

‘Armenia and Karabagh’ Takes Top Prize For Best Travel Guide of 2007



(LOS ANGELES, CA) The two countries with the best travel guide are Armenia and Karabagh, according to USA Book News, which recently announced the winners of its 2007 book awards.

The award designated “Armenia and Karabagh: The Stone Garden Guide” by Matthew Karanian and Robert Kurkjian, as the top winner in the best travel guide category of the competition.

Hundreds of titles competed for the awards, and winners in other categories included books from publishers such as Simon and Schuster, HarperCollins, Random House, and other large publishing houses.

The award of Best Travel Guide to “Armenia and Karabagh: The Stone Garden Guide,” which is published by the tiny Armenian-American-owned company Stone Garden Productions, is a remarkable achievement not just for the book, but also for Armenia and Karabagh, according to co-author Matthew Karanian.

“Think about it,” said Karanian. “Armenia and Karabagh are not on the top of most travel destination lists. We’re not talking about the Grand Canyon, Disneyland, or Italy. So the award really raises awareness of Armenia among a huge audience.” People are going to want to know where—and what—is this place called Armenia, he says.

Although the judges don’t make specific comments about why individual titles are selected or rejected, book prizes are based upon a combined evaluation of content, organization, and design.

“Armenia and Karabagh” emphasizes the region’s ecology and conservation, as well, and a major theme of the book is to urge travelers to be aware of the impact they have on the environment and

the local communities that they visit, says Kurkjian.

Ask the authors how an independently published book about Armenia and Karabagh could beat out the big-name publishers, and the big-name destinations, and you'll hear their passion for their homeland come soaring through.

"This is not a commercial venture for us, and the book is not just one more cookie cutter title in a big series. We published this book because Armenia and Karabagh deserve to have top quality representation at the bookstore, and in people's hearts and minds," says Kurkjian. "We wouldn't do this for any other place in the world."

According to Karanian, the award helps to raise positive awareness of Armenia and Karabagh among Armenians and non-Armenians, alike. "Armenia is a destination that will open the eyes of the curious traveler seeking something beyond the well-worn pathways of tourism," says Karanian. "It's a destination for everyone, and in many ways a point of embarkation, too."

The book features 135 color photographs by Kurkjian and Karanian, and 27 color maps, including maps by the Birds of Armenia Project of the American University of Armenia.

The book is available by mail order directly from the publisher for \$30 postpaid in the US and Canada, or \$35 postpaid worldwide. Check or money order in US funds to Stone Garden Productions; PO Box 7758; Northridge, CA 91327 USA. Sample pages, and information about paying by credit card, are available online from the website: www.StoneGardenProductions.com.