

LIFE IN ARMENIA

FOR DIGITAL NOMAD FAMILIES

JULY, 31ST 2026 | NO. 38 | LIFE IN ARMENIA

A LIFE-CHANGING RELOCATION

HOW SEVAN AND HERA PLANNED THEIR RETURN TO ARMENIA AND BUILT A NEW LIFE

THE STORY OF A MOUNTAIN

HOW AN ABANDONED PLOT BECAME A WINE WELLBEING ECOSYSTEM

HOW TO LIVE LONGER IN YEREVAN

PROVEN STRATEGIES FOR A LONGER, HEALTHIER LIFE IN THE ARMENIAN CAPITAL

WHERE NEXT? THE ISLAND NEXT DOOR

AND THE PART OF REMOTE WORK NOBODY TALKS ABOUT

BEYOND THE 180 DAYS

THE REMOTE WORKER'S GUIDE TO STAYING IN ARMENIA LEGALLY

LEARNING IN DILIJAN

WHAT MAKES THE YOUTH CHOOSE DILIJAN OVER YEREVAN'S ACTIVE LIFE

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO ENJOY SILENCE

ARMENIA OFFERS TRAVELLERS THE MOST EXPENSIVE LUXURY OF 2026

INTO THE BLUE

ARMENIA'S REMOTE WORK CAPITAL WELCOMES ITS 1ST COWORKING SPACE



MATHEW ZEIN

EDITOR'S LETTER

Four years ago, I started a magazine. Somewhere along the way, it became a part of who I am.

Today, I'm often introduced as the "Life in Armenia" guy, and the publication as "Mathew's journal." Thousands of questions about life here find their way to my inbox, and I answer each one personally. From repatriation, expatriation, and relocation, to visiting, investing, and doing business, and even things I know nothing about, I love exploring the answers and getting back to people.

Now, after overcoming months of hurdles and clearing the runway, we are reaching a huge milestone with our very first print edition! Life in Armenia will officially hit newsstands in Yerevan this September 2026, before expanding across Europe and the United States by December 2026. This quarterly print release will showcase the best stories, insights, and talent from across the country.

If you had told me four years ago that I'd be launching a physical journal, I would have thought you were crazy. Life in Armenia has given me a sense of purpose, something I couldn't find in any other country I've lived in.

Mathew Zein



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When Sevan first visited Armenia in 2014, he knew he would repatriate one day but he also knew it wouldn't be easy. Over a decade of intentional planning, remote-work transitions, and continuous community-building, he and his wife Hera built a life in Yerevan and finally moved to Armenia in 2025, and hopefully for good.

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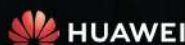
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A LIFE-CHANGING RELOCATION

HOW SEVAN AND HERA PLANNED THEIR RETURN TO ARMENIA AND BUILT A NEW LIFE



**SEVAN
KONU**

CERTIFIED NOTION CONSULTANT
AND P3.EXPRESS TRAINER



A LIFE-CHANGING RELOCATION **HOW SEVAN AND HERA PLANNED THEIR RETURN TO ARMENIA AND BUILT A NEW LIFE**

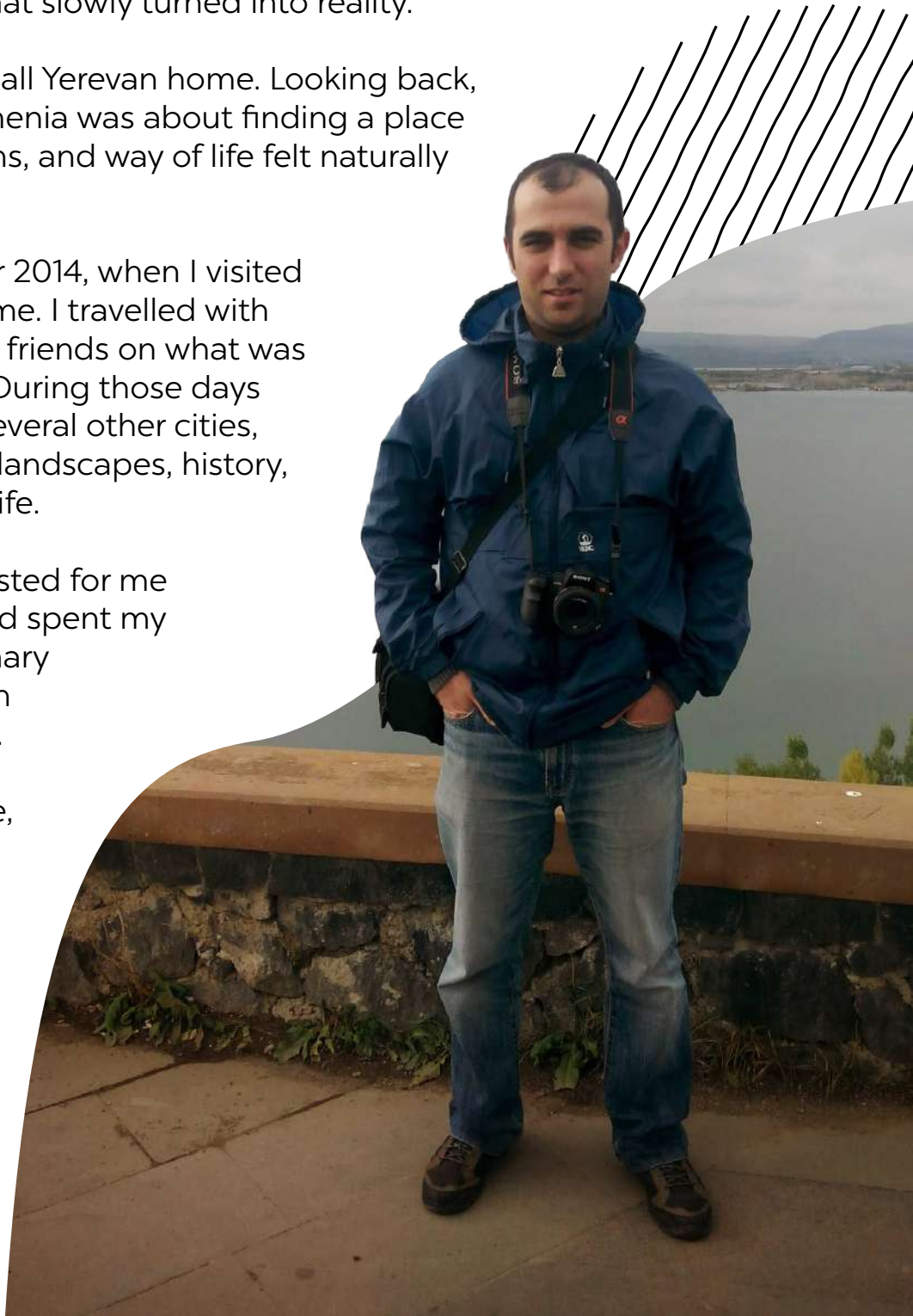
People often ask me a simple question: “Why Armenia?”

My answer is never simple, because **this journey did not begin with a sudden decision**. It began more than a decade ago, with curiosity, unexpected emotions, meaningful friendships, and a dream that slowly turned into reality.

Today, my wife Hera and I call Yerevan home. Looking back, I realize that moving to Armenia was about finding a place where our values, aspirations, and way of life felt naturally aligned.

The story began in October 2014, when I visited Armenia for the very first time. I travelled with my brother and a few close friends on what was planned as a five-day trip. During those days we explored Yerevan and several other cities, experiencing the country’s landscapes, history, architecture and everyday life.

Until then, Armenia had existed for me mostly through stories. I had spent my entire education, from primary school through university, in Armenian schools in Turkey. I grew up surrounded by Armenian friends, language, traditions and culture. Yet actually standing in the Republic of Armenia was something entirely different. It **transformed everything I thought I knew into something I could feel**.



That first visit left a lasting impression. After returning home, I knew I wanted to come back again and again. And I did. I returned in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021, 2024 and finally in 2025. Every visit strengthened my connection with the country. One thing became almost a personal mission whenever I travelled here: **meeting people.**

Rather than staying within familiar circles, I always tried to meet locals and people from different backgrounds. I attended cultural events, community gatherings, festivals and social activities in Yerevan and other cities. Every conversation taught me something new, not only about Armenia, but also about how to adapt to a different society.



Looking back, I realize I was preparing for a future life here. Over the years, those acquaintances became close friendships. Even after returning to Turkey, we stayed in touch. Those relationships would later become one of the strongest foundations of our move.

Around 2017, another idea quietly started growing in my mind. I wanted to live in Armenia. It wasn't an emotional impulse or a temporary fascination after a pleasant vacation. The feeling remained with me year after year. Every visit made the idea stronger rather than weaker. At the same time, I understood something important.

Dreams Require Preparation

Back then, my professional life depended entirely on being physically present in offices and factories. Relocating to another country simply wasn't realistic under those circumstances. But there was another dream growing alongside the first one.

I wanted the freedom to work from anywhere. Not only because of Armenia, but because I believed work should provide flexibility

and independence. **I wanted my office to fit inside a backpack.** So instead of waiting for the "right moment," I started preparing for it. I changed the direction of my career, invested in new education, obtained certifications and gradually developed skills that would allow me to work remotely.

Eventually, in 2021, I started working as a remote Project Manager. Remote work was still a relatively new

experience for me, but I adapted quickly. As long as my laptop was with me, my office could be almost anywhere.

Ironically, because my work involved many client meetings, I still preferred working from home or occasionally from company offices. Yet having the freedom to choose changed the way I thought about work and about life itself. Around the same period, another important person entered this story.

My Wife, Hera

I still remember one of the very first conversations we had while we were dating. I told her: "I want to move to Armenia one day. If we're going to build a life together, I think you should know that from the beginning."



At that time, the idea had never crossed her mind. Naturally, she had many questions. But instead of dismissing the dream, she became curious. The more we talked, the more interested she became. After we got married in 2021, we first went on our honeymoon. Shortly afterwards, we travelled to Armenia together, allowing her to experience the country for the first time.

Watching someone discover Armenia with fresh eyes reminded me of my own first visit years earlier. She experienced the warmth of the people, the rich cultural atmosphere, the cafés full of conversations, the concerts, museums, parks and creative spaces that give Yerevan its unique rhythm.

Little by little, Armenia became her dream too. Life, of course, rarely follows our original plans. Some years brought unexpected challenges and delayed our move. But even when circumstances forced us to wait, we never stopped preparing. One lesson became clear to me. Moving to another country isn't only about visas, jobs or apartments.

The most valuable thing you can have is a community. That understanding shaped every visit I made afterwards. I continued meeting people, joining events, participating in conversations and building genuine relationships. When we finally decided to move, I knew one thing with certainty: We would not be arriving as strangers.

By then, Armenia already felt like a place where people knew us, and where we knew people. **That made a huge difference.** In December 2025, together with our two beloved cats, Hera and I packed our lives into boxes and moved to Yerevan. Because we had visited so many times before, adapting happened surprisingly quickly.



It Felt Like Finally Arriving Not Like Starting Over

After the move, I continued working remotely in my existing position while we settled into our new home. Meanwhile, Hera focused on creating a new life here as well. She explored career opportunities while also dedicating herself to something she has always been deeply passionate about, yoga.

The city already felt familiar. We knew the neighborhoods we liked. We knew where to buy groceries, where to enjoy coffee, where to meet friends and where to spend quiet evenings walking through the streets.



Her vision extends far beyond teaching physical exercise. She hopes to build a welcoming community where people can reconnect with themselves, reduce stress and improve their physical and emotional well-being through yoga. Watching her gradually establish those roots reminded me that migration is also about **creating spaces where other people can feel they belong**.

A few months later, I made another life-changing decision. After nearly ten years of imagining it, I finally became a freelancer. I left my corporate position and began working independently as a Notion consultant. Notion, an American software platform for productivity and knowledge management, had been part of my daily life for years. Turning that expertise into a profession felt like a natural next step.



As far as I know, I am currently the only dedicated Notion consultant based in Armenia. My goal is to continue growing within the global Notion ecosystem and eventually become an official solutions partner while also continuing my work as a P3.express project management trainer.

People sometimes assume that becoming a freelancer happened overnight. It didn't. It was the result of years of preparation. Along that journey, two people I had met in Armenia, Matthew Zein and Hagop Panosian, played an important role. Through their remote work programs, conversations and generous advice, they helped shape my perspective on building an independent career.



Armenia Itself also Deserves Credit

The country has developed an impressive remote-work culture, with coworking spaces, educational programs, entrepreneurial communities and professionals eager to share their experience.

I benefited from that environment. When I eventually told people we were moving to Armenia permanently, most reactions were surprisingly

similar. People were shocked. Many couldn't understand why someone would choose to move east instead of west.

For many, **migration is automatically associated with Western Europe or North America**. But I believe they are overlooking something remarkable. Armenia offers a quality of life

that cannot always be measured by salaries or statistics.

It offers safety. It offers community. It offers culture. It offers creativity. It offers a pace of life that still leaves room for meaningful human connections. People usually begin by asking about restaurants, shopping centers or entertainment.

Those certainly exist, and Armenia has developed rapidly in recent years. But what truly makes this country special lies elsewhere. Volunteer organizations. Community initiatives. Creative workshops. Public lectures. Cultural festivals. Music. Art. History. People who want to build something together.

Once you begin participating in these communities, you realize that Armenia offers something increasingly rare in today's world: a strong sense of belonging. Whenever someone asks me to describe Armenia, I often call it a fascinating cultural hybrid.

It preserves one of the world's oldest civilizations while simultaneously carrying visible influences from the Soviet period. At the same time, its global diaspora continuously brings ideas, experiences and perspectives from Europe, North America and many other parts of the world.



The result is a society where tradition and innovation coexist. Perhaps what impresses me most, however, is the people. I have met talented entrepreneurs, artists, engineers, educators, volunteers and professionals whose dedication constantly inspires me.

Of course, Armenia is not a perfect country. Like every nation, it faces challenges. There are bureaucratic frustrations. There are economic

realities. There are moments when life becomes difficult. **But there is also something extraordinary.**

There are countless kind-hearted people willing to help complete strangers simply because they believe helping others matters. That generosity is one of Armenia's greatest treasures. As for Hera and me, we hope to contribute, even

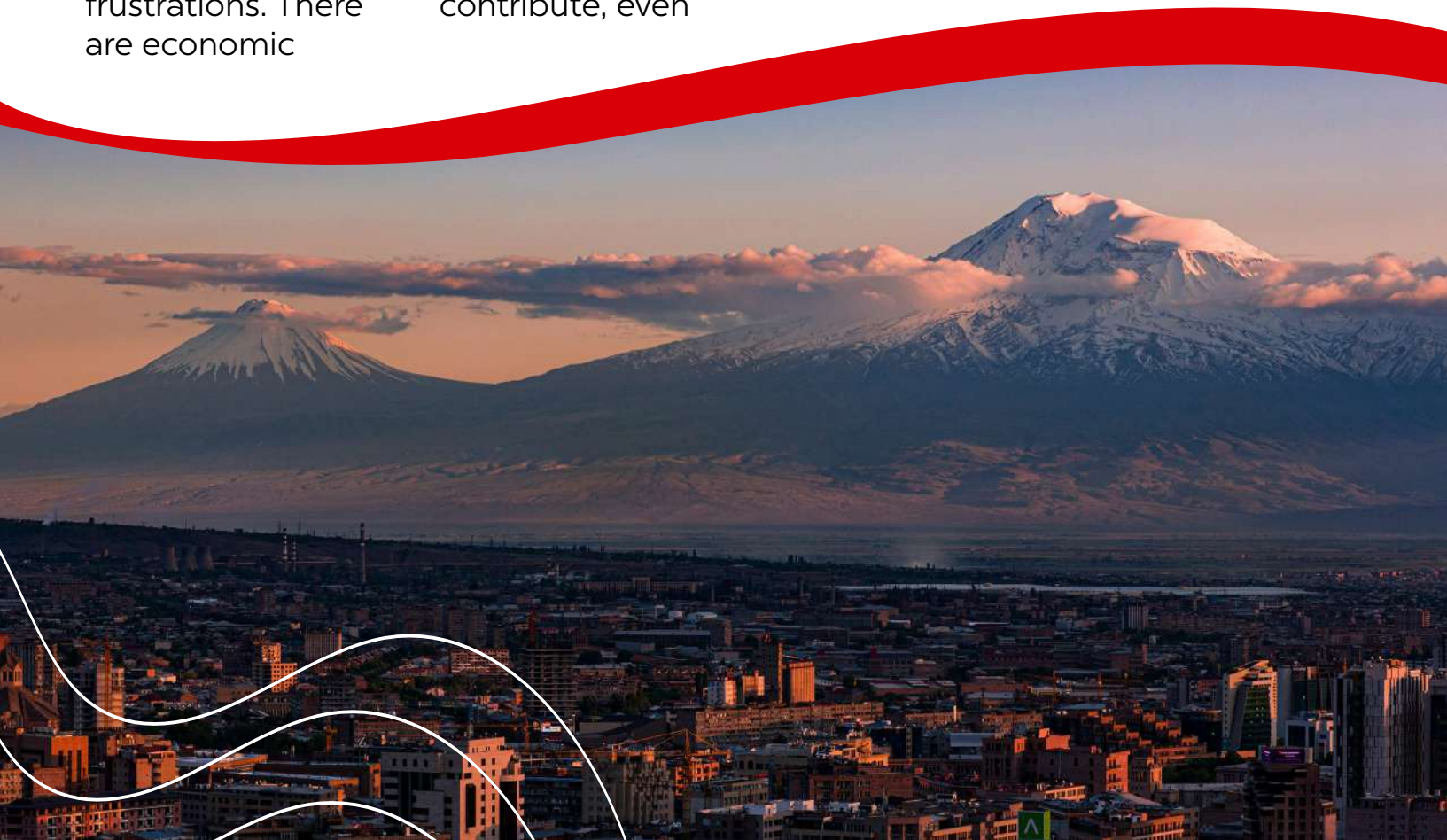
in a small way, to this beautiful country that has welcomed us so warmly.

We want to build communities. We want to share knowledge. We want to continue learning. And most importantly, we want to give back to the place that, after so many years, no longer feels like somewhere we moved to.

It simply feels like home. Looking back, I realize

that our story is not really about migration. It is about patiently preparing for a dream, investing in people, embracing change and trusting that sometimes the place where you truly belong is one you discover step by step.

For us, that place is Armenia. And **we believe our journey here is only just beginning.**



THE STORY OF A MOUNTAIN

HOW AN ABANDONED PLOT BECAME A WINE WELLBEING ECOSYSTEM



**MATHEW
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF



THE STORY OF A MOUNTAIN HOW AN ABANDONED PLOT BECAME A WINE WELLBEING ECOSYSTEM

In Aghavnadzor, in the heart of Vayots Dzor, there was a plot of land nobody cared much about for years. Too rocky to farm easily, too remote to build on cheaply, too ordinary to photograph. Today it has a name, Saromm Grounds, and, as it turns out, [a history older than anyone who acquired it expected](#). This is the story of that plot.

Readers of our June issue have already met Saromm Grounds without realizing what it was. This is the same company that sponsored and coordinated the scholarly book on the karas, the ancient Armenian wine vessel, working with archaeologist Miqayel Badalyan. You might have thought of the book as an act of cultural generosity. Now the fuller picture emerges; a company preparing to build its future on Armenian wine decided to first invest in Armenian wine's past.

A short drive from Aghavnadzor is the Areni-1 cave, [where archaeologists uncovered the oldest known winery on earth](#), more than six thousand years old. The village itself is one of the region's respected grape-growing micro-zones; wineries across Armenia source Areni grapes from its volcanic, high-altitude soils.



Looking for the Age of a Vineyard

Last week we went to Aghavnadzor on a mission to [find out how old these vines actually are](#). I travelled with Anoush Iskandaryan, Saromm Ground's CEO; Sophie Clusel, the vigneronne who looks after the vineyards and Sofiya Mkhitryan, the founder's daughter;

We started with Aram Mikayelyan, the head of the village administration, who welcomed us into his office and gave us a book on the history of Aghavnadzor, compiled from interviews with local elders. The earliest government document he could point to [dated the plots in question back to the 1860s](#). That means we're talking about [vines that are nearly 200 years old](#), and that's just the baseline of what we know.



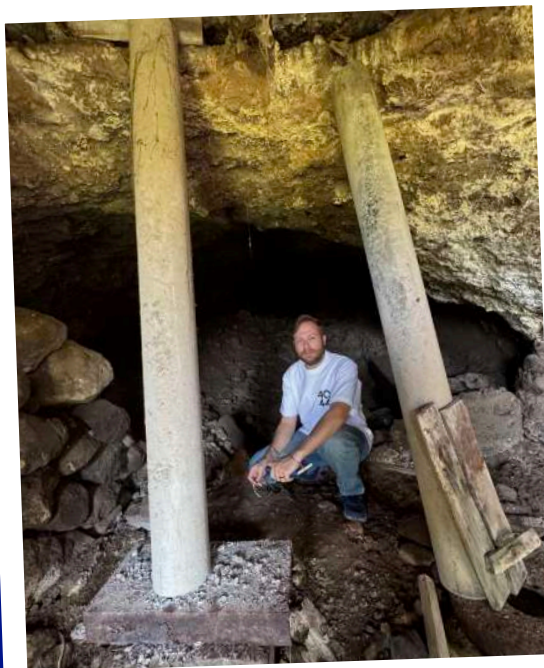
He also mentioned that a few years ago, an international delegation studying the Areni-1 cave findings and [tracing the ancestry of the grape varieties](#) suggested these exact plots might have supplied the ancient Areni Noir grapes. If that theory holds, we're talking about [thousands of years of continuous cultivation on these same slopes](#). At that moment, Sophie came close to tears. She was the one who tended to these vines month after month, caring for them like her own grandmothers, and from that moment on, [they became even more precious to her](#).

Then Aram walked us through the village and took us beneath one of the houses, into a cave the village dates to the Mongol period, which means it's almost 1,500 years old, cut into the rock and still cool in the middle of the day. I mention this simply to show that speaking in terms of millennia is completely normal in Aghv nadzor. It isn't out of context here; *in a place like this, thousands of years are the context.*

From there we went to see the oldest resident of Aghav nadzor, who talked us through the families who had owned these vineyards, one after another, and who left. *He gave us names, and names are threads.*



We are pulling on them next at the Matenadaran. I will report back on what the manuscripts say.



What I want to say here is that **the abandoned plot was never really abandoned by history**, only by recent decades. The vines had been here before. The mountain was just waiting to be reminded of what it had been.



The Mountain Sets the Schedule

Here's the part of the story I respect most, and the reason it earned the title of this article. The project started with planting, and it stayed with planting for years. Vines give nothing useful for the first seasons and demand everything, and [no amount of money makes a young vineyard mature faster than nature allows](#). In fact, I only found out about this project after four years of planting and harvesting.

Only after the ground has been worked, season after season, the project will move toward construction, taking the time for everything. And if you think about it for a moment, this is appropriate to the product. [Wine is the agricultural expression of patience](#).

Choosing to begin with the slowest possible asset was intentional. [The mountain sets the schedule here, and the humans have agreed to follow it](#). In a country where I've watched

some projects announced with fireworks and finished with silence, this inverted order, quiet first, results later, caught my attention and earned my respect.

There is a lesson here for the diaspora especially, and I say this with affection. So much diasporan investment in Armenia arrives with love and leaves with frustration, because [it comes carrying foreign](#)

[timelines to a land that keeps its own](#). Strip away the vines and the plans and what remains is a belief, one I'd like more investors, local and diaspora alike, to catch. The difference between an abandoned plot and an ecosystem is [the years someone is willing to give it](#).

We'll be following Saromm Grounds as the project grows, and something tells me this is a story, like its vines, that will get better with every passing year.



HOW TO LIVE LONGER IN YEREVAN

PROVEN STRATEGIES FOR A LONGER, HEALTHIER LIFE IN THE ARMENIAN CAPITAL



**MATHEW
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF



**WOLF
ALEXANYAN**

Chief Operations Officer and Chief
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INTERVIEWING



HOW TO LIVE LONGER IN YEREVAN PROVEN STRATEGIES FOR A LONGER, HEALTHIER LIFE IN THE ARMENIAN CAPITAL

Somewhere in California, there's a tech centimillionaire who is spending a fortune every year trying not to die. He has a team of doctors, a lab, and a strict schedule controlling every single move he makes.

Meanwhile, in Yerevan, I met Wolf Alexanyan who is developing a Yerevan-version of the same

goal. And unlike the famous longevity projects making headlines abroad, his version is free to read, practical to follow, and built for people with jobs, families, and normal bank accounts. Cherry on top, it was built around life in Yerevan, so it doesn't require leaving the city.

When I sat down with him to talk about it, my first question was the obvious one: if longevity is meant for billionaires, what exactly are the rest of us supposed to do? His answer became this monthly column.



A Protocol for people

Wolf's project is called the [Longevity Protocol for Non-Billionaires](#), published openly on his platform keepsimple.io. The name tells you almost everything. It was inspired by Bryan Johnson's famous Blueprint protocol, and Wolf is upfront about admiring the mission behind it. But he is upfront about the problem that **Johnson's lifestyle is out of reach for almost everyone**. Billionaires can delegate their lives; the rest of us are stuck living them. Most of us are caught in hectic routines that get wrecked by work, kids, travel, and the general noise of being a normal person.

So Wolf built something instead. By his own estimate, his approach costs him around \$3,000 a year, compared to the tens of thousands, and by some accounts far more, that Johnson's protocol demands. It is built on ten years of self-experimenting, constant tracking, and **applying published science to daily life**, with one clear goal that I found pretty honest: He is not trying to live forever; that was never the plan for him. He is trying to keep his brain sharp for as long as possible, so he can keep solving complex problems longer.

Because delusion is the default setting for most of us when it comes to health. We assume we'll deal with it later. We assume aging is something that happens to other people, **until one day it starts**

happening to us. Wolf studied what aging after 40 and 50 actually does to a body and a mind, and decided it was ugly enough to act early. **Since this is his only life, he chose control.**



An image of Blueprint founder from 2026

The Philosophy Underneath

The reason I wanted this to become a column is Wolf's mindset. He does not tell people to copy him, and he is **careful to say his protocol is not medical advice**. The only thing he actively asks for is mindfulness, meaning paying honest attention to what you eat, how you sleep, how you move, and what your habits are doing to you over years. **Facing yourself is uncomfortable**, and he knows it. As he puts it in the project itself, "while awareness can hurt, delusion kills."

Why Yerevan is a good place to try this

One more thing Wolf pointed out is that Yerevan, unlike many first-world cities, **has not yet been polluted by corporate capitalism** trying to turn its residents into mindless consumers. Companies here still operate on a relatively normal, locally accepted commercial level. They haven't yet evolved into **monstrous multinationals that swallow markets**, churn

out mass-produced, low-quality goods, and push cancer-causing products onto the public. They haven't completed that **vicious cycle that twists Eat, Pray, Love into Consume, Get Sick, Die and Be Replaced**. Many products in Yerevan are exactly what you might be looking for if you are aiming for longevity. In fact, you can find things here that you simply can't find anywhere else.

Additionally, from my very simple perspective on this, although I'm no expert, the city is walkable; many of us cross it on foot without thinking of it as exercise. Fresh fruit and vegetables are simply what the markets sell, in season, at prices that make eating well the cheap option rather than the expensive one. The sun shows up for most of the year.



The mountains are an hour away when your nervous system needs quiet. And the society, the evening walks, the long dinners, the neighbors who actually know your name, is the kind of thing longevity researchers keep pointing to when they study the world's longest-living communities. My four-year-old son knows our entire neighborhood; **I suspect that counts for more than any supplement.**



What comes next in this series

This first article is the introduction, the who and the why. In the coming issues, we'll go deeper into the protocol itself and translate it into Yerevan terms; where the city helps you and where, honestly, it works against you. Because let's be fair, Yerevan also has traffic, smoking culture, and pastries that do not care about your longevity plans.

If you want to read ahead, **the full protocol is free at keepsimple.io**. Wolf built it, in his words, not to save humanity but to nudge his friends toward a smarter, healthier life. Consider this series **my way of extending that nudge to our readers**. Your brain is the only office you'll never be able to relocate from. It's worth maintaining.

WHERE NEXT? THE ISLAND NEXT DOOR

AND THE PART OF REMOTE WORK NOBODY TALKS ABOUT



**MATHEW
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF

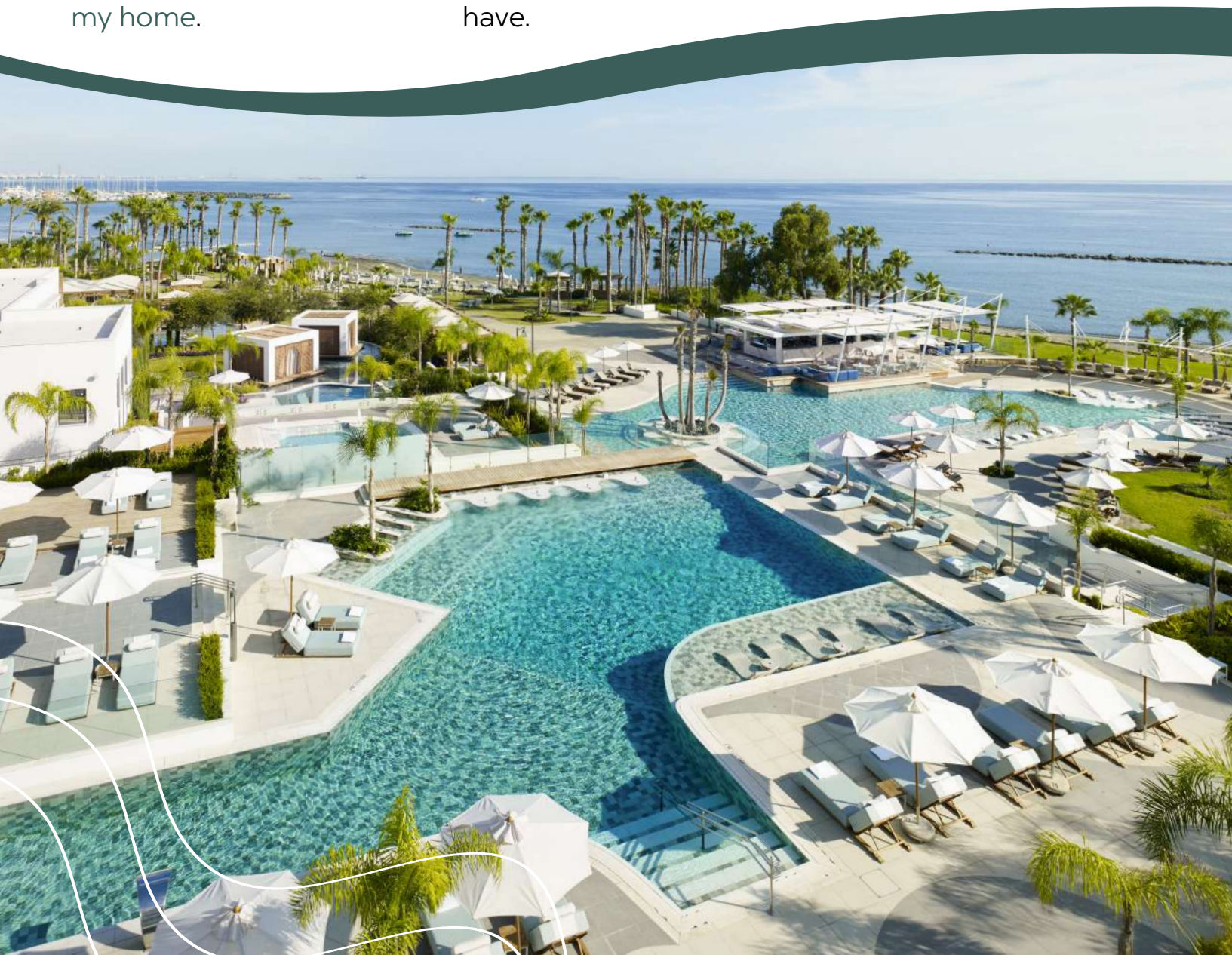


WHERE NEXT? THE ISLAND NEXT DOOR AND THE PART OF REMOTE WORK NOBODY TALKS ABOUT

Back in the day, when I was traveling across Asia, I always asked myself, “Where next?” Sometimes even on my first day in a new city. For digital nomads, this question is completely normal because the lifestyle itself is built on it. I carried that question with me for years before Armenia answered it and became my home.

Having brought quite a few digital nomads to Armenia, I always get the same question when we grab coffee in Yerevan. They want to know where to head after their time here, and my advice is always to go somewhere that has a coastline, the one thing Armenia doesn’t have.

Around two hours west of Armenia, in the Mediterranean, sits an island that has always attracted digital nomads from all over the world. I’m talking about Cyprus. And before you continue reading, yes, there are direct flights connecting the two destinations.





The Island Next Door



What makes Cyprus feel right, and I mean feel, in the way our readers who moved to Armenia will understand right away, is that it's the same kind of place as Armenia. A small, ancient nation that has outlived every empire that ruled it.

For anyone who has learned to love Armenia, landing in Cyprus doesn't feel like going abroad. And within the island, the compass points naturally to Limassol, the cosmopolitan seafront city on the southern coast that, unlike most beautiful coastal towns, doesn't hibernate when the season ends; it keeps its pulse all year, which happens to be exactly when we in Yerevan most need a sea.

And this is where the article you expected ends, and the one I actually wanted to write begins. Because I'm not going to spend the next section convincing you that Cyprus is beautiful; you have an internet connection, you can see it's beautiful. I want to talk about the reason you need it.

The Bill Nobody Warned us About

Remote work gave us everything we asked for: the geography, the flexibility, the escape from the cubicle. And then it presented a bill nobody warned us about. When your office is a laptop, your office is everywhere, which means nowhere is ever fully off. The old world had built-in endings; the commute home, the office door, the weekend that belonged to you. We deleted all of them and replaced them with nothing.



Somewhere along the way, 'working from anywhere' became 'working from everywhere, always.' Somewhere between 2019 and now, remote workers lost the ability to be somewhere without also being available. We are the first generation in history that **brings the office to paradise and calls it freedom.**

We can't rest at home, and we know it. Home is where the desk is. The nervous system has learned that **those four walls mean availability**, and no amount of 'taking the weekend off' rewires that. Real rest has a geographic requirement; it needs to happen somewhere your responsibilities physically cannot follow. Which brings the old question back, where next? **Not only for the laptop, but for the reset.**

Cyprus sits a short flight from Yerevan, and that proximity is the whole psychology. **A reset you can reach in an afternoon is a reset you'll actually take;** the one that requires two layovers is the one you'll cancel many times. But that leaves the harder question which isn't where you go, but **what kind of place receives you when you arrive.**

And this is where I'm going to introduce Parklane, a Luxury Collection Resort & Spa in Limassol



Since When Does a Digital Nomad Magazine Send its Readers to a Luxury Resort?

‘Digital nomad’ and ‘luxury resort’ don’t traditionally share a sentence. Nomads are supposed to be about guesthouses and monthly rentals, and for the everyday rhythm of the lifestyle, that’s right. But after years of nomading around the world before settling in Armenia, I’ve become convinced that the missing institution in remote work life is the reset.

We have infrastructure for working; we have almost none for recovering. Founders run for years without a real pause. Remote-working parents haven’t had a proper holiday since the laptop became the office, because every trip is still a working trip, or as we call it these days, a *workation*!

When I think about what actually exhausts me. It’s rarely the work itself; it’s the four hundred micro-decisions orbiting it: what to cook, what to book, who

picks up my son, which of the nine tabs is urgent. A place where every one of those questions is somebody else’s job is the reset.

For people like us, it’s the only environment in which the nervous system finally, physically, stands down. You can feel the exact moment it happens. It usually takes about a day and a half. That is what a well-built resort offers; a place engineered so that, for a few days, everything is handled.

The Place Built for Exactly This

Which brings me to our partner, and why this particular property made the collaboration easy to say yes to. [Parklane, a Luxury Collection Resort & Spa](#), sits on a direct beachfront location on twelve hectares of Limassol's coastline with a 300-meter Blue Flag beach. Those are the brochure facts. Here are the ones that matter to this magazine's readers.

For the families, the Explorers Kids Club covers 3,000 square meters, with dedicated zones from four-month-olds to twelve-year-olds, a pirate-ship pool, and year-round supervised programming, making it one of the largest kids' clubs in the Mediterranean. Readers of this magazine know I evaluate every destination through the eyes of a remote-working parent, and this is the rare setup where 'the kids are happy' and 'the parents actually rest' are the same sentence.



For the burnt-out, the Kalloni Spa covers over 3,000 square meters with 14 treatment rooms and 3 spa suites, with the island's only Thalassotherapy Centre, where, guided by expert attendants, guests move through seawater pools, each with a different temperature and salinity level, including one matching the salinity of the Dead Sea, and, in a detail that connects beautifully to our longevity series this year, a partnership with Swissmed Health, a clinical longevity centre, bringing medical-grade wellness and preventive care into the resort.





For the ones who can't fully unplug, like me, there's a dedicated Signature Suite with a proper work desk and smart-office equipment, because let's be honest about who we are; the difference is that here, work becomes one hour by choice instead of ten by default. This suite and all the top suites and villas are part of the [Bespoke Collection](#) with exclusive benefits.

And for couples, an adults-friendly Lifestyle Wing keeps the romantic reset an option too. Add five restaurants and bars, including Nammos Limassol, one of only a handful of Nammos locations worldwide, and La Petite Maison, and the evenings take care of themselves. Then there is the Retail Village, bringing a collection of mono-brand boutiques to the resort experience.

Let's Be Honest

This is a collaboration, and you deserve to know that, which is why it's stated at the top of this article and here again. But I'll tell you what I told Parklane's team when we first spoke: our readers trust this magazine because we never sell them a place we wouldn't send our own community to.

The reason this partnership exists is that their answer to 'what does a remote worker actually need?' matched the one we've been writing about for years; rest as infrastructure, family as a first-class citizen, and wellbeing treated as seriously as Wi-Fi. In the coming issues, we'll put that claim to the test properly, on the ground, the way we always do.



Where Next, Answered

For a change of sea, a working month, or, most importantly, a genuine reset from the lifestyle we all chose, the answer sitting two and a half hours from Zvartnots deserves a place at the top of your list. Cyprus for the island. Limassol for the city. And a beachfront resort for the part of remote work nobody teaches us: how to stop.



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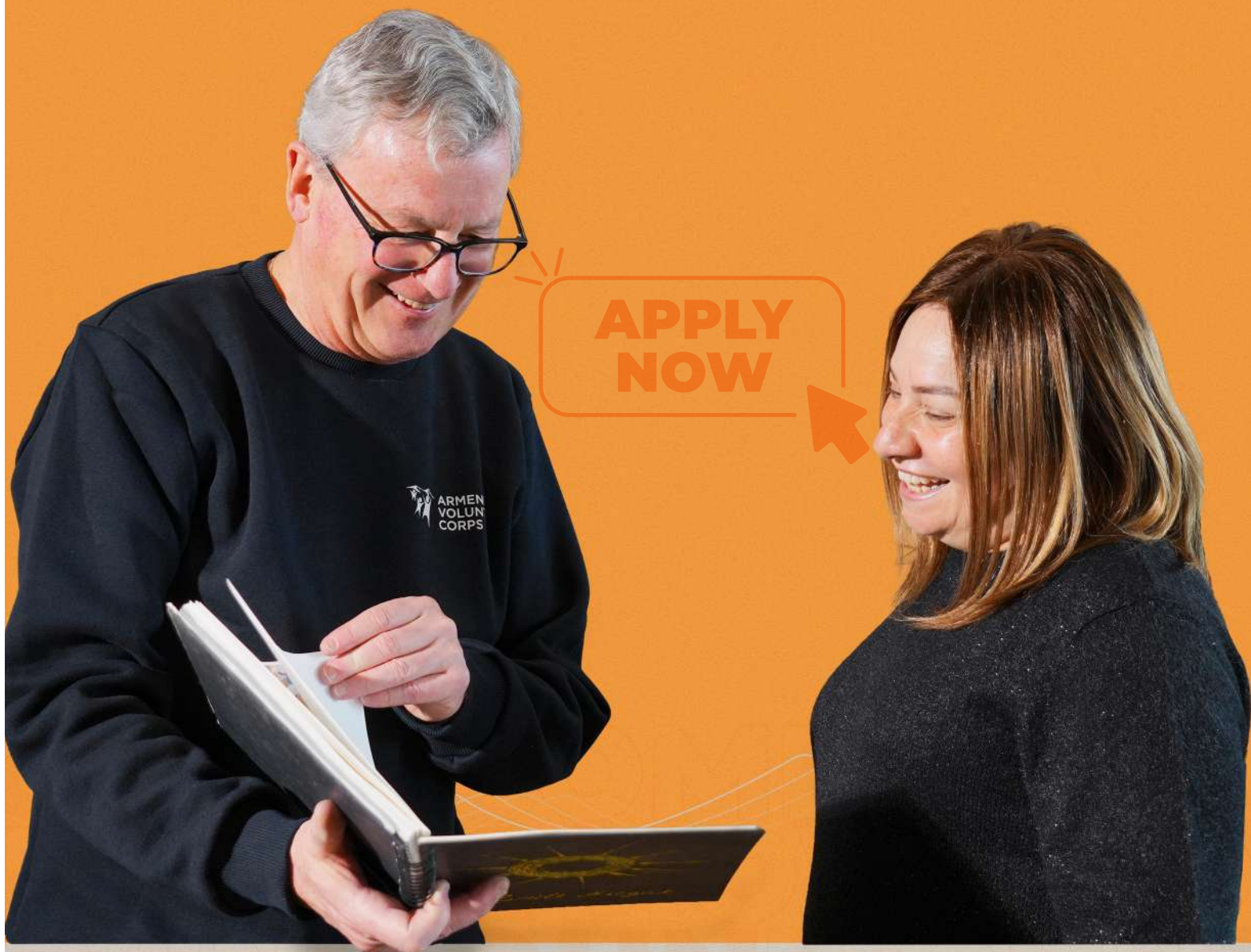
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BEYOND THE 180 DAYS

THE REMOTE WORKER'S GUIDE TO STAYING IN ARMENIA LEGALLY



**MATHEW
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF



BEYOND THE 180 DAYS

THE REMOTE WORKER'S GUIDE TO STAYING IN ARMENIA LEGALLY

Every foreigner living in Armenia on a visa-free stamp carries a small clock in the back of their mind. It ticks toward day 180, the point where 'visiting' legally ends and a decision has to be made. For years, that decision meant paperwork, an in-person appointment, and a certain amount of patience with queues.

The Migration Service waiting room is a tiny space with a single chair for two and standing room for two more. It's a place where Indian students, Russian tech workers, American retirees, and the occasional curious magazine editor (me) all crowd together until it's our turn to step inside. I can't say I've been thrilled about the experience, especially when I arrive ahead of schedule only to wait, or when the person ahead of me takes far longer than expected.

Anyway, if you share my dislike for that room, it's time to celebrate because from November 1, that room, as we know it, changes. Armenia's residence permit process is going fully electronic. Here is what has been announced so far.



What is actually changing

The Migration and Citizenship Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs has announced that from November 1, 2026, as a result of amendments to the Law on Foreigners, all services in the process of obtaining residency status will be digitalized.

A new digital platform is launching to streamline the residence permit application process. Here is how the process is changing:



The Current Process:

Upon booking an appointment, you must apply in person at the Migration Service. Once approved (usually within 2 to 3 months), the permit can be collected either by you or by an authorized representative holding a power of attorney.



As of November 1st:

You can only apply online from anywhere in the world, upload your documents, and track your case status digitally. You will only need to be physically present in Armenia to collect the final residence permit in person.



The new residence cards are biometric, which means appearing in person in Armenia to provide fingerprints and an electronic signature. The application may start on your laptop, but the card still requires your physical presence, and this cannot be done remotely or at consulates abroad. Plan your travel accordingly.

The new requirements (as far as we know them)

The familiar grounds for temporary residence remain as work, study, family ties, and business activity. The business route stays relevant for remote workers, since registering a business in Armenia has long been one of the most accessible paths to legal long-term stay, though reports on the reform indicate that applications will face clearer financial thresholds and closer attention to whether a business is real, with consistent operations and

tax compliance mattering more, not less. In other words, the paper company that exists only to hold a residence card is exactly what the new rules are designed to filter out.

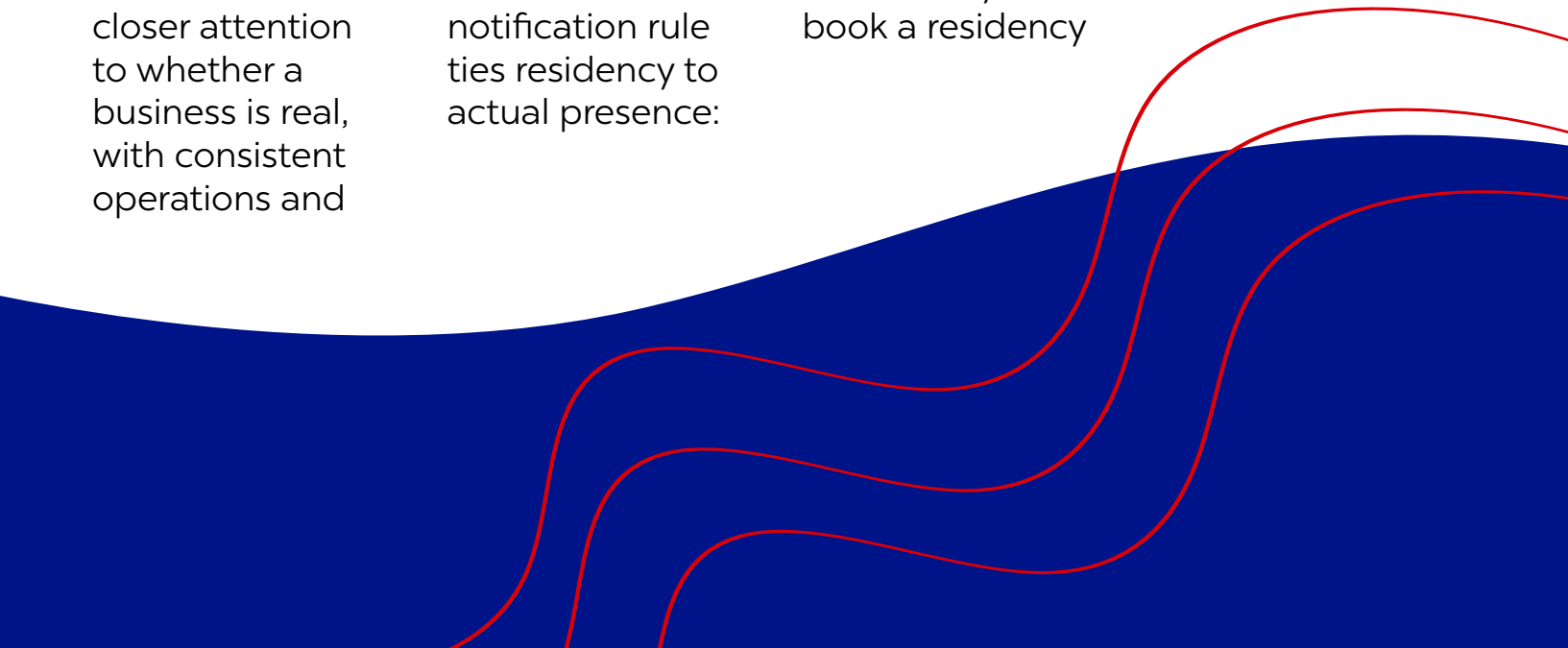
A few more details worth flagging from the announced changes and the reporting around them. Government fees for residence applications are set to increase from January 1, 2027. A new notification rule ties residency to actual presence:

permit holders who are absent from Armenia will need to notify the authorities once their absence reaches 183 days. And permits already issued remain valid until their printed expiry date, with the new system applying at renewal.

It's worth mentioning that the Migration Service website is currently not booking new appointments. Therefore, it looks like nobody can book a residency

appointment until the new system is in place by November 1st.

Keep in mind that some of the details above come from draft legislation and legal analyses published ahead of the launch, and final regulations can shift between announcement and implementation. Treat this article as your map, not your lawyer.



LEARNING IN DILIJAN

WHAT MAKES THE YOUTH CHOOSE DILIJAN OVER YEREVAN'S ACTIVE LIFE



**MATHEW
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF



One of the students I'm about to introduce describes herself as "such a huge city person," and she means it; she grew up in Yerevan's noise and lights and loved every decibel of it.

Moving to Dilijan, in her own words, was "a total 180."

So when I asked her about life there, she said that nowadays when she visits Yerevan, with everything going on all the time, she misses the green. **"I don't know a word that can describe Dilijan better than the word green,"** she said. For me, when a city person starts measuring their happiness in a color, something interesting is happening in that town.



The First Generation

The two students I met study at [Apicius Armenia](#), the international school of hospitality that opened in Dilijan as the first of its kind in Armenia. They are its first generation, which means they enrolled in something that barely existed yet. Anna Tadevosyan was honest about how that felt: "It was really scary," she told me, "being part of a project that you have nearly no information about, nothing to research, no one to ask." You just dive in. A year later, she says [she's more than happy the decision was made](#), and you can hear it before she finishes the sentence.

She started in fine arts, moved to architecture, then stepped into hospitality work simply to earn some money, and, to her own surprise, fell in love with the field. She's now studying hospitality management, [and for her second year she's chosen to specialize in events management](#), "the closest to my soul," as she put it, from a list that includes spa management, real estate, and front office.

Across the table sat Vadim Mkrtumyan, from Stepanakert, whose path ran through the army at twenty, then culinary studies in Yerevan, then a full year in a professional kitchen before he decided to go back to studying. When I asked him [why a working](#)

[cook returns to the classroom](#), his answer was: “I never stop to learn. I like learning.” His inspiration, he says, came from his family and from Stepanakert itself, where every holiday was special, and every holiday had a table at the center of it.

A School Where Everything is Real

What both students kept circling back to is the way Apicius teaches. [The program is built on experiential learning](#), half theory and half practice, and Anna found the perfect metaphor for it: “It’s like getting a speed run. You can complete something that usually takes people a few years in one or two. It’s like a cheat code.” The practice she’s describing happens at CEMI, the student-run bistro our readers met in our June issue, and hearing the same story now from the

inside gave me a better understanding. This first generation built CEMI. “We actually happened to participate in the process of CEMI getting born,” she told me. Vadim went one better, with a grin: “We can say we created CEMI.”

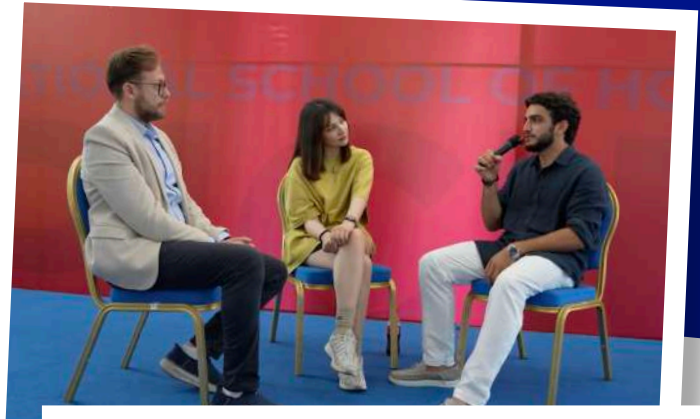
Inside, the students serve real guests, make real products, face real problems, and celebrate real wins, under the supervision of [Italian instructors who bring their own culinary culture into the Armenian one](#).

And the detail I found most telling: “Nobody is there to punish you for being not good enough,” Anna said. “Everyone is there to help you grow.” She also dismantled a misconception I hear often, why future managers spend their first year waiting tables and pulling espressos. Her answer: “a good manager is the one who understands his employees best, and you cannot lead people whose shoes you’ve never tried on.”



The Dilijan Question

Then I asked the question in this article's title. They live and study in Dilijan now, one after a life in Yerevan, the other after Stepanakert, so [what is life actually like there for the young?](#) And here's where the interview earned my trust, because neither of them sold me a postcard. "For young people, I think it's a little boring, honestly," Vadim admitted, before adding that Green Rock organizes a lot of events and volunteering the students take part in. Anna agreed from her own angle: for someone who needs experiences happening in their life, "Dilijan is pretty complicated." Moving there from the capital was [a 180-degree change that took her a while to get along with.](#)



Why They Choose it Anyway

Dilijan offers less to consume than Yerevan. Why choose it, then? Because, listening to these two, I [realized they're not choosing what the town gives them.](#) They're choosing what they intend to give the town. Both are leaving for Florence in September, where Apicius students can spend their next academic year, and both talk about that opportunity with the awe it deserves; "words cannot explain how cool that actually is."

But ask them what comes after, and neither reaches for Singapore or Dubai. Vadim sees himself in a professional kitchen, ideally one that Green Rock's growing ecosystem provides, in Dilijan, not the capital, working to "change the mentality of Armenian cooks" and lift the whole field, gathering experience abroad along the way and carrying it home. Anna put her version in a sentence: "I don't want to gain the skills and just use them somewhere else, instead of helping someone who actually needs me as a professional." She hopes that when she returns, Dilijan will have many more attractions for young people, and, she added, "we will be part of the people actually creating those."

There it is, the answer to this article's title, and it's not the one I expected when I framed the question. The youth choosing Dilijan over Yerevan's active life are [choosing a town small enough, young enough, and ambitious enough](#) that a twenty-something can be a builder of it rather than a customer in it. Yerevan offers them a finished city. Dilijan offers them a stake.

You can watch the full interview [here](#)





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FROM AIRPORT TO LAPTOP

YOUR STEP-BY-STEP ARMENIA REMOTE WORK ROADMAP



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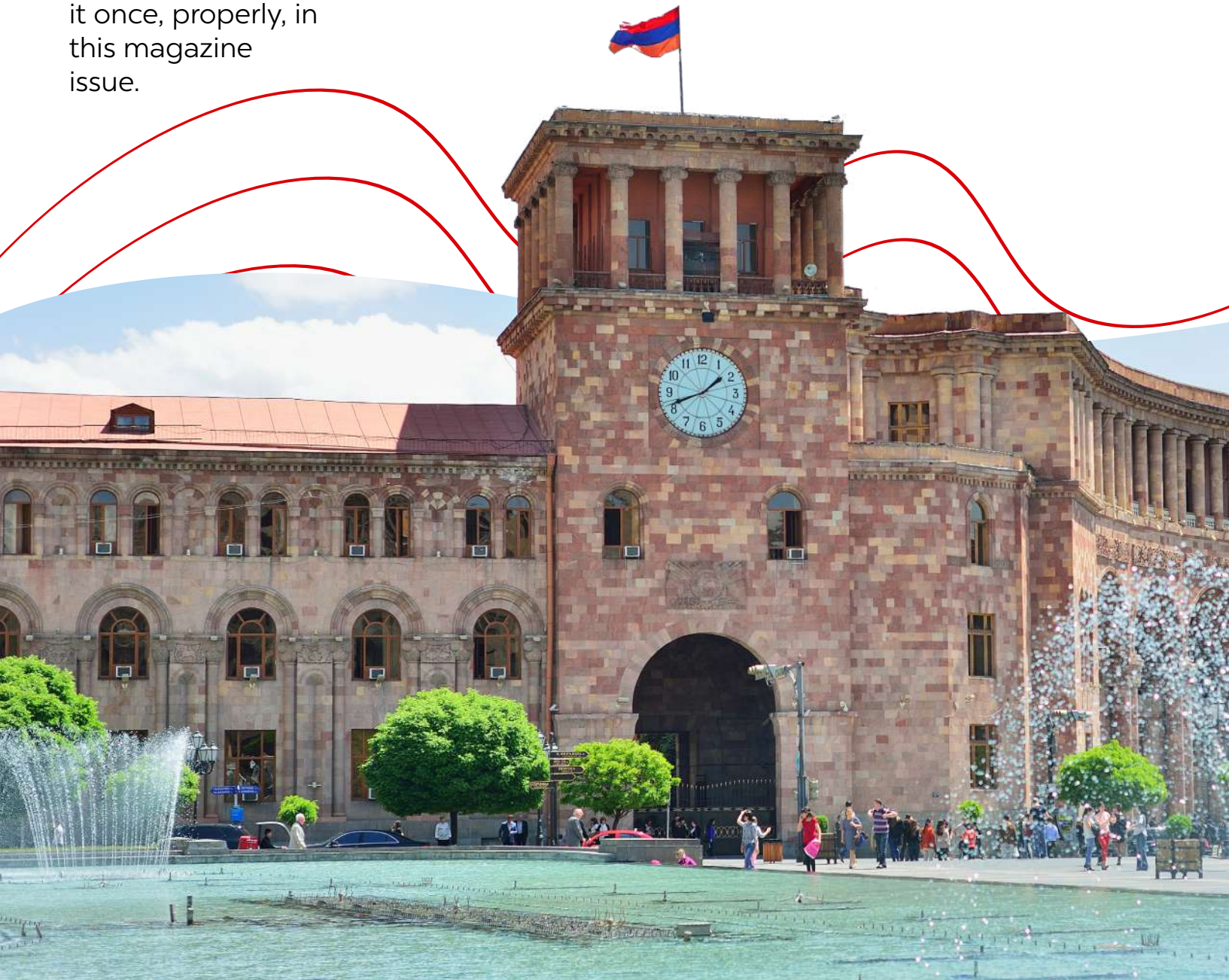


FROM AIRPORT TO LAPTOP YOUR STEP-BY-STEP ARMENIA REMOTE WORK ROADMAP

Every month, someone emails me the same question in different words: ‘Mathew, I’m thinking about trying Armenia for a few months. Where do I start?’ I’ve answered it so many times that I decided to answer it once, properly, in this magazine issue.

When I landed in Armenia back in 2018, I was a digital nomad with a laptop and absolutely no plan. In fact, the only plan back then was to spend a week in Armenia then leave for Canada. Nine years, a wife, a son, and a magazine about Armenia, I’m still here, which tells you how my one week plans worked out.

But I remember the early confusion like it happened yesterday. Do I need a visa? Where do I work from? At what point does the tax office start caring about me? This article is the roadmap I wish someone had handed me at Zvartnots Airport, from the arrivals hall to your first productive Monday.



Step1: Land, and don't panic about the visa

For citizens of a long [list of countries](#), including the EU, the US, and the UK, Armenia is visa-free for stays of up to 180 days per calendar year. Nationals of some countries do need a visa or an e-visa, so check your specific case before flying, but for most of our readers, **entry is the easiest step of the entire journey.**

Zvartnots Airport sits just outside Yerevan, and a taxi to the city center is a short, **cheap ride if you use a local ride-hailing app.** Uber doesn't operate in Armenia but there are alternatives. I recommend downloading [Yandex](#) or [gg](#) before flying so you can use them the moment you arrive.

One thing to avoid no matter what is the drivers who gather outside the terminal to solicit passengers. Just like at many airports, scams are common, and **they will demand you pay up to \$150 USD for a ride** that should cost no more than \$10-\$15 USD. Also, make sure to exchange money into Armenian drams at the airport just to pay for the ride; both apps accept cash payments.

Step 2: Get connected within the hour

Mobile internet here is fast and coverage is reliable. Last year, our team travelled across the country and tested Ucom's 5G speeds to see if Armenia is truly remote-work friendly. **Long story short: it absolutely is.** To get started, I recommend buying the [uWelcome](#) short-stay package from the Ucom desk at the airport. It offers unlimited internet for 15 days with some other features for 2500 Armenian drams (less than \$7).



Step 3: Find your desk

Yerevan's remote work scene has exploded in the past three years. **Saryan Street** alone hosts 17 remote work friendly cafes, and the model in most of them is simple: buy a coffee, open your laptop, stay as long as you like. If you want structure, there are membership-based coworking spaces too.



18 Page

We published a full, unsponsored map of the city's best spots in our June issue, so I won't repeat it here; the short version is that finding a good desk in Yerevan is not a problem you will have. **My recommendation is Ground Zero Specialty Coffee on 1st Saryan Street**; however, I'll leave it up to you to find your place.

Armenia's currency is the dram, international cards are accepted in Yerevan, and ATMs are everywhere. Opening a local bank account as a foreigner is possible and often useful for longer stays, though banks differ in their requirements and mood, so bring patience and

your documents. Many nomads simply live off their foreign cards for the first months, and that works fine in the capital. Anyway, I always recommend carrying up to 40,000 Armenian drams (around \$100) in cash for emergencies especially when you plan to leave the capital.



Step 5: Understand the 183-day line

5

Now the part everyone postpones: taxes. **The key number is 183.** You generally become an Armenian tax resident if you spend 183 days or more in the country during a tax year, or if your home, family, or primary place of business is here.

Residents are taxed on worldwide income; non-residents only on Armenian-source income. A three-month workation on a foreign salary is a very different situation from a permanent move. **Know which one you're in,** and if your stay is drifting past six months,

get proper advice. I recommend contacting [Smart MT Accounting](#) for any tax related issues. I researched tens of companies before finding them, and they have been handling my accounting for over nine years now; they all speak fluent English and know the tax laws inside out..

Step 6: If you settle in, formalize

Many remote workers who stay end up registering as a sole proprietor, which is straightforward here and opens the door to Armenia's simplified tax regimes. The turnover tax system (10% income tax), for instance, is available to businesses with annual turnover up to 115 million drams, roughly \$280,000, and replaces VAT with a low flat rate that depends on your type of activity; larger operations fall under the general system with 20% VAT.

Registered self-employed individuals also pay a modest social contribution. I'm not turning this article into a tax code; the rates and rules are laid out clearly, in English, on www.hartak.am, which has dedicated guides titled 'Digital Nomads in Armenia' and 'Working Remotely in Armenia.' It is one of the **top government portals I recommend as your first stop**. In fact, I took part in building the content for the English version of Hartak.

6

Step 7: Think beyond the 180 days

Sooner or later, one of two things happens: your 180 days run out, or Armenia convinces you to stay, as it did with me. Either way, **your next chapter is a residence permit**. Armenia is changing its entire residency system and moving it fully online. That story deserves its own article, and it gets one in this issue.

That's the whole roadmap. Land, connect, find a desk, mind the 183-day line, formalize if you stay, and plan your long game. Everything else, Armenia handles on its own.



YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO ENJOY SILENCE

ARMENIA OFFERS TRAVELLERS THE MOST EXPENSIVE LUXURY OF 2026



**MATHEW
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF



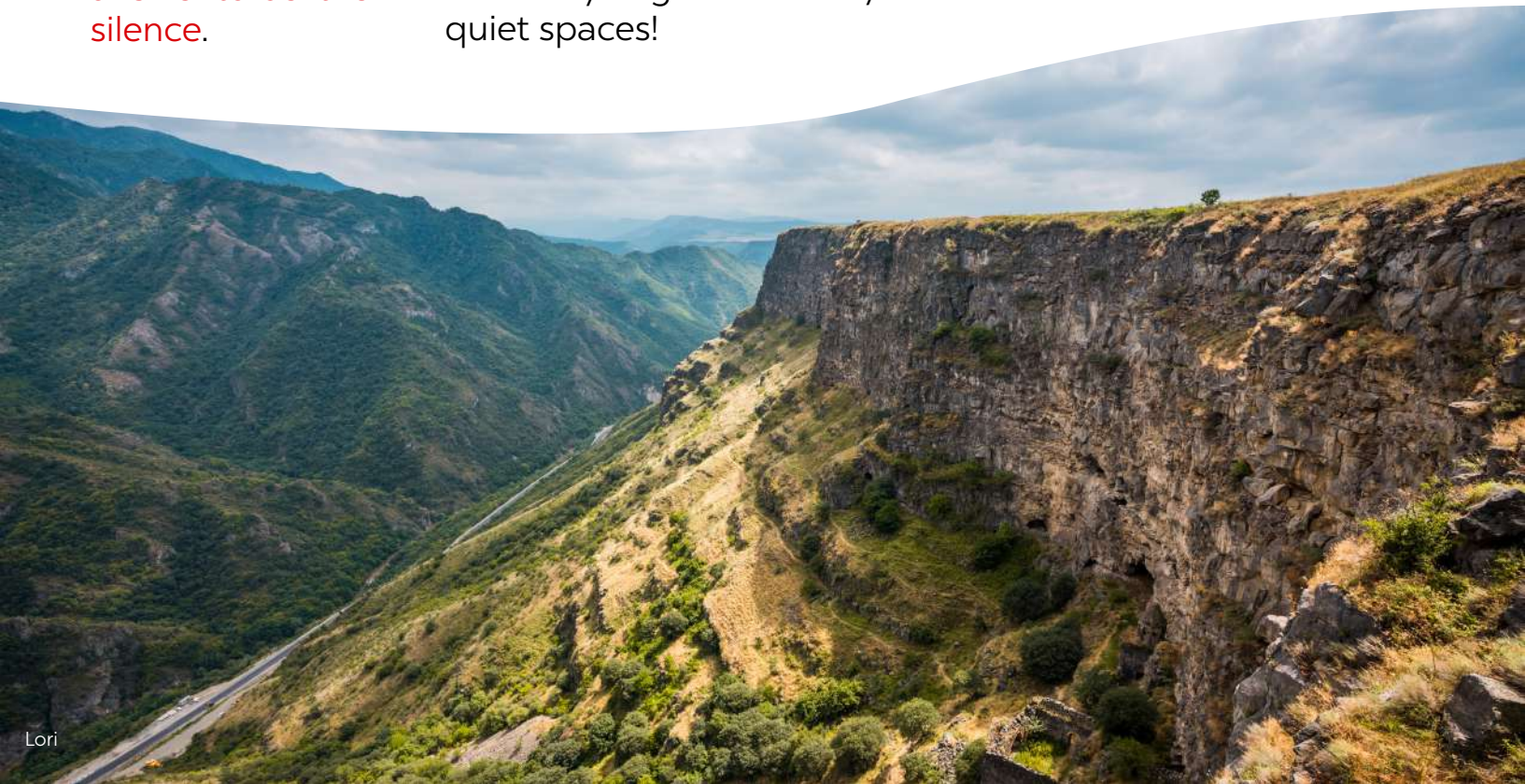
YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO ENJOY SILENCE ARMENIA OFFERS TRAVELLERS THE MOST EXPENSIVE LUXURY OF 2026

This month, my in-laws visited us in Armenia for the first time. We've always tried to describe how beautiful it is here, but nothing compares to seeing it for yourself. We road-tripped through different regions and spent a few days enjoying nature in the Lori region. When I asked my mother-in-law what she loved the most about the region, I **never expected her answer to be: the silence.**

I couldn't help but do some research on silence, and I was surprised to find that it has become an expensive luxury. **Silence is officially something you have to pay a premium for.** In fact, the 2026 Hilton Trends Report highlights "hushpitality" as a travel trend centered around **quiet, calm, and intentional silence.** Urban hotels spend millions to artificially engineer quiet spaces!

In the Armenian regions, **hotels don't have to engineer silence**; they just get it as a built-in feature. And then nature throws in birdsong for free. If I had to put that into a marketing slogan, I'd say: In the Tavush, Syunik, and Lori regions, there's an **unlimited, natural supply of the single most demanded trend in global hospitality.** Before you read on, however, a quick confession: Yerevan is a completely different story.

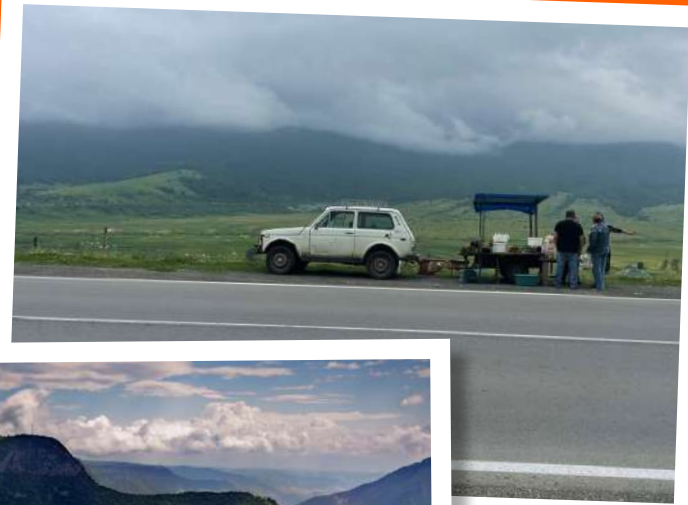
There is something bittersweet about this. Humanity spent centuries paying to be entertained, only to come full circle: **now, we pay to be left alone.** The luxuries of our era are the default conditions of the pre-industrial one, sold back to us at a markup.



Now hold that markup in your mind and drive thirty minutes out of Yerevan, in any direction. The product being engineered in city hotels simply occurs here, unbranded and unbilled. The

forests around Dilijan absorb sound the way the town absorbs stress. **The Debed canyon in Lori has its own acoustic identity.** Down in Syunik, the silence has actual weight.

And here's the detail I keep returning to: Armenia invented the silent retreat centuries before the wellness industry trademarked the vibe. The monasteries this country is known for, Tatev on its plateau, Haghartsin folded into the Dilijan forest, Noravank glowing red at the end of its canyon, were built precisely for quiet, placed at the end of the hardest roads their builders could find. Modern travelers book digital detox packages; **medieval Armenians just built further from the noise.** The technology changed but the product didn't.



For the traveler or remote worker reading this, **no booking platform sells what I'm about to describe**, which is rather the point. Base yourself in Dilijan for a week and work mornings before disappearing into the national park by afternoon. Walk the early sections of the Armenian National Trail, designed village-to-village so you spend whole days in quiet and sleep in guesthouses at night. **Give Lori two nights instead of one, long enough for your nervous system to stop bracing for notifications.**



Or perform the simplest ritual available in this country: pick a monastery at least an hour from any city, arrive on a weekday morning, and sit still for longer than feels natural. **The first ten minutes are uncomfortable.** That discomfort is the sound of your ears recalibrating to a world without engines, and it passes.

I highly **recommend visiting the Haghpat and Sanahin monasteries** on the high plateaus of the Lori region; these two UNESCO World Heritage sites face each other across a deep river gorge.





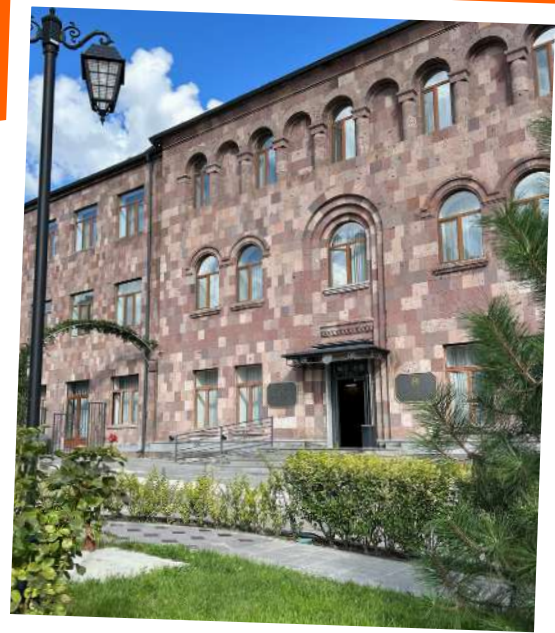
These two, in fact, are the perfect place to run the experiment. Come on a weekday morning, sit in the courtyard at Sanahin, then cross the gorge and do the same at Haghpat. There's no traffic noise up on the plateaus; often there's nothing but wind. But to do it properly, you'll want to wake up nearby, **before the day-trippers race up from Yerevan and turn around by lunch.**

I know I said no booking platform sells what this article describes, so allow me one exception from a personal experience, because it earns it. If you need a base for that pilgrimage, the [Vallex Garden Hotel](#) sits in Alaverdi, down in the Debed canyon itself, a short drive from both Haghpat and Sanahin.



It's a hotel with a garden, a terrace, and a restaurant serving Armenian cooking, and it proves the thesis of this piece: **nobody had to engineer the quiet there.** The canyon supplies it, the monasteries lend it their gravity, and the hotel had the good sense to be built in the middle of it. Spend the night, and you can be sitting in a thousand-year-old courtyard the next morning.

One honest note I have to repeat, because this magazine doesn't sell postcards: Armenia's silence lives in its nature and its regions, **not on Saryan Street on a Saturday night.** Yerevan is a warm, social, happily noisy city, and we love it for exactly that. The point is proximity. In many countries, the world's most expensive luxury requires a flight and a four-figure invoice. Here, it starts one short drive from your desk.



INTO THE BLUE

ARMENIA'S REMOTE WORK CAPITAL WELCOMES ITS 1ST COWORKING SPACE



**MATHEW
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF



INTO THE BLUE ARMENIA'S REMOTE WORK CAPITAL WELCOMES ITS 1ST COWORKING SPACE

Last year, I invited Andreas Wil Gerdes, a German digital nomadism ecosystems architect, to Dilijan. Just 15 minutes after arriving, he turned to me and said, “[This is Armenia's remote work capital.](#)” He was absolutely right. Dilijan naturally has everything it takes to hold that title, except for [a real, standardized, community-focused, purpose-built coworking space.](#)

There were already remote-friendly cafés and guesthouse coworking corners, and [credit goes to those early efforts for proving the demand existed](#); however, during our meeting with the remote work community in Dilijan last October, everyone spoke about the urgent need for a reliable, 24/7 workspace. Because of occasional electricity outages, remote workers, especially those working late hours on

EST shifts, [need a dependable backup location](#); moreover, everyone back then talked about missing having a community. Despite living in the same town, there was no actual hub in Dilijan to bring remote workers together and give them a place to connect. Our event was the first of its kind in the city with 50+ participants from 12+ countries.





Enter Villa 3

Last month, I was invited to the opening of Villa 3 in Dilijan. In short, it was exactly the coworking space I've always wanted to see in Armenia. If you are reading this in San Francisco or Berlin, you might assume it's just a small workspace in a small town in rural Armenia. But allow me to say that you are entirely wrong.



The first thing you notice inside Villa 3 is the fireplace, and the first thing you notice about the fireplace is that it's blue. Not painted blue but sculpted blue, a flowing, biomorphic 3D printed from recycled plastic, sitting at the center of the space like a piece of contemporary art.



It's a strange and wonderful object to find in a forest town in Tavush, and it **tells you everything about the ambition of the project around it.** Dilijan has finally opened its first true coworking space, and nobody can say it's a small town playing it safe.

The building, historically known as Villa Zarabyan, sits in the forested landscape the town is famous for, and the design's central decision was minimalism, so that **the nature outside remains the main event.**

The space is organized across three levels: open coworking areas, meeting and collaboration rooms, lounge zones, and a lecture hall, with the top floor opening into a rooftop lounge and terrace that looks straight out over the trees.

Villa 3 is one piece of the integrated environment Green Rock has been building in Dilijan, a plan that brings together a hotel, a music hall, a café, a residential campus, and a public art park alongside the

coworking hub. It's the same ecosystem that gave us CEMI, the student-run bistro we profiled in June, where hospitality students serve their homework to real customers.





The education arm trains the people; the coworking arm attracts the professionals; the cultural pieces give everyone a reason to stay past the weekend.



The excuse for treating Dilijan as a day trip has officially expired. Come for a week. Work from the blue. Walk into the green. I have a feeling this is the first of many such stories we'll be writing from Tavush.



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A DIFFERENT WAY TO EXPERIENCE THE COUNTRY DISCOVERING ARMENIA THROUGH WINE EDUCATION BEYOND THE EXPAT BUBBLE

Moving to Armenia was a unique experience of double discovery; a new culture and a new perspective on my own life. Besides learning a new language and understanding the local context, relocating to another country requires the ability to view familiar things in a new light. All of this is generally demanding.

I built my life in Moscow and moved to Yerevan in 2024, continuing to work remotely. [Armenia welcomed newcomers warmly](#). Yerevan now offers many places and events where people

can socialize within the expat community, but I wanted to find a deeper way to engage with local life. I enrolled in the EVN Wine Academy's 18-month Enology and Wine Business program, delivered in partnership with Hochschule Geisenheim University, one of Europe's leading agricultural universities.

My professional background is in finance, but I've always had an interest in wine. I attended many wine tastings in Moscow and visited wineries whenever I had the opportunity while traveling. During the pandemic, my interest in wine led me to pursue formal wine education, and I earned the WSET Level 2 Award in Wines.

In my opinion, no other drink so vividly expresses its place of origin and becomes so distinct in flavor and aroma from its raw ingredients as wine. In wine, you can recognize volcanic soils through peppery and mineral notes, sense the hot climate through tropical fruits or jammy berries, and guess the size and age of the barrel by the intensity of vanilla and chocolate aromas. When you begin to taste wine consciously, it's truly captivating.





This program was very different from my previous wine studies. It doesn't aim to cover all the world's wines or provide the broad knowledge of wine styles and appellations that a sommelier should possess. Instead, it approaches wine from the producer's perspective: how wine is made and how it's brought to market. This offers a more grounded view of the winemaking profession, without the usual romantic image of Russell Crowe's character in "A Good Year", sitting on a veranda overlooking his vineyard with a glass of wine at sunset.

You learn from active industry professionals; winemakers, sommeliers, winery operations directors, and laboratory staff who work on a new vintage every year and continuously improve their skills. It is through their efforts that a new chapter in Armenian winemaking is being written. And this **rare opportunity to join a professional community** and witness the industry's evolution from the inside is very appealing.

I really like the current slogan of the Armenian wine industry: **"The Oldest Newest Wine Country"**. It's believed that winemaking in these areas dates back 6100 years, and the discovery of the Areni cave, where the earliest known winery complex was found, confirms this.



However, modern winemaking in Armenia is only about 20 years old, hence a feeling of being at **the beginning of something big and the joy of initial success** and recognition are so pleasant to share with industry professionals.

What makes Armenia unique as a place to study wine is its accessibility; just an hour's drive from Yerevan, you can reach a winery or vineyard. This **proximity to the realities of the industry, nature, and vineyards** is one of the main advantages. By exploring wine regions, you also gain a deeper understanding

of the country itself, how people live, what drives them, and what brought them to an industry that requires patience and long-term commitment.

Many of them come from the diaspora, have lived abroad, built successful careers, changed the course of their lives, and decided to create something in Armenia for their children and grandchildren. Their life stories make it easier to navigate your own changes and uncertainties. The courage, openness, and creative energy they bring are inspiring.

Along with learning about wine, I gained valuable experience immersing myself in a new language environment. The language of the program is English, but when you're the only foreigner in the group, the **local**

language becomes part of the learning process.

For me, this was an opportunity to maintain my level of English and begin to understand spoken Armenian. I had already been studying Armenian for a while. Spoken Armenian is

different from what you learn in textbooks. There are many dialects and regional accents. But **wine became a great help in adapting to the language:** during tastings, the language barrier often seemed to fade, and Armenian speech became easier to follow.



Language skills proved useful when it came time for my internship in September. I interned at Karas Wines, a winery located in the Armavir region, between Mount Ararat and Mount Aragats, which has the largest vineyards in Armenia; over 400 hectares at an altitude of 1000-1200 meters above sea level. Along with seasonal workers from Armavir and nearby villages, I participated in the harvest, carried out remontage on red wines (mixing the must during fermentation), sorted grapes for reserve wines, and spent a lot of time cleaning and preparing equipment.

It turned out that **physical work is a special kind of retreat for a white-collar worker**. But the chance to taste grapes from different varieties, sample wine directly from the tank, and follow its daily changes during fermentation made even the most routine tasks feel meaningful.

An enriching experience was **getting to know my classmates and their life stories**. My group included people from at least three generations, which made the conversations interesting, and the many shared trips strengthened our bonds. One of the biggest differences I noticed

compared to Russia was **the strength of family and, more generally, horizontal social ties**. This is likely due to the country's size: Armenia is home to approximately three million people. Personal connections and trust are among the country's most valuable forms of capital, **a lifesaver in turbulent times**.

I completed the program in June of this year, and this fall I plan to continue my studies by pursuing the WSET Level 3 Award in Wines, also in Yerevan at the Armenian Wine School, which became an official WSET course provider only last year.

This will complement my practical experience and understanding of Armenian winemaking with a broader exploration of global wine regions and styles.

I love seeing how, through the efforts of dedicated professionals, Armenia is becoming not only a wine tourism destination but also an emerging international wine education hub. It gives another reason for digital nomads to consider Armenia.

The program allowed me to see a side of Armenia that many remote workers may never encounter. And the better I got to know

it, the more I liked it. I initially wrote this article for myself, to **capture my impressions while they were still fresh and revisit them one day**. But perhaps it may also be useful to other remote professionals as well. If you've moved to Armenia and have an interest in wine, **consider wine education as one way to get to know the country**. It helped me, and perhaps it will help you too.



EARNING DOLLARS, SPENDING DRAMS

THE HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE FOR FOREIGN REMOTE WORKERS IN ARMENIA



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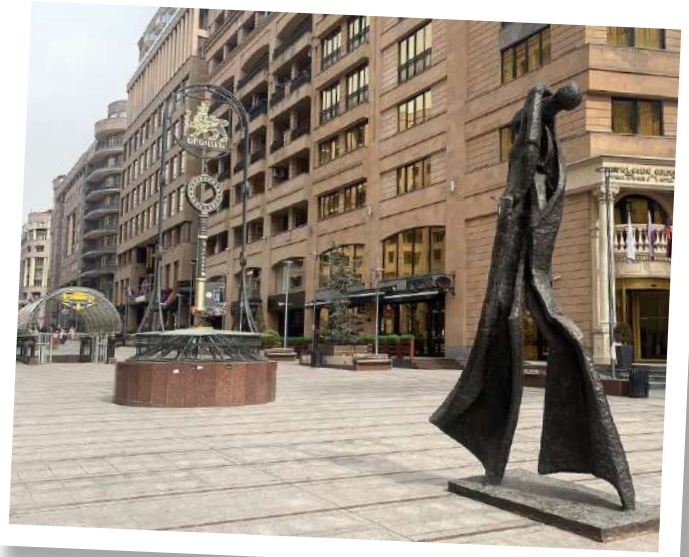
**MATHEW
ZEIN**

EDITOR IN CHIEF



EARNING DOLLARS, SPENDING DRAMS THE HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE FOR FOREIGN REMOTE WORKERS IN ARMENIA

I want to start this article with a confession, the life I'm about to describe is **not the average Armenian life**. It's the life of a foreigner earning in dollars or euros and spending in Armenian drams, most probably within a few walkable kilometers of Yerevan's center. It's a bubble, and I'll say before anyone writes in. But it's also a real bubble, one that many remote workers live in, and it's **not exclusive to Yerevan since other emerging remote work destinations have it**.



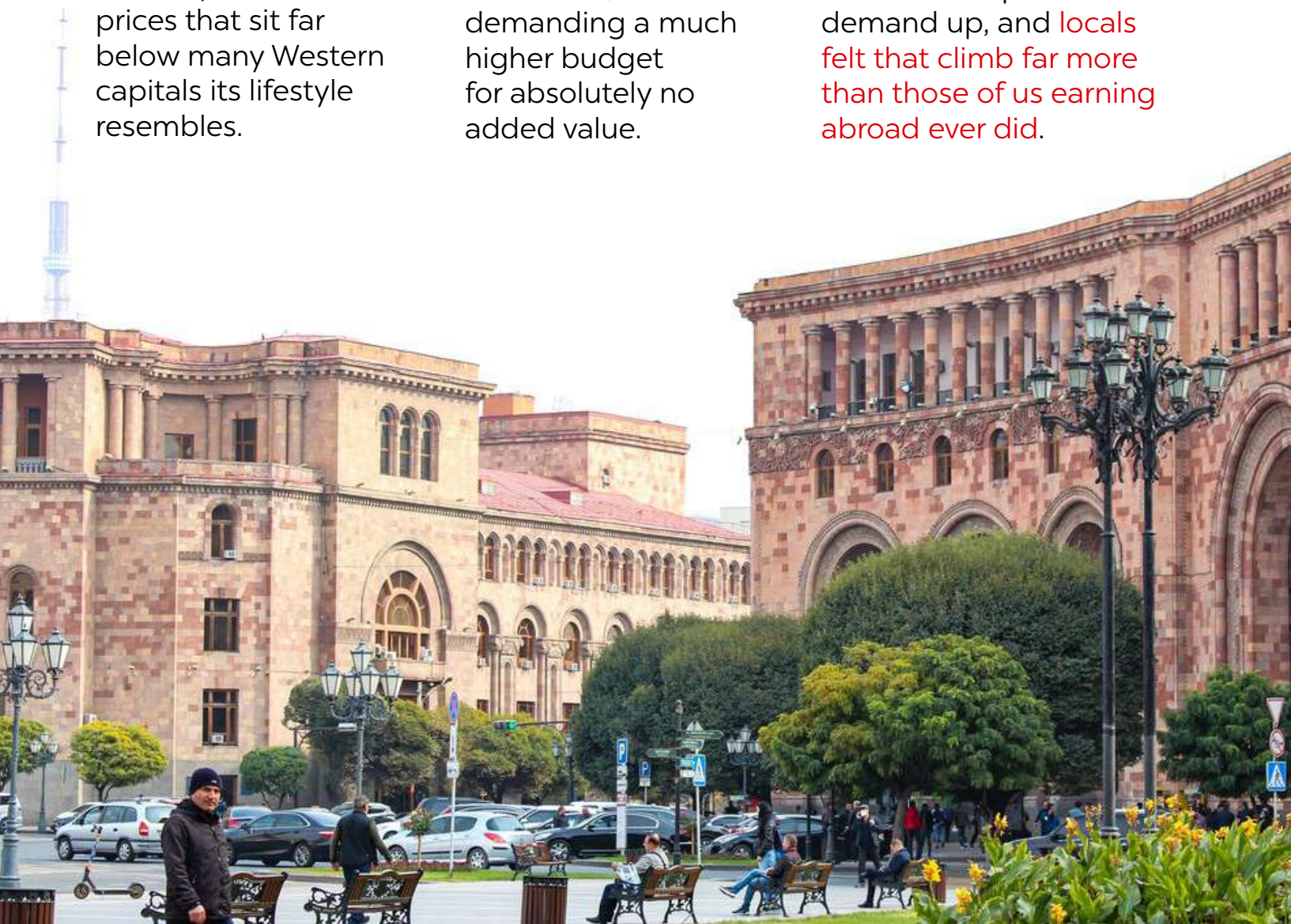
When your income comes from abroad and your expenses are local, an invisible weight lifts, it's the weight of a Western cost of living. I've heard this so many times from **Life in Armenia readers who relocated after securing well-paying remote jobs** ahead of time. They say things like, "Now we can have someone take care of the kids at home," "Now we have someone to cook for us," or "Now we can dine out more than before." Was it worth it? Yes, because it gave them more family time and a **better quality of life for the same amount of money spent**.



Earn in a strong currency, spend in a softer one, and **the gap becomes your quality of life.** Remote work turned that from a retiree's trick into a lifestyle available to anyone with a laptop. Armenia happens to be a good place to run it. **Yerevan offers a European city-center experience,** cafés, theaters, coworking spaces, specialty coffee on every corner, at prices that sit far below many Western capitals its lifestyle resembles.

I'm not saying Yerevan is the most affordable city anymore; things have changed a lot since I arrived. Nowadays, you can easily find European cities that match Yerevan's cost of living, or are sometimes even more affordable. However, **there are still many places where the cost of living is incomparable to Yerevan,** demanding a much higher budget for absolutely no added value.

Now the part I promised. Almost everything foreigners praise about affordable Yerevan describes Kentron, the city center, and **the lifestyle of people who arrived with foreign incomes.** Local salaries tell a different story, and for many Armenian families the same city is not cheap at all; it's home, with home's full weight. Prices, especially rents in the center, climbed noticeably after 2022, when waves of relocation pushed demand up, and **locals felt that climb far more than those of us earning abroad ever did.**



So yes, the perspective of this article is biased, openly and unavoidably. But **a biased reality is still a reality**. The foreign remote worker's Yerevan exists; I've lived in it for nine years. The fair way to hold both truths is not to deny the privilege but to acknowledge it, and, ideally, to **behave like a guest who knows he's getting the better end of a deal**: spend locally, tip well, hire locally,

volunteer as much as you can, and put something back into the community that's hosting your arbitrage.

And by the way, after spending a few months in Yerevan, the reason you're staying changes; it becomes **the safety that lets you walk home at midnight and let your kids play**

outside without a second thought. The culture that treats children as a public good; my four-year-old is greeted by name in half the shops of our neighborhood. The pace that lets a dinner last three hours because nobody is rushing you out of the table.



If it were only about cheap rent, people would leave the moment prices rose. Many stayed anyway. **That tells you the Armenian dram was the door, not the room.**

One practical reminder: Earning abroad while living here does eventually meet the tax system. **Spend 183 days or more in Armenia in a tax year and you're a tax resident**, taxed on worldwide income, a topic we cover properly in the roadmap article in this issue. The arbitrage is legal, common, and welcomed; just do it with your paperwork in order

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