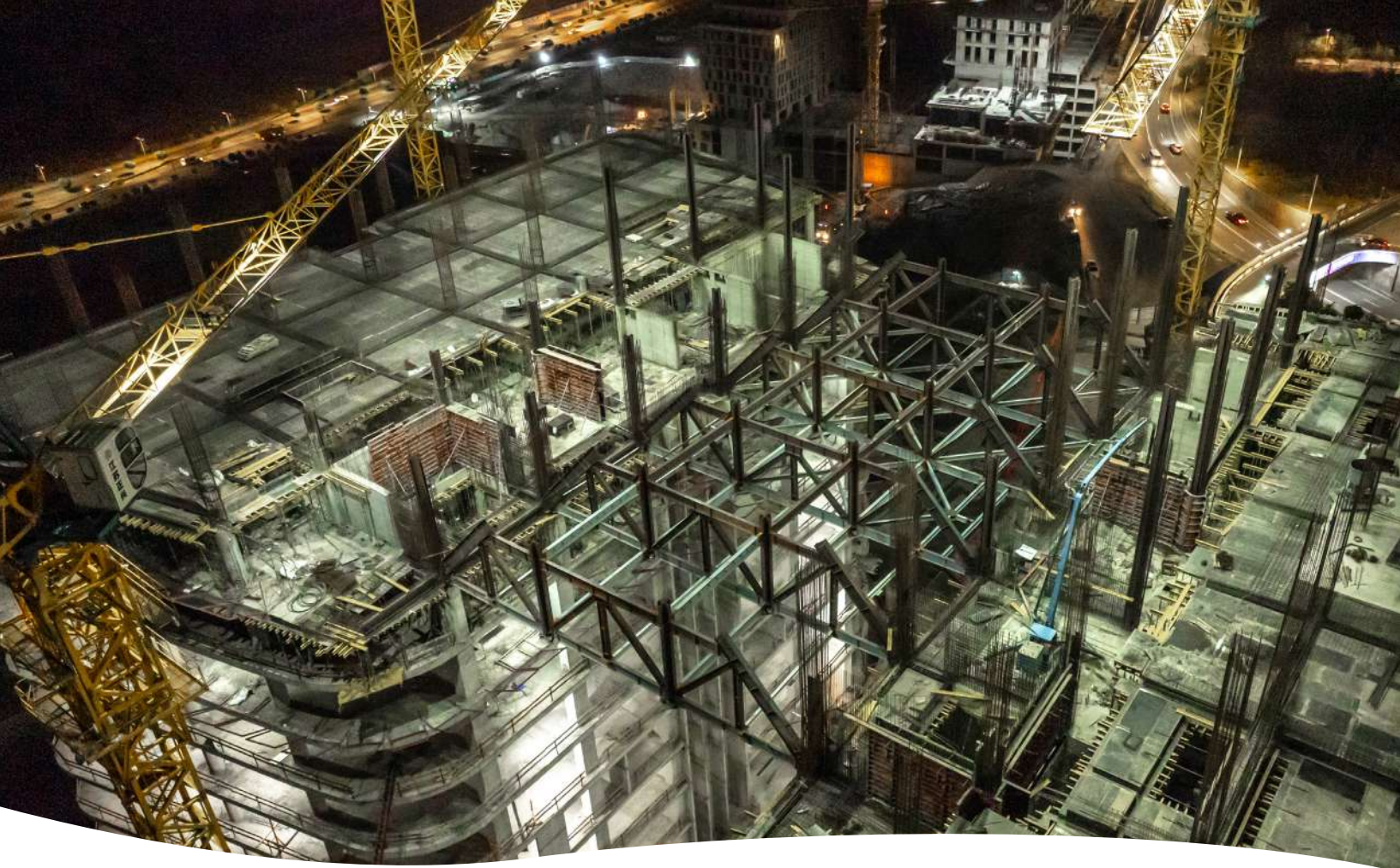
The sustainability angle also appeals to international tenants, particularly European companies under pressure to reduce their global carbon footprints. A building with demonstrable energy efficiency and environmental management becomes more attractive to these tenants. In my conversation with [Hayk Ter-Tachatyan](#), Operations Director at [Dalan Technopark](#), he clearly outlined the strategic goals behind the project to **attract the regional headquarters of global tech giants to Armenia**.



Hayk Ter-Tachatyan

Operations Director at Dalan Technopark

If I build Dalan Technopark without the best access control, fire alarm, and CCTV systems interconnected, then the building will be nothing more than a really big glass-covered, overpriced can with the most basic equipment inside, rendering paying high lease rates pointless. This is the difference: we charge more, but we provide our tenants with the best possible workplace and management tools.”



According to Hayk, facility management experts basically take care of the building and everyone inside, and in modern times, a task as responsible as this cannot be accomplished without the basis they need to do their jobs effectively.



Hayk Ter-Tachatyan

Operations Director at
Dalan Technopark

This must be standardized in Armenia. Dalan Technopark shouldn't stand out; it should set an example of what is necessary for large tenants like NVIDIA, Adobe, Cisco, AMD, EBRD, ADB, Microsoft, Google, Servicetitan, Siemens, Synopsis, and other big names."

He continued about how they were approached by several tech giants, who sent them multiple pages of very complicated requirements that would blind and confuse the average construction project.

But LEED and BOMA prepared them for the strictest possible set of tenant requirements, and what seems unattainable for most buildings is standard procedure at Dalan Technopark.

As an example of what difference it makes, he explained how if an NVIDIA employee from India shows up in Yerevan for a work trip, they don't have to go through a complicated old-fashioned check-in to get to their work station; they can simply show up at Dalan Technopark and use their company card to access the parking, the elevators, the doors, and their office. Their faces, names, and eyes will be captured and archived in case something goes wrong, with backups stored on Dalan's servers and with NVIDIA.



Hayk Ter-Tachatyan

Operations Director at Dalan Technopark

This is the difference. They pay a lot for safety, security, peace of mind, ease of work, and access to whatever they need. This is what Dalan brings, and this is what facility managers control.”



According to Hayk, having those kinds of systems boosts interest; for example, the most famous and best systems in the world are Software House and Lenel 2, which the Pentagon and State Department use. But also, they are trusted by most US tech companies. So, when they send an offer showing how their building uses one of these systems for its access controls and security, that's their most important checklist point ticked. In any other building, they have to go through great lengths to install those systems themselves.

By moving beyond the heroic chaos of «firefighting» to the invisible efficiency of predictive systems, Armenia's professional facility management is setting the new, **non-negotiable standard demanded by international tenants.**

10 DAYS IN THE DEBED CANYON

YOUR GUIDE TO A PRODUCTIVE REMOTE WORK EXPERIENCE IN NORTHERN ARMENIA



**MATHEW
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF



10 DAYS IN THE DEBED CANYON YOUR GUIDE TO A PRODUCTIVE REMOTE WORK EXPERIENCE IN NORTHERN ARMENIA

Last year, I wrote a book and named it “My Life in Armenia” to summarize my nine years in this beautiful country; however, I’ve been putting off the final review process for months. I drafted it over a year ago, but never had the chance to properly edit it before starting the publication process.

Heading North

This autumn, I finally made the time to review my book. I wanted to do it during the famously beautiful fall season in Armenia. A trip to the Armenian mountains in this season reveals a soul-touching mix of **yellow, orange, red, and rich brown, all peppered with the last traces of green.** This stunning display is what locals call the “carpet mountains” during this magical season. And **what’s a better place to enjoy the “carpet mountains” than the Lori Region?**



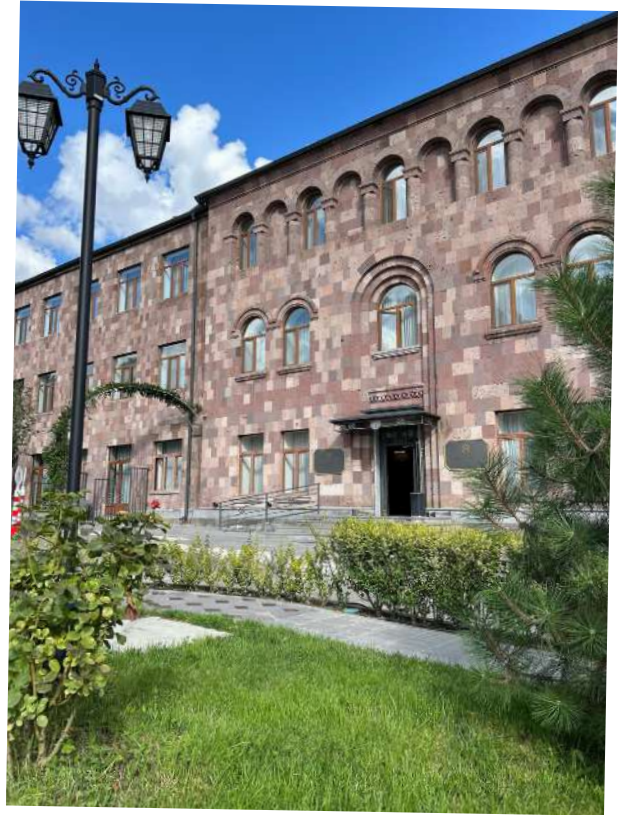
So, last month, I traded my apartment in central Yerevan for a room overlooking the Debed Canyon for 10 days. While my friends thought I was taking a vacation, I was actually about to have **one of the most productive work weeks of my career.**

And here’s a spoiler before you keep reading: the lack of social obligations has been liberating. No one’s texting about after-work drinks or weekend plans that require coordination. My calendar is mine. I work when I’m most productive, explore when I want to, and rest when I need to. **It’s a level of autonomy I’d forgotten was possible.**

My Personal Experience in Alaverdi

Alaverdi isn't Yerevan. It's not a polished digital nomad hub with trendy cafés on every corner. It's a working town with Soviet-era architecture. So, I wanted to stay in a place where I could balance working remotely with access to basic quality services like food and internet. After researching accommodation options in the area, I chose [Vallex Garden Hotel](#), and it's proven to be exactly what I needed, though perhaps not in the way you'd expect from reading typical hotel descriptions.

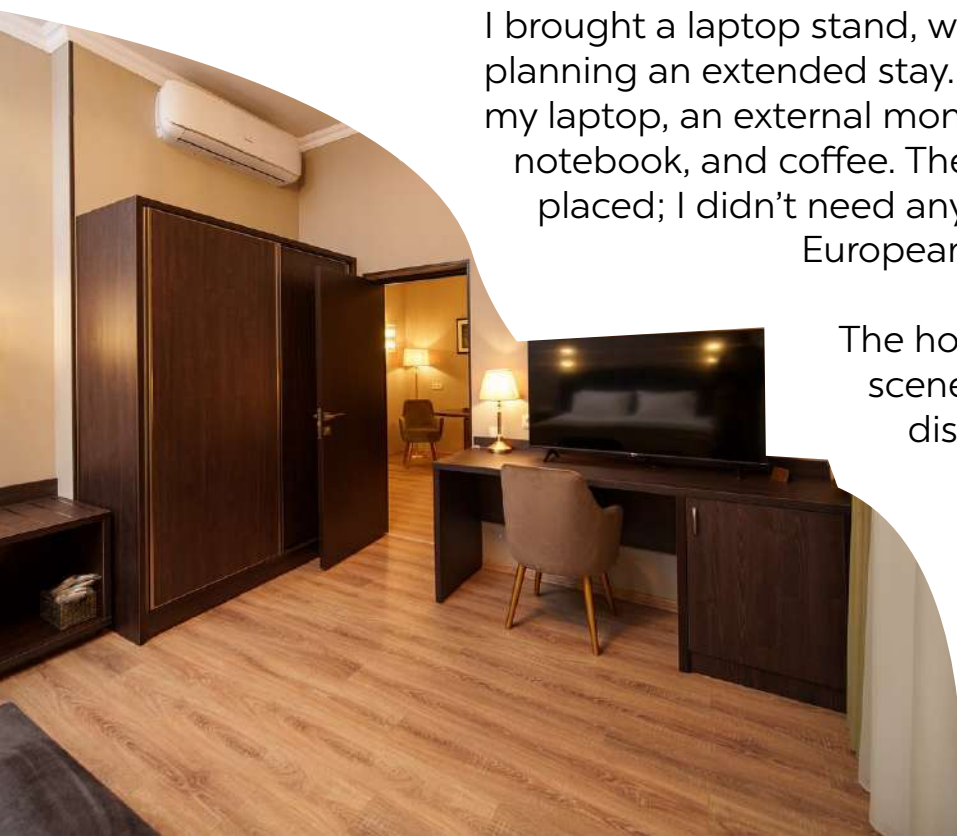
The rooms are spacious enough to set up a proper remote workspace. I pushed the desk closer to the window because the natural light throughout the day has been phenomenal. I had massive windows and natural light that shifted throughout the day.



Vallex Garden Hotel, Alaverdi,
Lori Region of Armenia

I brought a laptop stand, which I'd recommend for anyone planning an extended stay. There's enough surface area for my laptop, an external monitor (I brought a portable one), notebook, and coffee. The power outlets are conveniently placed; I didn't need any adapters beyond the standard European plug.

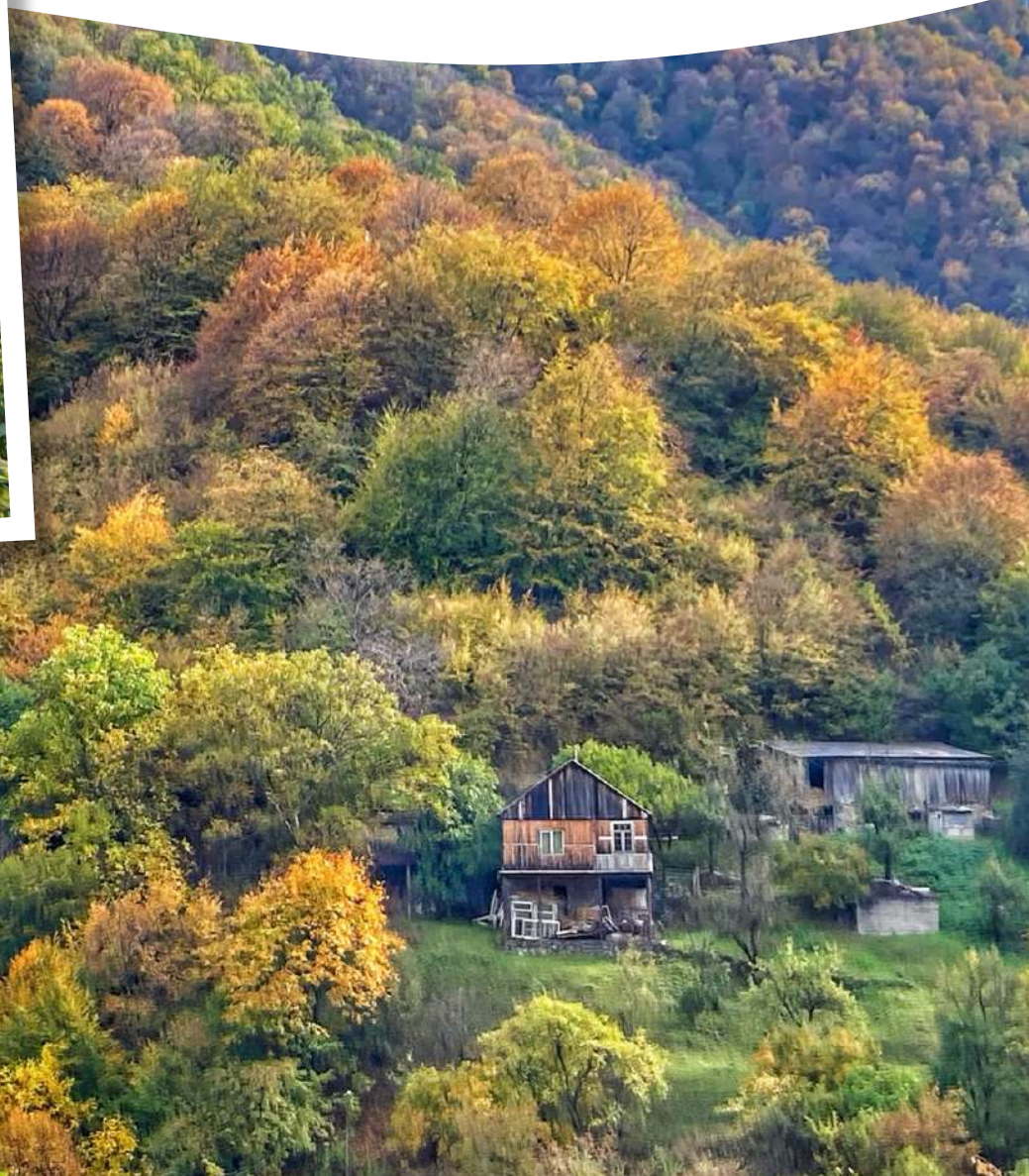
The hotel is quiet. There's no party scene, no loud common areas, no disruptions. During the week, it's primarily business travelers and the occasional tourist. This environment has been conducive to deep work.



The housekeeping staff is attentive without being intrusive. There's reliable hot water and heating (essential in northern Armenia, even in shoulder seasons). The restaurant serves good meals, including Western options, and it's reasonably priced. In general, you won't find many dining options in the city, so it was [a good thing to have a functional restaurant in the hotel.](#)

Let's talk about what actually matters for a remote worker: the WiFi at Vallex is good and, more importantly, reliable. I've conducted several online interviews for my Miami-based podcast [during evening hours without a single issue.](#) The connection handles all the demands of my remote work. That said, I also use a Ucom 5G data plan as a backup. [Armenian mobile data is surprisingly strong, even in smaller towns.](#)

I won't pretend there haven't been lonely moments. There have been evenings when I wished I could have a complex conversation in English about something other than work. But I've also discovered that loneliness and solitude are different things. Solitude, chosen, structured, purposeful, has been creatively fertile. [I've done some of my best thinking here.](#)



Bring good headphones. Not for drowning out noise, the hotel is quiet enough, but for creating your own environment. I have playlists for different types of work: ambient for writing, instrumental for drafting, and complete silence for strategy work. Being able to control your audio environment when everything else is unfamiliar helps maintain consistency in your routine.

Alaverdi is cheaper than Yerevan or most Western remote work destinations. The Vallex Garden Hotel rates are reasonable for extended stays; **your money goes much further here**. Alaverdi is well-connected by minibuses to Yerevan and other towns, but I'd strongly recommend having access to a car if possible. **Ride-sharing apps don't operate here like they do in Yerevan.**

Keep in mind that Russian and Armenian dominate. English is limited outside the hotel.

Daily Routine & Weekend Exploration

My typical day in Alaverdi, focused on reviewing my book, started with a very early morning work block fueled by strong coffee from the coffee machine inside the room (the hotel kitchen doesn't operate at 6 am). It was then followed by a breakfast break and a short walk along the Debed River whenever the weather permitted (every now and then, it rained lightly). Afternoon work sessions were dedicated to deep review and rewriting.

Evenings were spent exploring the area around the hotel. It's positioned so that many attractions are accessible within a short walk or a quick drive. Honestly, this is where Northern Armenia reveals its ace card. [From Alaverdi, you can explore tens of sites](#). Read our [October 2025](#) issue to learn more.



I've found that having weekend adventures to look forward to has made my weekday work more focused. There's a psychological benefit to knowing that if you buckle down

Monday through Friday, [you've got real exploration ahead](#), not just hopping between coworking spaces in different neighborhoods.

It's Alaverdi ...

It's important that I put you in the right context so you don't misunderstand me. At this point, [I wouldn't relocate to Alaverdi for an entire season](#). The city is still developing in terms of its remote work scene and needs time to become fully reliable for remote workers and nomads; however, it's a great pit stop, as I described earlier. I've been more productive, spent less money, and had more memorable experiences than in months of bouncing between typical digital nomad hotspots.

It's a place where you can [spend a few days up to a few weeks](#) working remotely and focusing on one task you want to get off your mind.



I needed a reset. Not from work itself, but from the performance of being a 'remote worker.' The coworking spaces, the networking branches, the constant pressure to document everything for social media; it had become exhausting. **I wanted somewhere I could just work, think, and exist.**

One of the unexpected benefits of being in Alaverdi has been the natural work-life separation this town imposes. **There simply aren't endless entertainment options competing for your attention.**

If you're tired of the remote-work circuit and want to actually get work done while experiencing a part of the world most people skip entirely, consider northern Armenia. And when you need a reliable, comfortable base to make it happen, Vallex Garden Hotel does the job well.

Just don't expect fancy lobbies or rooftop bars. Expect solid WiFi, quiet rooms, and the kind of remote work experience that **reminds you why you started this journey in the first place.** I'm almost done reviewing my book, and all I need now is a second trip to finish it. Soon you'll see the book on the market, and now you know the story behind it.



Welcome to Hartak.am, your trusted guide on Armenian public services

Armenia is developing a National Services Gateway called “Hartak”, a one-stop interaction point between citizens and public services. It's a trustworthy source of information ensuring that users find the right service when they need it, and know what to expect from the process.

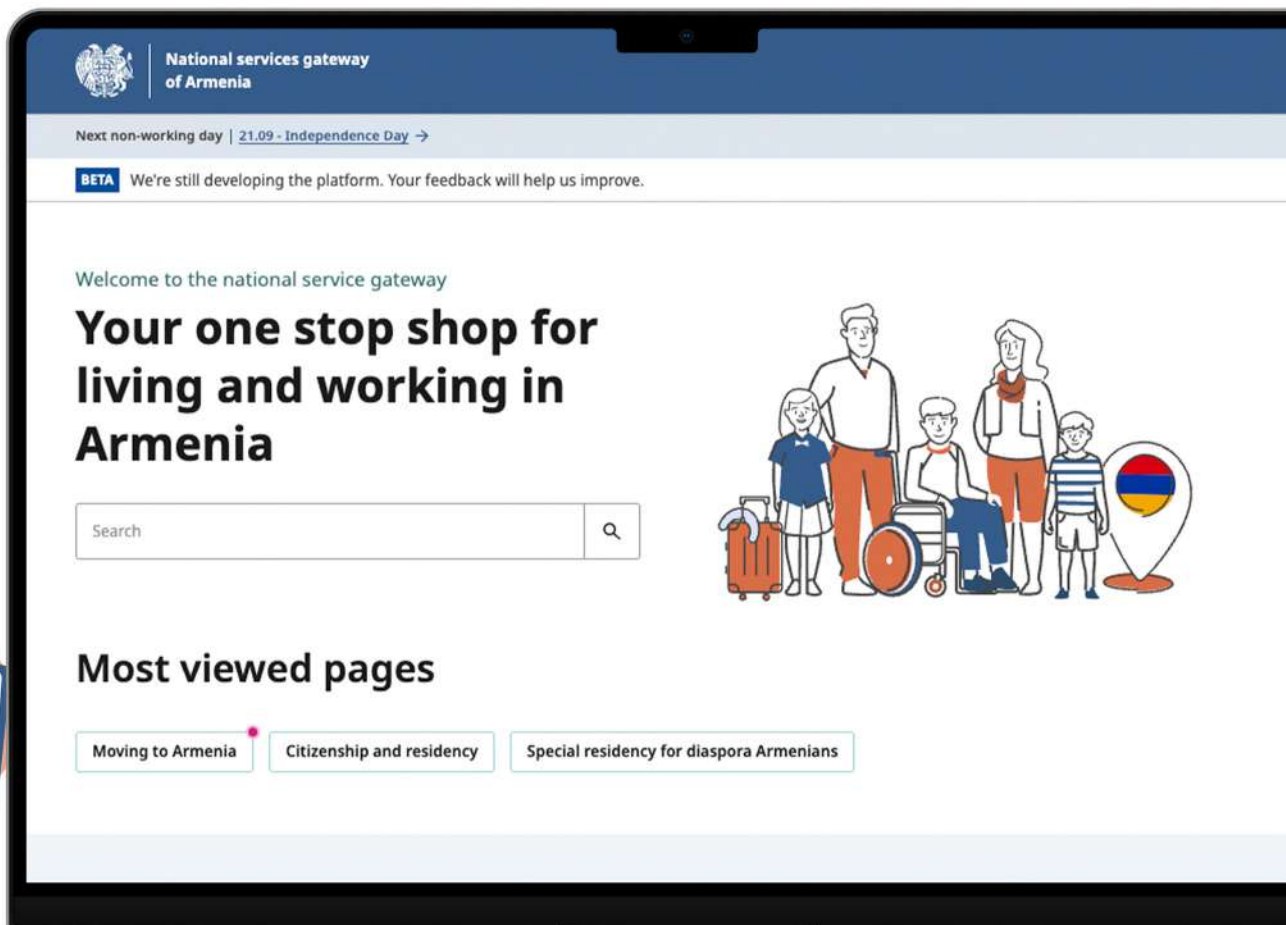
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DNA, DIASPORA, AND THE VINES THAT BIND

WHAT GRAPE TELLS US ABOUT THE BIRTHPLACE OF WINE



**DIANA
KHANDILYAN**

FOUNDER OF GLASS NOMAD



DNA, DIASPORA, AND THE VINES THAT BIND WHAT GRAPE TELLS US ABOUT THE BIRTHPLACE OF WINE

Everyone seems to be chasing their roots these days.

You know the drill: send off your saliva, wait a few weeks, and voilà: a colorful pie chart tells you who you are. There are many options on the market: 23andMe. Ancestry.com. MyHeritage. And then you get the result: maybe it's 40% Irish, 10% Scandinavian, 50% mystery. Friends text each other screenshots like secrets unlocked. Some find pride, some find confusion, others just find more questions.

Me? I've never needed a pie chart to feel Armenian.

I don't care if I'm 83%, 92%, or 99.9%. My identity isn't made up of percentages; it's made up of smells, flavors, memories, and the weight of language passed down through generations. I don't need confirmation. I live it.



Grapes, though? Grapes are a different story. I do want to do a DNA test.

Because when it comes to wine, the question of where a grape really comes from is still, in many cases, a mystery. And unlike people, grapes can't tell their story with poetry or pain. We need science and a little imagination to trace their lineage.

And that search? It might just lead us home.

The Grape Genome and the Nerds Who Decode It

Did you know apples come from Kazakhstan? No, really. Not the ones in your lunchbox, but the original, wild apple forests in the Tien Shan mountains, where scientists traced the genetic origin of all modern apples.

How? DNA. It turns out, fruit has ancestry, too. And for grapes, the quest to find that origin, that ground zero of *vitis vinifera*, has become a scientific obsession.

Wine scientists (a dream job, honestly) spend their careers playing grape detective. They sequence grape DNA the way some people binge crime podcasts, trying to piece together relationships: who's the parent, who's the sibling, who's the mysterious wild cousin. They travel across Europe, the Caucasus, and the Middle East, sampling vines in villages, monasteries, and backyards. They chase genomes, but let's be honest, there is surely a lot of wine tasting happening during these scientific explorations.

So far, what they've found is wild: the greatest diversity of grape varieties doesn't come from Bordeaux or Burgundy. It comes from this [neighborhood of the South Caucasus: from modern-day Armenia, Georgia, Turkey, and Iran.](#)



A Tangle of Vines: What DNA Diversity Tells Us

When scientists find hundreds of grape varieties growing wild or semi-wild in one place, not clones, not crosses, but genetically distinct cultivars, that's a giant flashing arrow pointing to the origin. Because genetic diversity works like this: the closer you are to the beginning of a species' journey, the more variation you'll find. As the plant spreads outward (through trade, war, or wandering winemakers), only a few cuttings make the journey, and variation narrows.

That's why Western Europe, home to some of the most famous wines in the world, has surprisingly low grape

diversity. They've perfected a few stars: Cabernet, Chardonnay, Pinot. But they're all closely related. Meanwhile, in Armenia, Georgia, and surrounding regions, scientists are still cataloging hundreds of indigenous grapes, some with no known relatives, others with tangled family trees that defy classification.

This richness isn't just academic. It's a sign. A hint that this region, our region, might not just be a birthplace of wine. [It might be the birthplace of wine grapes themselves.](#)

Voskehat, Areni, and the Forgotten Siblings

Take Voskehat, often called the "golden berry," a white grape with a name that sounds like poetry and a genetic makeup that's just as lyrical. It's not a relative of Chardonnay. It's not a clone of anything famous. It's its own thing.

And Areni? That graceful red grape growing in Vayots Dzor for over 6,000 years; it's not a cousin of Pinot Noir, despite the elegant comparisons. It's ancient, indigenous, and surprisingly tough for its delicate personality.



What's even more fascinating is that these grapes don't just appear different; they are different. Armenian grapes often carry resistance to certain pests, grow well in extreme altitudes, and adapt to dry-farming conditions. These are not pampered European varieties; they're survivors. And the fact that so many are still standing, despite the weather changes, phylloxera, Soviet restructuring, and decades of neglect, is just proving the point.

That's a story written in DNA. And here's the kicker: there are dozens, maybe hundreds, more. Unmapped. Unnamed. Sitting in old village vineyards, sometimes even mistaken for table grapes. It may happen that an Armenian grandma's old vines hold more genetic secrets than a 23andMe kit.

The Grapes That Got Away

Some grapes never stayed where they were born. Like people, they moved, willingly or not, seeking better weather, new soil, or just hitching a ride on someone's donkey cart. Some got renamed. Others got forgotten. And a few, like Malbec and Carménère, got famous abroad while nearly disappearing at home.

Armenian grapes are still being studied, and we don't know the full extent of what we will uncover. Take Karmrahyut, for instance. Often blended with Areni, yet distinct: deep ruby fruit, intense structure, sometimes aromas of rose petal and spice. Or Khndoghni; tannic, brooding, under-celebrated.

On the white side, Kangun offers crisp citrus lift; Haghtanak brings bold berry and dark spice. All these and almost 300 other discovered indigenous Armenian varieties reveal the highest grape genetic diversity in the world, according to recent studies.

Which is curious, because Armenia has always been in isolation. If not bounded by modern borders, there were always geographical ones.



So this diversity, evolutionarily speaking, must have been triggered by external factors: climate, soil composition, earthquakes, and even volcanoes.

Yes, the Caucasus Mountain Range is mostly considered dormant, with major volcanic activity stretching back 200,000 to 100,000 years. But mostly is the keyword here. We know that the last eruption of Mount Kazbek occurred around 6,000 BCE, and geothermal activity has persisted in pockets. Even today, scientists register ongoing mud volcano activity across the region.

There are still many questions about where the “mother” grape originated and what that variety was. Grapes turned out to be more complex than apples.

What Roots Us

In a world obsessed with ancestry, maybe it's not just about knowing where we came from, but choosing what we carry forward.

Armenia's grapes have done both: some stayed home, others traveled, many were forgotten, but all of them whisper fragments of a deeper story. A story not just of viticulture, but of survival, adaptation, and quiet endurance through centuries of change.

We may not have a global grape superstar like Cabernet. And most wine lovers can't pronounce Karmrahut or Sireni (yet). But we do have something rare: vines that remember.

Their DNA is older than borders. Their roots stretch deeper than politics. And their flavors, when coaxed into the glass, taste like nowhere else on Earth.

That's the beauty of Armenian wine. **It doesn't just tell a story; it keeps one alive.** I'll toast to that with a glass of bright and fragrant Kangun from Van Ardi. If you ever come across a forgotten Armenian variety, maybe Khatun Kharji, Mskhali, Tozot, or Chilar, let me know. I'd love to hear what you tasted and what it made you feel.



Follow me on Instagram @glass_nomad and don't hesitate to reach out. Let's keep exploring these vines that bind us.

THE SMALL COUNTRY THINKING BIG

HOW YEREVAN'S STARTUPS, FOOD, AND CULTURE RESHAPED MY IDEA OF POST-SOVIET PROGRESS



**BOJAN
STOJKOVSKI**

TECH JOURNALIST AND
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF AT IT LOGS



THE SMALL COUNTRY THINKING BIG HOW YEREVAN'S STARTUPS, FOOD, AND CULTURE RESHAPED MY IDEA OF POST-SOVIET PROGRESS

Coming from the Balkans, I expected to encounter something familiar in Armenia: the same traces of a post-communist past, the cautious optimism, the eagerness to push beyond old systems. **But what I found instead was something far more layered and profound.**

My journey to Yerevan began as part of my work in tech journalism. Thanks to Nomad Armenia, I came here to explore Armenia's growing startup ecosystem and to meet founders, investors, and innovators who were helping the country turn its small size into an advantage. I wanted to understand how a nation, best known for its history and diaspora, is becoming **one of the most unexpected technology stories in the region.**



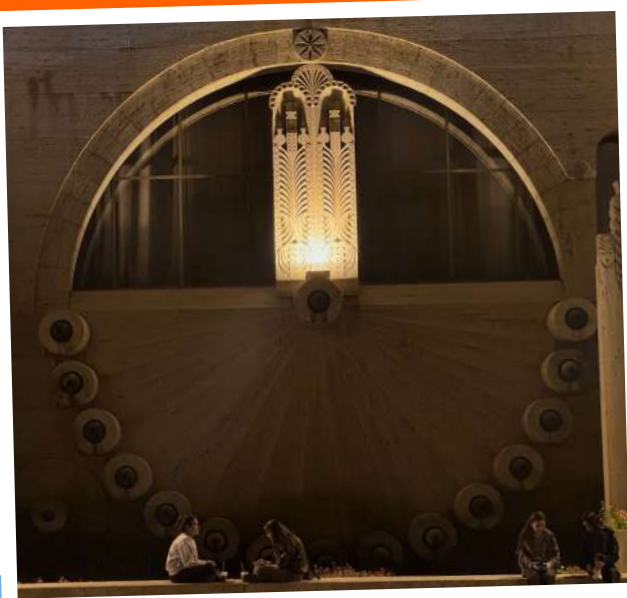
Together with Mathew Zein at Ground Zero Specialty Coffee

My first real introduction to this world came at Ground Zero, a so-called venture cafe on Saryan Street; a lively hub where founders and freelancers gather during and after work hours to exchange ideas over coffee and food. It was here, surrounded by entrepreneurs discussing bold ideas in a mix of Armenian, Russian, and English, that **I first understood how far the ecosystem had come.** And Ground Zero is definitely the symbol of Yerevan's evolving startup culture, helping the local talent elevate itself to the global tech stage.

Conversations there often drift between product demos and geopolitics, from the challenges of running a startup to the role of the diaspora in financing and mentoring Armenia's next generation of innovators. Local investors told me something that stuck with me and is a valuable lesson for the Balkans: **Armenia's diaspora isn't just sending remittances anymore.**

Instead, they're building companies, opening offices, and bringing back knowledge and capital —much like Ground Zero and its founder, a diaspora returnee who built a movement behind a rising tech ecosystem. Throughout the last decade, **there has been a shift from emotional to strategic support**, and it's one of the main reasons Armenia's startup scene has grown so fast compared to others.

What surprised me most was how intentional this transformation has been. **Armenia doesn't have the market size of its regional neighbors**, but it compensates with a sharp focus on education, engineering, and global connectivity. Many of the founders I met were educated abroad (the US, Russia, or Europe) and returned home to create something that could compete on a global level. The result is an ecosystem that feels outward-looking yet deeply rooted in local pride.



Walking through Yerevan, you'll see this duality everywhere. **Soviet-era buildings stand beside sleek co-working spaces**. Traditional bakeries share streets with tech accelerators. There's a quiet confidence among the young people you meet in cafes or offices. Most of them told me that even in a country with limited resources, you can build something meaningful and globally relevant.

During my last day in the country came the moment that truly stayed with me: standing at the top of the Yerevan Cascade. The massive staircase rises from the city center toward a hill overlooking the capital, each level revealing more of Yerevan's layers. As the sun set, painting the city in warm gold, I also saw and interpreted the Cascade itself as a metaphor for Armenia's tech journey - step by step, layer by layer, rising toward something greater.





Of course, no trip to Armenia would be complete without mentioning the food. My first discovery was Zhingalov Hats, a flatbread stuffed with fresh herbs; a very simple, aromatic, and unforgettable dish. Over the next few days, I tried Western Armenian dishes rich with spices and textures that spoke of centuries of migration and survival. Meals here aren't rushed; they're shared. And around every table, the same themes emerge - family, resilience, and the desire to build a better future.

Much of this mindset, locals told me, comes from necessity. After decades of emigration and conflict, innovation has become a survival instinct. Now, tech offers not just economic opportunity but a sense of control over Armenia's future. As one founder put it, when you can't change your geography, you change your path.



Photo taken at the reception party organized by the 2025 UATE for journalists and speakers at Digitec



The government, too, has recognized this shift. In recent years, it has invested heavily in education, digital infrastructure, and **public-private initiatives to support startups**. Institutions like the Ministry of High-Tech Industry are actively connecting local talent with global markets. But the real driving force remains the community, that network of entrepreneurs, engineers, mentors, and returning diaspora who see Armenia as more than a place to live, and more as a long-term project that is also attracting expats, digital nomads, and freelancers.



2025 Together with Mathew Zein at Digitec



Photo taken during a wine evening organized by Nomad Armenia, together with Christoph Looser and Mariam Navasardyan

When I asked several local investors what makes Armenia's ecosystem tick, they pointed not to money or technology, but to motivation. Many founders are building companies not just for profit, but as a form of patriotism, a way to make the country more resilient and self-reliant. This mindset echoes across different sectors, from AI and biotech to defense tech and fintech.

The diaspora's role is especially important. From Silicon Valley to Paris, **successful Armenians are reinvesting their experience and capital back home**. They're setting up R&D centers, organizing accelerators, and mentoring local founders. It's a feedback loop of trust and belonging; **one that other small nations, especially in Eastern Europe, could learn from.**

Most impressive of it all? The devotion behind it all. Armenians seem to have turned adversity into creative fuel. Even with ongoing geopolitical uncertainty, the optimism is real, not performative. There's pride in building something from the ground up, in staying and contributing when it would be easier to leave, a storyline that is too familiar in the Balkans and my native Macedonia.

For a journalist used to covering innovation through data points and investment rounds, this trip turned out to be a very human and spirit-first story. In Armenia, it's about survival, creativity, and collective hope, which is proof that even small countries can think big if they choose to build together.

TECH EVENTS



with

ARTAK N. G.



TECH BLOGGER

NOV 1	Mentor Play/Product edition	
NOV 1	IBBA chapter Armenia launch	
NOV 1-2	Empowering educators through AI driven innovations	
NOV 1-2	Democracy Tech hachathon	
NOV 4	Insight days at Adobe	
NOV 6	Internet management conference	
NOV 11-12	Finnoway Armenia by PLUS forums	
NOV 14	AI in our lives	
NOV 15	Femmino	
NOV 15	Data in Action	
NOV 17	IESM challenge: Optimize and Solve	
NOV 20	Armenia's future	

ORGANIC DOMINATION ON LINKEDIN

HOW ARMENIA'S 1# AND 2# LINKEDIN CREATORS BUILT GLOBAL AUDIENCES



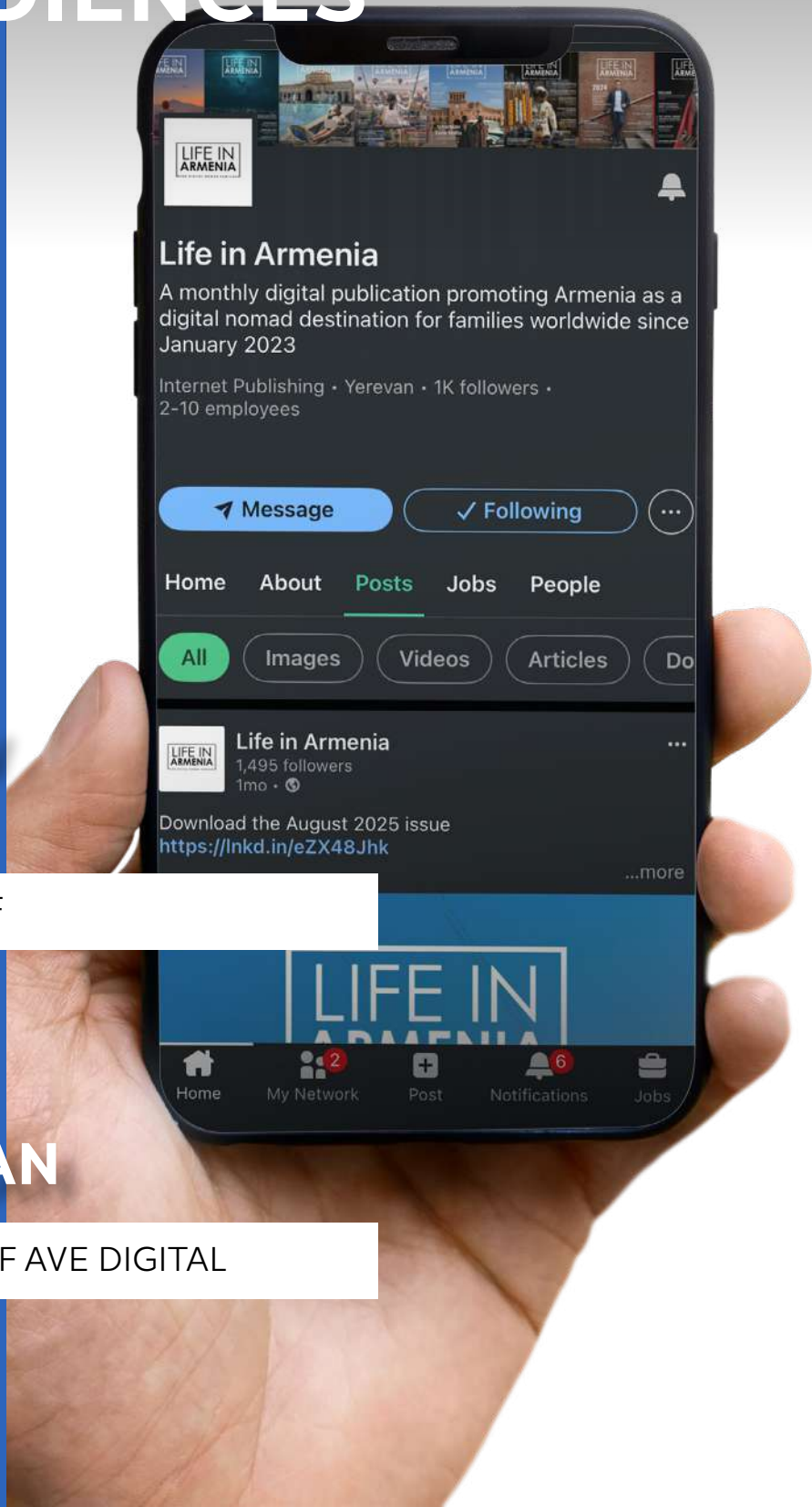
**MATHEW
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF



**ANI
AVETISYAN**

CO-FOUNDER OF AVE DIGITAL



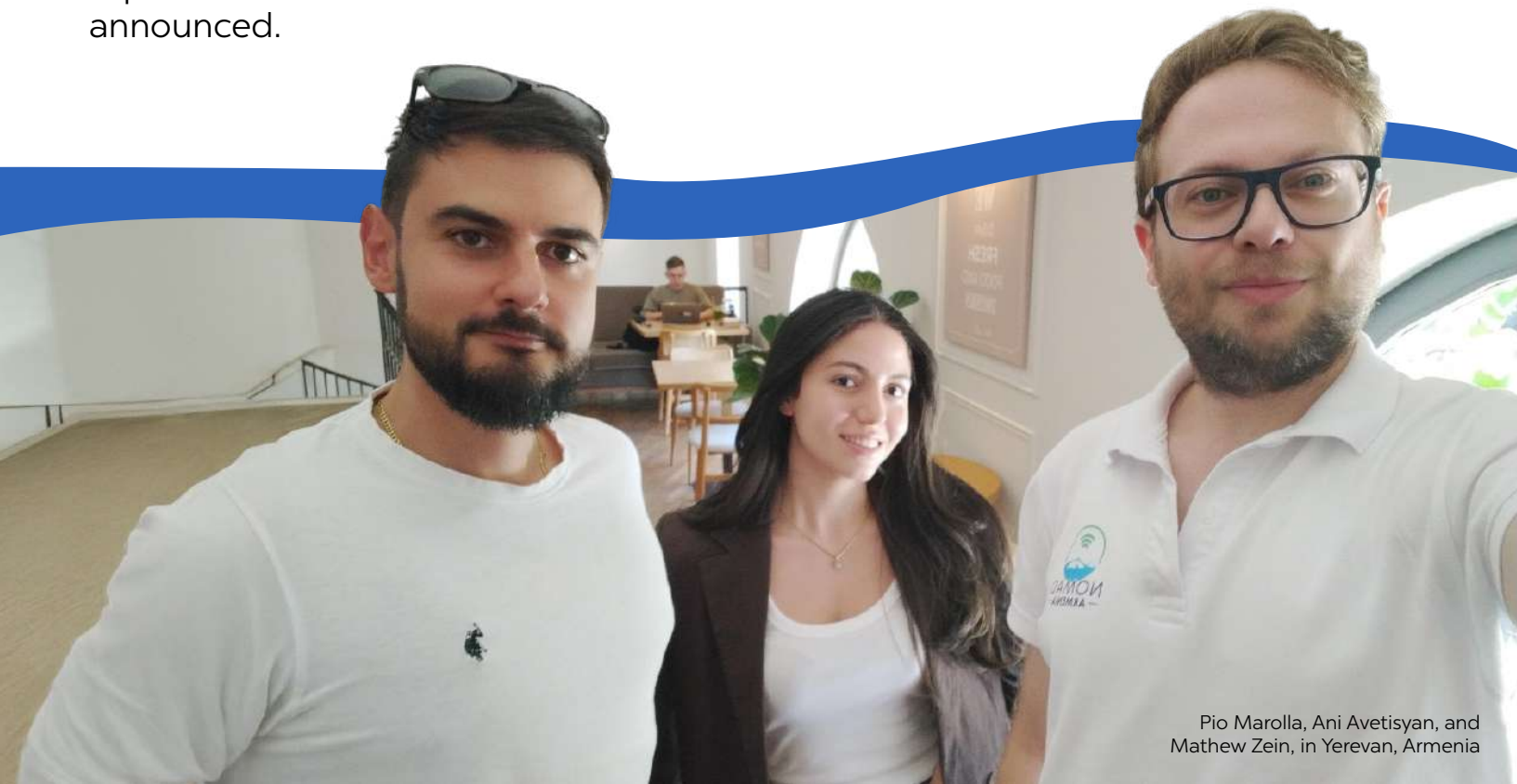
ORGANIC DOMINATION ON LINKEDIN

HOW ARMENIA'S 1# AND 2# LINKEDIN CREATORS BUILT GLOBAL AUDIENCES

Ani and I have been competing for Armenia's number one ranking position on LinkedIn. In 2024, I ranked as the most influential account on the platform, but soon after, she claimed the top spot, moving me to #2 in 2025. Although we never actually competed for the position or made it a target, the rankings became a way for us to discover each other when Armenia's top accounts were announced.

I had to check her profile and find out who this young lady was and what kind of work she did on LinkedIn to earn the top ranking. A quick look at her profile revealed we come from two different worlds and work in different fields; however, we both share one thing in common: we use LinkedIn to reach global audiences, albeit in different ways and with different strategies.

Ani is the co-founder of AVE Digital, a boutique digital marketing agency for B2B brands. While her team operates in Armenia, she targets international clients and has no ties to the local Armenian market. For her, LinkedIn is a channel to source leads online, and her content reflects that focus. I, on the other hand, am the founder of Life in Armenia magazine, and my entire LinkedIn presence operates as a channel to spread the word about the magazine and attract sophisticated readers interested in moving to Armenia to work remotely. I operate in Armenia but target only those abroad who are interested in Armenia.



Pio Marolla, Ani Avetisyan, and Mathew Zein, in Yerevan, Armenia

Now it's clear: we come from two entirely different worlds. Anyway, we met together and had a two-hour conversation about our LinkedIn

strategies and approaches. Eventually, we decided to co-write this article about how we use LinkedIn from Armenia and why.

Ani

The 1# LinkedIn Creator in Armenia

Seeing my name on top of Armenia's creator list felt like an honour, and frankly, it was quite incredible. 2 years ago, I had less than 500 followers, and most of them were students and people I met in person.

When Matt and I met in person to start this article, I knew I had to tell the whole story of my LinkedIn experience. I wanted everyone to understand that being a top-ranked creator was a natural byproduct, not the goal, and it will never be the goal for me. I wanted to share these lines with Matt's audience and wanted my connections to read his.

I co-founded AVE Digital in Yerevan after living in St. Petersburg and graduating with a degree in Marketing from Prague. After gathering experience at SAS, Peerboard, and ThinkLinkers, I felt it was time to build something of my own.





My experience in Europe, I heard the call of my homeland and decided to return to Yerevan. However, this time I didn't come back alone; I convinced my Italian business partner and AVE Digital's co-founder, Pio Marola, to relocate to Armenia.

Especially in the B2B tech sector, many companies have outstanding solutions but fail to communicate them in a compelling way; their marketing plays by old rules: features rather than benefits, self-celebratory content, and no executive visibility. Quite simply, this doesn't work anymore. Modern customers connect with brands they trust.

Such trust is built by bringing people to the front line. 80% of adults say a CEO's reputation impacts their decision to buy; therefore, founder-led marketing and employee-generated content perform miles better than corporate content. We need to let go of the idea that a product sells itself and that B2B Marketing must be boring, uninnovative, and impersonal. People naturally trust other people more than they do a logo and corporate jargon.

This is why I decided to work on a brand dedicated to helping B2B companies and individuals build a strong, impactful, and distinct presence on LinkedIn. After all, what's better than LinkedIn for founder-led marketing and employee-generated content!



I started out on LinkedIn when I was a student, but it's only at ThinkLinkers that I started taking it seriously. The beauty of LinkedIn is its audience variety. It has CEOs and senior professionals, students, and job seekers from all over the world. This platform is a goldmine for B2B Armenian companies trying to enter the global market. Through LinkedIn, a start-up CEO can literally build a bigger audience than a Wall Street-listed company.

Armenia's tech sector has huge potential, but we need to escape the small market mentality and invest in spreading our excellence through stories, founder-led marketing, and global exposure. At times, I feel like digital marketing is still downplayed here. Many organizations see it as a nice-to-have and a trivial matter. But good marketing is the difference between a struggling software outsourcing company in Armenia and its US giant client that resells the product with an eye-watering margin.

But LinkedIn Marketing doesn't come without its own challenges. Many companies post on LinkedIn frequently but with little to no impact, playing catch-up rather than being original and creative. AI-generated content certainly doesn't help. Many companies jumped at the opportunity to cut costs with GenAI, but by doing so, they outsourced their voice, lost their edge, and ended up with interchangeable content.



Many people wondered why I came back to Armenia after graduating in Europe and having a great job there. But in a connected world, there's no reason why I should feel at a disadvantage in Armenia. Thanks to LinkedIn and my personal brand, I didn't need to choose between my home and my career. I could have them both.

AVE Digital's clients come mostly from EMEA and the US, and being in Armenia, with its friendly business environment and tax benefits, helped the company grow faster and leaner. Pio was impressed by the talent, better business conditions, and lighter bureaucracy, which prompted him to relocate here and co-found the company with me.

We built AVE Digital after an extensive experience in the conference business, where we tested, refined, and proved the value of building communities and human connection. Billion-dollar companies were coming to us for our ability to connect people, give them exposure, and facilitate business development. AVE Digital felt like a natural evolution and a way to close the gap. Brands need a presence in both the physical and digital worlds. Conferences were our product, but digital marketing is how we connected thousands of people.



Our secret was to forget corporate speak, pomposity, and seriousness, and to put our people at the forefront of our brand. What is known today as EGC (Employee-Generated Content) is what got us from “just another B2B company” to a unique collective of trusted experts, storytellers, and personalities.

The shift happened during COVID, when the ad budget was 0, we reinvented our marketing through our people’s voices and creativity. We survived a crisis we shouldn’t have survived as a conference company, largely thanks to our people-led marketing.

If you’re new to LinkedIn, whoever you are, you have a story. It may not be perfect, but it’s yours. Start building a personal brand today, share your journey candidly, and don’t let perfectionism or imposter syndrome hold you back. Start posting consistently 2-3 times a week. Connect with people in your industry. Inspire, be inspired, and engage with them frequently. The beginning will be awkward, but trust me when I say: it’s all worth it.



Matt

The 2# LinkedIn Creator in Armenia

As many of you reading this already know, I founded Life in Armenia back in 2023. It was created as a media outlet to spread the word about the good things happening in Armenia, specifically to attract remote workers to consider visiting and relocating, whether for a few months, a year, a decade, or even a lifetime. From day one, I had a clear target audience in mind: the English-speaking, sophisticated reader who works remotely or who is considering it. And where do you find that audience better than on LinkedIn?

Other social media platforms excel at visual engagement. However, LinkedIn was my primary channel for engaging readers from day one. By “readers,” I mean people who take time to absorb words and share thoughtful feedback, not those who would swipe in a fraction of a second to see another photo, like another post, or briefly view a short clip. I don’t deny the importance of all social media platforms; each serves a purpose, and LinkedIn is no exception.



I knew that leveraging LinkedIn was important for promoting Life in Armenia, and achieving organic success would be a victory in itself, which is exactly what happened. I've built a global audience interested in learning about Armenia. To maintain relevance and maximize reach, I regularly clean my connections, removing non-relevant accounts. This focused approach ensures that every post effectively functions as a targeted mailing list. My rule of thumb is strict: I only connect with Armenians, the diaspora, or others with an interest in Armenia in one way or another.

This focused strategy is why Life in Armenia grew from zero to 25,000 international readers in less than three years ; all organically, without spending a single dollar on social media marketing. This reach extended to countries and audiences I never initially targeted or even considered. The impact is immediate: every time we publish a new magazine, I simply post it on LinkedIn, and within a few days, messages start rolling in, often from Armenians, but just as frequently from people all around the world.

I have countless stories of this organic reach. For instance, an Italian reached out to me on WhatsApp after finding Life in Armenia in a college graduates' group chat. It turned out an Armenian alumnus had shared the magazine, wanting to showcase the beauty of his country, and I ended up gaining several loyal Italian readers who still text me often.

Another time, I received dozens of signups from Texas! An American family whose son had married an Armenian woman wanted to learn about her homeland, and he shared the magazine with them. Incredibly, I later met that family here in Armenia.

One day, I was hanging out with a friend who is a public figure and noticed him chatting with someone on WhatsApp. He was asking, "Can you tell me what this meeting is about?" It turns out, he asks that specific question before scheduling any call or in-person meeting.





I told him I don't do that; I simply schedule calls right away through LinkedIn messages. He then explained why my approach works: LinkedIn's audience naturally filters out the noise, keeping only those with a higher interest in business or knowledge exchange. That kind of self-filtering is a significant advantage that you don't find on most other social media platforms today.

How do I do it? Simply put, I post content clearly and authentically, with no secret formatting tricks, line breaks, or reliance on AI. I just tell it straight, and the engagement level jumps.

In fact, I sometimes intentionally leave out a piece of information from the main post and put it in the first comment. This is a subtle way to check how many people actively seek out and read the entire thread. When I see 10,000+ views on a single comment in a LinkedIn post, I know the content

is truly resonating and that people are reading deeply.

Today, there are many "so-called secrets" to posting on LinkedIn, but I don't believe they are important as long as you have something authentic to share. You only need to shape how you share your thoughts. The key is to make the platform work for you, not the other way around. And I'm guessing this is exactly where my LinkedIn strategy meets Ani's LinkedIn strategy.



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ARMENIA IS NOT WHAT YOU THINK!

THE -3MILLION-USER MARKET THAT PUSHED A -60MILLION-USER APP TO GO ENGLISH



**MATHEW
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF



FEATURING

**STANISLAV
STEPANOV**

CEO AT 2GIS ARMENIA



ARMENIA IS NOT WHAT YOU THINK! THE -3MILLION-USER MARKET THAT PUSHED A -60MILLION- USER APP TO GO ENGLISH

“We never considered developing an English version of our app until we reached Armenia.”

[Stanislav Stepanov](#), CEO of [2GIS Armenia](#), told me this over coffee at his Yerevan office last month, and I had to stop him right there! Wait, you have 60 million users across Russian-speaking countries, and **Armenia is what made you think about English!** This relatively small country, with a population of almost three million, has you consider the English version of your app!

Just in case you're not aware, 2GIS has been widely used in Russian-speaking countries for years. It's basically **the Google Maps of the post-Soviet world** with additional features. But when they reached 200,000 active users in Armenia, they couldn't ignore the **growing demand for English-language interfaces**, from foreigners residing in Armenia and locals alike.



Armenia Isn't What You Think

Here's the thing about Armenia right now: it's changing fast. Really fast. **Yerevan feels different every few months**; more cafes with decent espresso, more English on menus, more remote workers from everywhere working on their laptops.

The old stereotype that you need Armenian or Russian to survive here is outdated. Sure, knowing some Russian helps, and Armenian will win you more friends. **But English is everywhere now**, especially among anyone under 35 or working in tech. For 2GIS, this created an unusual demand in a small country within their target region. Their business model was built around Russian-speaking markets. Then Armenia showed up asking, **“Hey, where's the English version?”**

I Might Be User 200,001

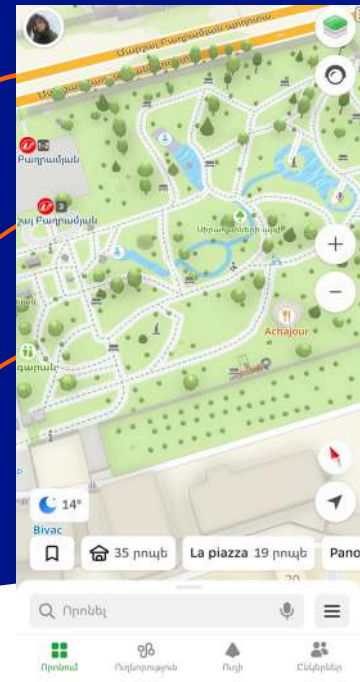
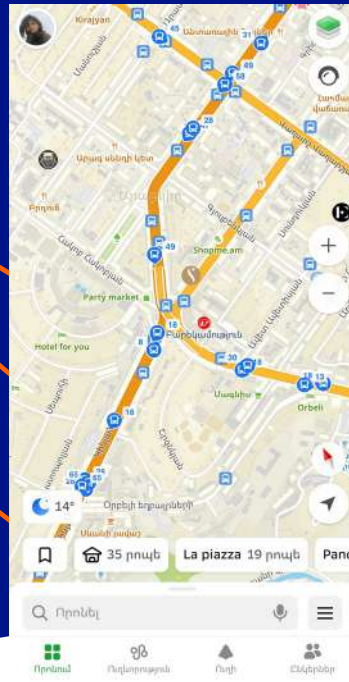
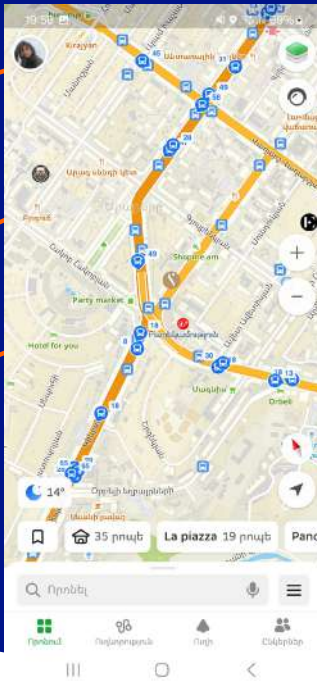
What got me interested in featuring 2GIS in this editorial is the fact that **I am one of those who demanded an English version of the app**. When I first learned about it at Digitec last month, I couldn't hide being impressed, and for that reason, I visited Stanislav at his Yerevan office to learn more.



In 2GIS, **everything renders in full 3D** with actual, detailed building models, not the flat cartoon graphics available in other apps. Take a shopping mall in Yerevan. Click on it and you can navigate floor by floor, seeing exactly which stores sit where. Amusement parks show the actual rides in 3D, some with little animations showing how they move.

Buses appear as 3D models that move in real time, with an accuracy of about 20-30 seconds. Traffic lights update live. Even the trees are mapped correctly, and they change color with the seasons. **The tree on the app will have the same status as the tree on the street:** yellow in fall, white when there's snow, and so on.





The secret behind this accuracy is part tech, part human. **2GIS employs scouts in Yerevan**; people who literally walk around the city all day, noting what's changed. New cafe? They log it. Store closed? Updated. Tree cut down? Removed from the map. This obsessive attention to detail transforms the app from impressive to useful.

Even when you need information about a company or a navigator to get there, you don't have to switch from one app to another. 2GIS provides everything in one place, making your life easier and more comfortable.



What About Making Money?

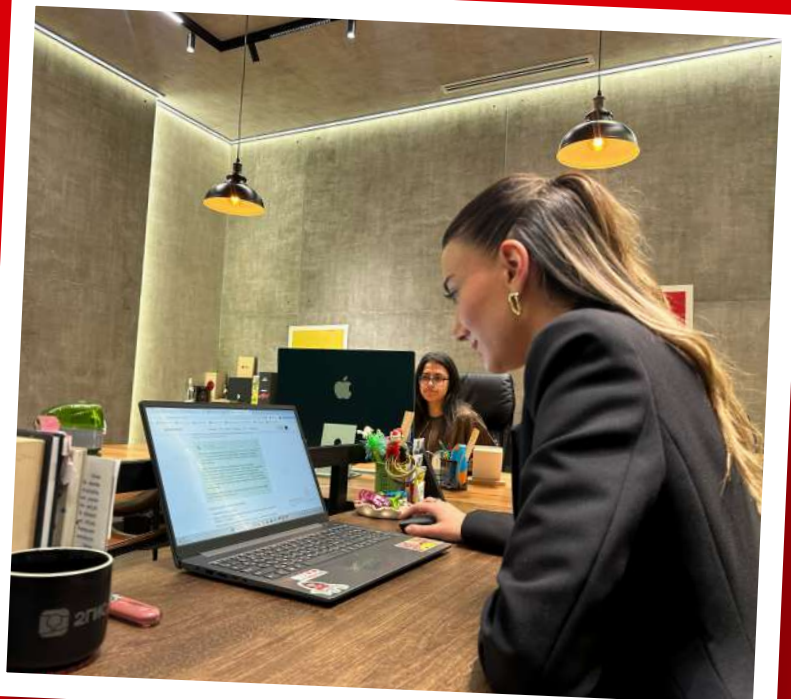
I asked Stanislav the obvious question: How do you make money in a country of three million people? 2GIS runs on advertising, and businesses pay to get recommended in the app. Their initial plan was to break even in five years, maybe turn a profit after that. The small market often forces you to adopt a long-game approach.

But once again, the Armenian market surprised them. Users adopted the app faster than expected. More importantly, businesses started advertising. Honestly speaking, I got the kind of response I'd expect from a much more mature market. Now they're **projecting break-even by year three**. That's not just good news for 2GIS; it says something about Armenia.

Nomad Armenia and 2GIS teams at 2GIS's office in Yerevan, Armenia



A 60-million-user app added a whole new language because of what's happening here. That **tells you everything you need to know about where Armenia is headed.**





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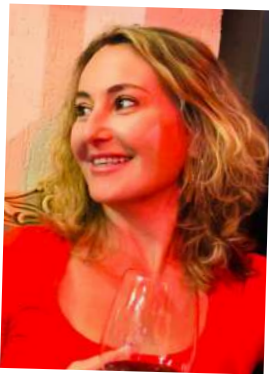
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