

**SPECIAL EDITION**

Publisher The Georgian Times Media Holding, Member of the World Association of Newspapers

# The Georgian Times

**NO 1** NEWS PAPER IN GEORGIA

**Distributed free**

Special Edition / 2021

Newspaper, International Edition - Published by "The Georgian TIMES" Media Holding Since 1993 www.geotimes.ge



**NATIONAL BUSINESS AWARD**

**XXI 2020-2021**

**Best Company Businessman Investor**

**THE GEORGIAN TIMES** MEDIA HOLDING

**SOCAR** ENERGY GEORGIA **GENERAL SPONSOR**

**ZARAPASHVILI** **DIAMOND SPONSOR**

**RMG** **GOLD SPONSOR**

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MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF GEORGIA

**PARTNERSHIP FUND**

# Top Companies

## GRAND PRIZE GOES TO RMG



## BEST INVESTOR - SOCAR ENERGY GEORGIA



## JOURNALISTS CHOICE AWARD WENT TO - RMG



MEDIA WINNERS  
SELECTED BY BUSINESS -  
THE GEORGIAN TIMES,  
TV PIRVELI



**Malkhaz Gulashvili:**

"I believe this year's event has been quite a considerable and elegant one. The same words can be used to describe the participating companies, which stood out from the others despite the challenging pandemic year"



# THE XXI GEORGIAN TIMES GEORGIAN NATIONAL BUSINESS AWARDS

The twenty-first consecutive Georgian Times Media Holding Georgian National Business Awards ceremony was held on June 29 at the Garden Hall. The event was attended by the business elite and a large contingent from the government, the diplomatic corps, the academic community, leading media outlets and other distinguished guests.

As always, the best companies and businessmen of the year were identified at the gala event. This year the Awards were attended by 80 people, the maximum capacity allowed by the regulations imposed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Station, Rustavi 2, TV Pirveli, Imedi TV, PosTV, Formula, The Georgian Times Radio, the Fortuna Radio Holding, GT Media and the English language edition of The Georgian Times.

The companies were assessed according to the following criteria:



Nana Gagua, Founder, Vice-president, Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of The Georgian Times

The supporters of the XXI Georgian National Business Awards were the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia, the Ministry of Finance of Georgia, Tbilisi City Hall and the Partnership Fund. The General Sponsor was SOCAR Energy Georgia, the Diamond Sponsor Zarapxana, and the Gold Sponsors RMG, Caucasus Auto Import and Georgian Products.

The media supporters of the XXI Georgian National Business Awards were the Georgian Public Broadcaster, the Georgian Times TV

Protection of Entrepreneurs' Interests, Public Image, Philanthropy, Effectiveness of Advertising, Job Creation, Stability of Operations, Corporate Social Responsibility, Company Development/Success, International Recognition, Effectiveness of Public Relations, Effectiveness of Marketing, Financial Transparency, Attraction of Investment, Strength of Exports, Development of Innovative Projects, Professionalism of Team, Promotion of Small and Medium-sized Business, Continual Progress, Use of New Technologies and Guarantee of Quality.

The best companies and busi-



Founder and President of The Georgian Times Media Holding, Malkhaz Gulashvili and Guka Salukvadze, Event Host and Organizer

nessmen of 2020-2021 were declared to be:

- 1. Adjarabet – Archil Kakhidze**  
Corporate social responsibility  
Customer-oriented high technologies
- 2. Askaneli Brothers—Irakli Uglava**  
Georgian brand with international recognition  
Promoting national traditions  
Innovative management
- 3. Aversi – Paata Kurtanidze**  
Professional team  
Large employer  
Quality guarantee



- 4. Badagoni – Mari Giorgadze**  
Ambassador of Georgia abroad  
Protection of employees' interests  
High social responsibility
- 5. Carriage Building Company – Badri Tsilosani**  
Effective management  
Longstanding success story
- 6. Caucasus Auto import – Giorgi Surguladze**  
High social responsibility  
Stable partner
- 7. Georgian Industrial Group - Davit Bezhushvili**  
Diverse business portfolio



## The Georgian TIMES

# 1 English-Language Newspaper in Georgia

First published in 1993.  
The Founder and the President Malkhaz Gulashvili. Tel: (+995) 577 461 046  
The Georgian Times Media Holding.  
59, Kostava str, Tbilisi, Georgia.  
E-mail: office@geotimes.ge; http://www.geotimes.ge

Publisher/Editor in Chief  
Nana Gagua  
Tel.: (+995) 555 293 003  
E-mail: gul@geotimes.ge

Executive Editor:  
Mariam Toidze  
Tel: (+995) 577 727 207  
E-mail: editor@geotimes.ge

Copy Editor  
Rumwold Leigh  
Tel: (+995) 599 501 452  
E-mail: rumwoldleigh@netscape.net

Director:  
Kakha Maskharashvili  
Tel: (+995) 551 501 313  
E-mail: director@geotimes.ge



- Professionalism of team
- High social responsibility
- 8. Georgian Products – David Bardavelidze**
- Diversification of activities
- Promoting national standards on the global market
- 9. Gianti Logistics – David Tughushi**
- Adopting European standards of workplace health and safety
- Professionalism of team
- Loyal partner
- 10. Gurieli – Mikheil Chkua-seli**
- High quality standards
- Dynamic growth and ongoing development
- 11. NCC – Gegi Kelbakiani**
- Devising customer-centred innovative projects
- 12. PSP Pharma – Vazha Okri-ashvili**
- The largest network of stores in



- Georgia
- Positive public image
- High corporate standards
- 13. RMG – Koba Menabdish-vili**
- Unrivalled leader of exports and mining technology modernisation
- 14. SOCAR Energy Georgia – Mayr Mamedov**
- Consistent operations
- High degree of transparency
- Corporate social responsibility
- 15. TAM Management – Panti-ko Tordia**
- Devising innovative projects
- Responsible and stable partner
- 16. Zarapxana – Nikoloz Nako-pia**
- Preserving unique goldsmithing traditions
- High business reputation
- Professionalism of team
- Special Awards were presented in the following categories:**

- Business's favourite media out-lets - TV Pirveli, The Georgian Times**
- Corporate Social Responsibility champion - Caucasus Autoimport**
- Best exporter of the year - Georgian Products**
- Jury's favourite company - Zarapkhana**
- Contribution to fighting Covid-19 - Levan Ratiani**
- Media's favourite business - RMG**
- Largest contributor to the state budget - SOCAR Energy Georgia**
- Supporter of Bolnisi winery - RMG**
- Favourite Companies of Nana Gagaa, Vice President of the Georgian Times - Askaneli Brothers, Badagoni**
- Best investor – SOCAR Energy Georgia**
- Grand Prize - RMG**
- The winning businessmen were





polyclinics and bought Respiratory Protective Equipment for them. I think we have successfully overcome our challenges and today we can see that our work is appreciated”.

Irakli Zubitashvili, spokesman for SOCAR Energy Georgia, the Best Investor of the year, told us: “This victory and recognition are very important for us. Special thanks go to every employee of SOCAR Georgia and the members of our team - this victory would not have been possible without their support. Special thanks go to The Georgian Times Media Holding. Similar events are extremely important for business. They are a stimulus and motivation for us to see that our round-the-clock work all year round is appreciated”.

We asked many of the other attendees what this event meant to them. Irakli Nadareishvili, Deputy Economy Minister, stated in his speech at the ceremony that “An event such as



GELA KHANISHVILI - FIRST DEPUTY MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND AGRICULTURE

the handmade, exclusive composition Bolnisi Cross made of gold, silver, diamond, blue sapphire, turquoise, zircon and green garnet. RMG was also awarded the Soldier’s Father, also made by Zarapkhana for its support of the Bolnisi winery, and was named the media’s favourite business.

Koba Menabdishvili, RMG Production Director, told us: said. “It is particularly important for us to participate in this event along with such successful companies and, moreover, to win alongside them. When the world has suspended operations for almost two years due to the pandemic, it is a pleasure to see that our work is appreciated. The company has not stopped operating for a second, even though at the beginning of the pandemic, Kvemo Kartli, where our company operates, was declared a closed area”.

Menabdishvili added that, “RMG has transferred one million GEL to a special fund and also purchased fast PCR tests at a cost of 400,000 GEL. We have also supported the



IRAKLI NADAREISHVILI -- DEPUTY ECONOMY MINISTER

presented with the traditional badges and certificates made by Zarapkhana. Other special awards made by Zarapkhana included the handmade lion awarded to Mayr Mammadov and SOCAR Energy Georgia and the special gilded bible awarded to Davit Bardavelidze and Georgian Products for promoting national standards on the global market.

Nana Gagua, Vice President of The Georgian Times Media Holding, presented other exclusive prizes to her favourite companies. Badagoni was awarded a unique Saperavi wine, while Askaneli Brothers was awarded a similar bottle of Tsaraphi. The Saperavi was bottled in 2014 and the Tsaraphi in 2013, in accordance with the ancient Georgian traditions. The Tsaraphi is decorated with an exclusive painting of Tara – the Winemaker.

This year’s Grand Prize went to the RMG company. It was awarded





IRAKLI KADAGISHVILI - MP GD



the Georgian National Business Awards is a wonderful opportunity to thank Georgian business for the economic wealth it creates”.

First Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture Giorgi Khanishvili said: “Today’s ceremony is very important, not just because the representatives of companies have been rewarded, but because other people have gained confidence in their work. Over many years, the victory of various companies at this event has created a feeling in people that their work is appreciated. Today, we see a lot of examples of success,

and we get the feeling that if these specific people succeed, others will be able to do the same”.

According to David Saganelidze, Head of the Supervisory Board of the Partnership Fund, all the companies participating in the event are winners this year, because they managed to maintain and even increase the efficiency of their activities during the pandemic.

“This was an outstanding event, since 2020-21 turned out to be the toughest year in memory, not only for Georgia but the entire world. The economies of huge countries collapsed. In my opinion, all the companies which managed

to maintain their profiles in such a year are winners. They have not only been able to retain employees but the capacity and effectiveness of their companies. Because of this, it was really difficult to make a choice between the competing companies”, Saganelidze said.

Malkhaz Gulashvili, President of the Georgian Times Media Holding and organiser of the Awards, summed up the event:

“We have held another of our now-traditional awards ceremonies at the highest level. The attendance format, imposed on us by the pandemic, has made the evening even more convivial. In spite of the restrictions, we have gathered a large number of government, diplomatic corps and leading media representatives.

“I believe this year’s event has been quite a considerable and elegant one. The same words can be used to describe the participating companies, which stood out from the others despite the challenging pandemic year.

“For every winning company this was a deserved victory. RMG is distinguished by its conscientious attitude towards its own business, its partners and the population. SOCAR also deserved to win Investor of the Year as it is significant for anyone to be investing at this time.

“I would also like to single out Caucasus Auto Import, which has a serious sense of social responsibility and donated 185,000 GEL to nurses. Georgian Products, winner of the Best Exporter Award, is also noteworthy as it has really increased the potential of Georgia’s exports”, Malkhaz Gulashvili said.

The ceremony was choreographed by Oto Poladashvili and Juliana Bar Gnar. The slogan of the Georgian Times Georgian National Business Awards remains unchanged: “Let’s do what we know and live in a rich country.” The Georgian Times Media Holding will be organising another Georgian National Business Awards next year.

Tamuna Dughashvili



JULIANA BARG NAR AND OTO POLADASHVILI



ALUDA GUDUSHAURI - MP GD

# RMG is the Top Company of 2021

RMG has won the Grand Prize at this year's Georgian National Business Awards and a number of other prizes. It won awards for being the unrivalled leader of exports and mining technology modernisation, journalists' favourite company and for supporting Bolnisi winemaking.



RMG is the largest mining group in Georgia and one of the top ten exporters. The largest employer in the region, it employs more than 3,000 people and over 100 company-affiliated contractors.

Here The Georgian Times interviews Koba Menabdishvili, Production Director of the RMG Group, about the company's future plans.

**- In addition to several other prizes, RMG has won the Grand Prize at this year's awards. How does your company manage run so smoothly on an ongoing basis?**

- The 21st Georgian National Business Awards ceremony became a big day for our company. To be honest, the awards for Leader of Technological Modernisation of Mining Production and Supporter of the Bolnisi Winery were not unexpected, given the activities and social responsibility projects RMG conducts. Being named the media's favourite business was a surprise, as was the Grand Prize, as these are decided by secret ballot!

For years, RMG has opened its doors to all interest groups, including the civil sector and the media, who frequently visit us in Kazreti. Our innovations regarding the technological renovation of the enterprise, the implementation of

our environmental programme and our numerous social responsibility projects capture the interest of both the media and the public sector. Special thanks must go to the media for reporting objective information about us. I believe it is very important for the progress of the company to be presented to as many people as possible via various media channels.

I would also like to once again thank the wonderful team of the RMG Group, who are real professionals of ore mining. Finally, I would like to thank the companies which have named RMG as the best company, and awarded us the Grand Prize. I want to wish them all success in their activities.

This award is both a great honour and a great responsibility for our team. We will try our best to conduct our activities with increased focus and make a positive contribution to the economic development of Kvemo Kartli and all Georgia.

**- How has your company coped with the challenges arising from the pandemic?**

- As for the rest of the world, the first few weeks of the pandemic were full of challenges for our company. We had to make instant decisions. On the one hand we had to protect our employees, and on

the other production had to continue. We enabled approximately 600 administrative staff to work remotely, while the others were supplied with all the necessary protection, such as face masks, disinfectant sprays and so on.

It was difficult to streamline our operations. Ore Mining is a 24/7 activity, and our Executive Director and about 50 managers, including myself, had to switch to crisis mode. We transformed our Kazreti office into both a working and living space, where we worked 62 days non-stop.

We set up two anti-crisis working groups in Tbilisi and Kazreti, which observed the ongoing processes at the two locations. We also established a Covid-19 Management Operative Headquarters, which continues to function. This monitors employee compliance with covid-19 recommendations on a daily basis and provides timely and effective implementation of all necessary preventive measures in the production area to maximise employee safety.

I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize the importance of timely vaccination. I think mass vaccination is the quickest way to get us all back to the normal rhythm of life.

**- What are your future plans? What new projects are you going to implement? Are you going to increase your investment portfolio?**

- We have both a short-term and a long-term plan. Technical upgrading of the company is amongst our top priorities. This process began in 2017, with the involvement of international partners. We have invested \$40 million in copper enrichment plant upgrades alone. Furthermore, we purchased safe, state of the art mining equipment in 2021, the total cost of which exceeded \$10 million. Environmental and labour safety issues are of paramount importance during the process of renovating the company.

RMG continues to progress by introducing mod-



young people and groups, construction of the Bolnisi Museum, various local and international conferences and cultural heritage programmes.

I would highlight our Bolnisi winery support programme. The company is proud of this project. The city of Bolnisi has a centuries-old history of winemaking, but Bolnisi is a relatively new location on the map of Georgian wine.

In 2018, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between RMG, the Wine Association of Bolnisi and Bolnisi Municipality, under which RMG has taken the responsibility of producing, promoting and supporting family winemakers in Bolnisi. The sustainable funding provided by RMG ensures that Bolnisi winemakers obtain the relevant qualifications, conduct laboratory research of soils in the region and present their wines at different international competitions in Georgia and abroad.

We have now moved on to the next stage of this cooperation, which involves the establishment of a Georgian-German wine house in Bolnisi. We have purchased an old house in the German district, which is being restored by the German Cultural Heritage Association in the South Caucasus. I believe this location will become a very popular destination for all visitors to Bolnisi, who will want to get acquainted with and taste quality Bolnisi wine.

As I have mentioned, we have big and interesting plans which are being fulfilled by more than 3,300 people. This is the team of RMG, which works on a daily basis to create a better future for people and families, the region and the entire country. It is important that this is respected, because together we are creating a strong economy for a stronger Georgia!

ern technologies and international approaches of high standard.

**- RMG is known for its social responsibility projects. What are the company's future plans in this regard?**

- Corporate social responsibility is a strategic direction of the RMG Group. RMG has spent more than \$20 million since 2012 in support of hundreds of arts projects, athletes and sports teams, creative





SOCAR has invested  
**1,223.5 billion USD**  
into Georgia's  
economy  
during 2007-2020



# SOCAR

## ENERGY GEORGIA

SOCAR has paid  
**1,667 billion USD**  
in taxes into  
Georgia's state  
budget during  
2007-2020



# Zarapxana – Georgia’s Bastion of Goldsmithing Tradition

*Zarapxana’s unique goldsmithing traditions are a distinguished continuation of Georgian jewellery history. It has been producing authentic and unique products over 82 years. Found in 1939, it became the first jewelry factory in Georgia. With its distinct craftsmanship, Zarapxana offers a variety of collections and individual pieces that tell a truly unique and meaningful story. All of the items are handmade and responsibly manufactured by highly respected professionals. The company recreates and modernizes historical jewelry by taking inspiration from different artefacts and archaeological findings, as well as groundbreaking pieces of literature and art. Immense research and work is invested into crafting each and every item, as it carries and represents the importance of Georgian legacy. Along with representing national value, Zarapxana offers a wide selection of contemporary jewelry for any generation. Through its timeless designs and courageous collaborations, Zarapxana constantly searches for new inspiration and ways to create history worth remembering.*



Zarapxana is a traditional favourite of the Georgian Times Georgian National Business Awards. This year Zarapxana and Nikoloz Nakopia won awards for preserving unique goldsmithing traditions, having a high business reputation and the professionalism of their team. It also received a special award for its support of Bolnisi winemaking.

Here GT interviews Nikoloz Nakopia, CEO of Zarapxana, regarding the future plans of the company.

**- Zarapxana is a traditional partner of our awards. What did the pandemic year look like for the company? What challenges did you overcome?**

- As we all know, the Covid-19 pandemic has affected not only the

Georgian economy but the global economy. Our sector was one of the first to experience the critical effects of the pandemic, and one of the last to overcome such crises.

We faced difficulties related to sales and realization due to changes in priorities in the luxury goods market. As the economy fell, premium produce such as ours became less necessary to the customer, and this led to a drastic fall in the demand for luxury goods.

The second issue, which pulled us even further back, was all the restrictions and regulations enforced during the pandemic. As stores closed, we were left

with no choice but to rely on online sales. Simultaneously, communication with our contractors and international suppliers became an issue, and this drastically decreased the pace of logistics. It became difficult to import metal alloys, gold and other materials, or to communicate with anyone regarding the import or export of goods. However, through diligence we were quick to adapt and face the impending challenges caused by the world pandemic.

**- What is your strategic development plan in this new reality?**

Our strategy remains to constantly move forward and evolve as a brand, without looking back. Despite the difficult circumstances, we resumed our manufacturing process, maintained every job position, and generated as much production as we did before the pandemic.

- We adapted to demand by replacing certain products with others. Not only did we maintain a solid production of already existing items, but we also created and released new jewellery and souvenirs.

In the autumn, we will be launching our brand-new collection based on a Georgian theme. We will present a motif never before embodied in Georgian jewellery making and goldsmithing. With this collection, we will once again present and remind our customers of Georgia’s history and heritage.

**- What kind of innovations will you be offering your customers?**



- Other than the upcoming release of our brand-new historical collection, we have launched both our online store and a worldwide delivery service for quick and optimal shopping. We also offer online payment by instalments.

Corporate Sales are now offering an improved service, introducing better accessibility and more diversity, producing custom made items such as awards, medals, pins, etc. for partner companies. We will be releasing new souvenirs in the autumn, and are looking forward to presenting our latest creations

to our clients.

**- What is the company’s corporate social responsibility portfolio?**

- It is important to be a company with a universal outlook. Our social responsibility strategy has several directions: inclusivity, education and national preservation.

We employ, and try to aid, internally displaced persons from the occupied territories (IDPs), war veterans, people with disabilities and so on. Compared to other companies, we have a high percentage of female employees, with over 50% being female.

Education is also extremely important to us; we conduct various free trainings and exemplary internships. We aim to prepare our trainees for a professional career in their chosen field of goldsmithing. As they gain knowledge with us, they can either become a member of our company or pursue their interests elsewhere.

Very often we take part in charity activities and projects to aid younger generations, by providing educational, technological and medical resources. We also help laboratories and train other organizations involved in the jewellery industry, to help Georgia maintain and develop its goldsmithing culture.

Georgia’s heritage and culture play a vital role; thus, we take part in renovating historical items and creating new products for export, with the aim of introducing Georgia’s culture and traditions to the rest of the world.







# “WE DO WHAT WE KNOW”

## XXI National Business Awards Investment Awards The Winners of Various Prizes

**MAIN AWARDS**

- 1. Adjarabet - Archil Kakhidze**  
Corporate social responsibility  
Customer-oriented high technologies
- 2. Askaneli - Irakli Uglava**  
Georgian brand with international recognition  
Promoting national traditions  
Innovative management
- 3. Aversi - Paata Kurtanidze**  
Professional team  
Large employer  
Quality guarantee
- 4. Badagoni - Mari Giorgadze**  
Ambassador of Georgia abroad  
Protection of employees' interests  
High social responsibility
- 5. Georgian Carriage Building Holding - Badri Tsilosani**  
Effective management  
Longstanding success story
- 6. Caucasus Autoimport - Giorgi Surguladze**  
High social responsibility  
Stable partner
- 7. Georgian Industrial Group - Davit Bezhuashvili**  
Diverse business portfolio  
Professionalism of team  
High social responsibility
- 8. Georgian Products - David Bardavidze**  
Diversification of activities  
Promoting national standards on the global market

- 9. Gianti Logistics - David Tughushi**  
Adopting European standards of workplace health and safety  
Professionalism of team  
Loyal partner
- 10. Gurieli - Mikheil Chkuaseli**  
High quality standards  
Dynamic growth and ongoing development
- 11. NCC - Gegi Kelbakiani**  
Inventing customer-oriented innovative projects
- 12. PSP Pharma - Vazha Okriashvili**  
The largest network of stores in Georgia  
Positive public image  
High corporate standards
- 13. RMG - Koba Menabdishvili**  
Unrivaled leader of exports and mining technology modernisation
- 14. SOCAR Energy Georgia - Mahir Mammedov**  
Consistent operations  
High degree of transparency  
Corporate social responsibility
- 15. TAM Management - Pantiko Tordia**  
Devising innovative projects  
Responsible and stable partner
- 16. Zarapkhana - Nikoloz Nakopia**  
Preserving unique goldsmithing traditions  
High business reputation  
Professionalism of team

**SPECIAL AWARDS**

- Business's favourite media outlets:**  
TV Pirveli  
The Georgian Times
- Corporate Social Responsibility champion:**  
Caucasus Autoimport
- Best exporter of the year:**  
Georgian Products
- Jury's favourite company:**  
Zarapkhana
- Contribution to fighting Covid-19:**  
Levan Ratiani
- Media's favourite business:**  
RMG
- Largest contributor to the state budget:**  
SOCAR Energy Georgia
- Supporter of Bolnisi winery:**  
RMG
- Favourite Companies of Nana Gagaa, Vice President of the Georgian Times:**  
Askaneli  
Badagoni
- Best investor:**  
SOCAR Energy Georgia
- Grand Prize:**  
RMG

# “You cannot buy freedom with money, freedom is a luxury, and as a media leader you can and should create it”

The Georgian Times is largest Media Holding in the Georgian media market, with longest traditions. Here its major players outline its achievements and future plans.

**First up is Malkhaz Gulashvili, its Founder and President.**

**Mr. Gulashvili, The Georgian Times Media Holding has once again gained the trust and sympathy of businessmen at the GEORGIAN NATIONAL BUSINESS AWARDS ceremony. The Georgian Times has now begun a new stage of multimedia development, and is offering a lot of new products to the public. What can you tell us about these?**

The Georgian Times Media Holding is the largest in the Georgian media market and the one with the longest traditions. We founded it in 1991. The Georgian Times is an independent outlet, and has chronicled all our country has endured during these three decades.

Today the media holding comprises the trilingual (Georgian, English and Russian) web portal geotimes.ge, the news agency Gtmedia.ge, the radio station GT Radio and television station Gttv. It also includes the English-language newspaper The Georgian Times, founded in 1993, which is a member of the World Press Association and collaborates with The New York Times, The Washington Times, Comersant, Washington Post, The Azer Times, The Associated Press, UA times...

Our trilingual news agency geotimes.ge objectively covers the major events in the country and the world. The site has users in 120 countries, and attracts 40-50,000 individual visitors per day.

The media holding has been running the Georgian National Business awards since 1995 and Media Awards of the Year - National Media Awards. Georgian Business award is annual event which honors the best companies, businessmen, investors and persons, politicians, diplomats, sportsmen of the year.

We are glad that our new media products GT RADIO, TV GTTV and the news agency GTMEDIA.GE have gained popularity and the trust of their users in a very short time. However, this is why the leading businessmen in the country trust us. Our media platforms help them to communicate effectively with the public and create an image, and they stand by us and assist our development, for which I thank them.

**Can you give us more detail about the new products of the Media Holding?**

Let's start with the radio station - Radio Georgian Times

broadcasts 24 hours a day in all the major cities of Georgia. It is an innovative radio station, and the trust and popularity it inspires are growing day by day. Its growth is also determined by the fact that the company promoted by the Tbilisi Minibus, Didube market, and Rustavi car market. So we have a fixed number of listeners.

We take into account the interests of all age and social groups in a diverse broadcast output. Every half an hour you will learn what is happening in Georgia and the world.

Our simple objective is to provide balanced and comprehensive information. We provide exclusive live broadcasts from the epicenters of events, with ongoing commentary and assessments.

We only use reliable sources. We offer analysis from qualified specialists and interesting interviews on current topics. Programmes by Giorgi Gasviani, Mamuka Areshidze, Eka Sekhniashvili, Nuka Margvelshvili, Kote Matitashvili, Petre Kolkhi, myself and others make the station interesting for people of all tastes.

Our most ambitious project is the television station. The Georgian Times Broadcasting Company is a Georgian channel with a general broadcasting license. Georgian Times Broadcasting Company broadcasts throughout Georgia and neighboring countries, and offers viewers a variety of formats and content, including news, socio-political, economic, analytical, educational and entertainment content.

The channel also broadcasts Georgian feature films and scientific documentaries, which are an exclusive project of the channel. The concept of the Georgian Times Broadcasting Company is to create a completely new balanced TV channel in the media space, providing objective and authentic information to viewers.

GT Media, a news agency affiliated with our media holding, began operating on March 6, 2021 and is already at the forefront of the online media space. Despite being around such a short time, GT media is in the top 10 of the online media ratings.

GT media is staffed with professional and experienced journalists. Its aims are to provide the public with up-to-date information, objectively cover current events in this country and abroad and give a person with a different ideology the opportunity to express an opinion. Our goal is to



encourage critical thinking, as this serves to protect political pluralism, individual freedom and rule of law in the country.

The GT media news agency provides information to readers in Georgia and abroad in three languages (Georgian, English, Russian). Its news portal publishes information on current developments in politics, economics, business, society, culture, military affairs, law, crime, education, healthcare, conflict and sports.

In a word, we are doing what we know, and in the near future, we will offer a lot of new creative media products to the public.

**"The Georgian Times is the same age as independent Georgia and a chronicler of all the dramas our country has endured over the last decade", says Nana Gagua, Founder, Vice-president, Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of The Georgian Times. Here she gives a brief history of the holding and its accomplishments.**

Preparations for the publication of the Georgian Times began in 1991, and the first edition was in 1993. The Georgian version was soon joined by the English-language Georgian Times and later a Russian counterpart. We then printed a number of other high-profile publications over the years.

It seems that in the 21st century the newspaper era is over, but we are proud that we are still "newspapers". I can boldly say that working in the print media is much harder than working in television. In a newspaper, you need to convey your feeling about the subject, conclusions, predictions and analysis to the reader briefly



and clearly in black and white. In this new post-newspaper era, we face new challenges. Radio Georgian Times was one way of meeting these challenges, and has become one of the most successful, popular and highly rated stations. What it has achieved in such a short time could not have been predicted.

I would like to emphasize that our central brand, The Georgian Times, paved the way for the success of Radio Georgian Times. The station was lucky to be able to start broadcasting under this brand. Without the newspaper's strong, well-organised and objective team behind it the station would not have succeeded as it has.

After testing our strength in radio, we dared to do more and took another step - entering the field of TV. Then the electronic newspaper geotimes.com.ge and news agency gtmedia.ge were added to give us a broad range of presences in the media space. All this was made possible by our 1990s team.

We have always been amongst the top five print media outlets. Television cannot stand on its feet in 6 months, but we are slowly making strides in the television space. I am sure that in 2-3 years the TV station will be at the same level the Georgian Times newspaper is.

Throughout our existence it has been true that if an important and resonant topic is broadcast on Georgian television, an article was published about it in the Georgian Times the day before. We will try and maintain this tradition with our own station, so that every new product under our brand, be it radio, television or online publications, is seen as a worthy successor to the original Georgian language Georgian Times.

Georgia has changed presidents and governments, and there have been civil and external wars. The Georgian Times has always been at the epicentre of these events. During President Shevardnadze's time many government members, prosecutors and investigators were replaced following articles in our newspaper, as can be seen in our archives.

Today, having more experience, we do not open fire in all directions as the young Georgian Times did. We rely more on analysis, on in-depth processing of events. I believe that a journalist should be an analyst first and foremost, not just a storyteller. Current events should be deeply analysed, and the already agitated society should not be aggravated by excessive engagement.

It is very difficult to switch from print media to TV. But it is also true that too many TV stations which offer to publish a newspaper simply cannot produce one. The work involved in producing and printing a newspaper is so great that it cannot be compared to presenting news on the air.

We have gained the best experience through working with our journalists and editors from 1991 to the present day, and are using that experience to produce



better quality radio and television. We do not sow panic, and do not create storms in empty spaces. Now is the time for balanced, verified, objective information to be broadcast on television or radio, not just scandal and sensation.

Most importantly, we never dictate who to interview and who not, what to ask or what to avoid. It is important to me that there is a diversity of correspondents in our holding.

The myth that the Georgian Times is a private island for either the opposition or the government has collapsed. We often sit quietly in front of the TV and watch our old opponents and critics come to visit our TV station. I am proud of that. I want them to feel that the Georgian Times does not censor contributors, and that all can have airtime and be treated the same way.

Media which only operates under editorial censorship is not media. It immediately becomes a servant of two masters, and not interesting to the public either. So the greatest gift my husband Malkhaz Gulashvili and I, and our team of journalists, can give is absolute freedom. You cannot buy freedom with money, freedom is a luxury, and as a media leader you

can and should create it.

**The Georgian Times Media Holding has a diverse team. Here various senior staff outline their areas of work.**

**Papuna Gulashvili, Founder and General Director of Georgian Times Radio:** The idea of creating a new radio format came to us after observing the media market and seeing that no station was offering tasteful music and balanced socio-political content. In terms of music, our station caters to the tastes of all types of listeners. We have classical, modern, electro, house and techno programming. As for information, it is important that it be objective and balanced as well as timely and full of exclusives. Our programming is very innovative. It helps people find themselves. For example, we have Father Peter's programme Bridge. I am sure our station is interesting for people of all generations, as the rating suggests.

After the radio station became a market leader we established the TV station as a complement to it. We wanted to share the unbiased content we had on the radio with the TV viewers as well.

**Tamuna Abramishvili, Head of TV and Radio direction of The**



**Georgian Times Media Holding:** We have only been broadcasting for a few months but have already managed to capture a niche in the market, for which I thank our loyal viewers. We have tried to create a TV network which will interest all tastes and age groups. The morning starts with a news programme, which also airs at 11, 2, 4 and 7 o'clock. News digests are also aired throughout the day.

We have an entertainment programme "laboratory" and a business programme, Capital. The Georgian Times is also distinguished by the fact that we have a documentary film studio, in which we make films about lost civilizations and historically interesting people. We also offer political talk shows, and Eka Sekhniashvili's political programme is aired 4 times a week.

Maka Razmadze has a daily programme Tea With Maka Razmadze, where successful people talk about politics and other topical issues in an informal environment. Malkhaz Gulashvili, the

political players. This is the main motivating factor for our development.

**Geno Jokhidze, head of the news service of GT media and the online Georgian Times:**

The information portals of the Georgian Times Media Holding (the trilingual agency and newspaper) are developing daily both technically and creatively. Their ratings are growing.

The news agency will eventually have offices in all the major cities and regions of Georgia, where local journalists will be employed. They will continually provide us with up to the minute information on current events in specific areas.

The news agency will also have representatives in other countries strategically important for Georgia, in their capital cities, where the head offices of various international institutions are located. The newsroom contingent will at least double.

The information service will have even more vehicles avail-



founder of our holding, also hosts the political-analytical programme Real Politics once a week.

In the future we plan to expand, diversify our content and add new shows. We are also planning to purchase new serials, showing them in Georgian, and Georgian films. We had a great response to our screening of Georgian cartoons. It seems people missed the old Georgian cartoons very much, and of course we will continue this.

Our radio content is also diverse - Kote Matitashvili and nuka margvelashvili, Father Peter and Giorgi Gasviani host authored programmes, and Malkhaz Gulashvili and Eka Sekhniashvili host political talk shows. In addition, we have a very powerful social page on Facebook where radio and video content is streamed. This further increases the radio station's popularity and community involvement.

Our most important achievement is to maintain an independent editorial policy. All information produced by us is balanced and free from the influence of po-

able, so it can get to the scenes of stories. The quality and quantity of our technical equipment will increase. We will obtain a drone, which is a 21st century necessity when it comes to information acquisition and dissemination.

The editorial team will be divided into dedicated segments, such as the Department of Politics, the Department of Economics and Business, the Department of Culture and Sports, the Department of Entertainment and so on. We also plan to create a sociological and analytical department, which will conduct surveys, street surveys and analyses to produce products for both the news agency and newspaper portals.

In order to improve the dissemination of information, i.e. to reach a wider audience, a more powerful Social Media and Web Development Department will be created, which will work directly on the proper packaging and dissemination of information on various social networks. We will also increase the resources of the marketing service, which will become even more fruitful.

# Georgian Products Named Best Exporter

The 21st Georgian Times Georgian National Business Awards on June 29 were attended by several members of the government, the business elite, the diplomatic corps and academics, along with representatives of leading media outlets and other distinguished guests. The gold lion awards for diversification of activities and promoting national standards on the global market were won by Davit Bardavelidze and Georgian Products, who also took out the Best Exporter title.

Georgian Products was founded in 2014, and since 2015 has been manufacturing pet furniture which is sold on the EU market. In 2018 it expanded its product range, with pet food being a notable addition. The enterprise currently employs 570 people.

Here GT interviews Davit Bardavelidze, founder of Georgian Products, about recent developments in the company.

**- What have you achieved over the last seven years?**

- Our company was founded in 2014, but launched its first products in March 2015, after the Association Agreement with the European Union was signed which gave us an advantage over our competitors, in that we could export our products to the EU without customs duty. The support the state provided us with was signing this Association Agreement.

**- How did this pandemic year affect the company? What difficulties did the company have to overcome?**

- This award emphasises once again that our success is also that of our country, as we operate on the international market and popularise Georgia.

Despite the pandemic and accompanying challenges, 2020 was pretty successful and we have continued exporting our products without interruption. The most difficult challenge was simply to continue operating, to obtain a consistent supply of raw materials and to get our products delivered to our European and American partners.

In one way the pandemic has had a positive impact on our company, since our products are sold online on the EU market. As many consumers had to stay home under Covid-19

regulations, they purchased products online and demand increased respectively.

However there were challenges over preventing the spread of the virus in the company. We had to ensure the health of our employees. There were also logistical issues in our global market, so another challenge was to prevent transport delays increasing the price of our products, which we addressed by finding alternative suppliers and raw materials. We believe we met all these challenges successfully.

**- Which countries do your export your products to?**

- Our products are exported to EU countries. They are stocked in warehouses in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Italy, Poland and England, but they are sold from there throughout the EU market. We are adding another warehouse in Hungary in September.

We also export products to the USA. At present we have only entered one region, the Midwest, but this year we will be shipping to the Northeastern region of America. Our goal is to cover all seven regions by next year.



**- What innovations can customers expect in the year future?**

- Innovative pet toys and accessories are amongst the most important novelties we offer our customers. We also introduced the first trademark (brand) on the market.

We are planning to manufacture toys for dogs made of natural rubber, or its substitute thermo-elastin. There is only one big manufacturer of such toys on the market today, and we want to compete with it. We are already negotiating with customers on the sort of products and quantities they wish to receive.

**- What does the work of your company bring to the country?**

- We create jobs. We promote the country as a symbol of quality. We convey the message that products made in Georgia can be high quality and competitive, which we hope will persuade more investors and manufacturers to shift their production to Georgia. We generate huge inflows of funds for the country, which are economically beneficial.

**- What is the company's corporate social responsibility portfolio like?**

- The well-being and progress of our employees is the most important thing for Georgian Products. We also

have a great responsibility to protect the environment and our natural resources.

This is why our enterprise is equipped with European standard production facilities and machines, in which all safety norms are observed. Our employees are given the opportunity to complete different trainings to improve their skills or master additional professions. We use ecologically clean and certified raw materials, and waste is completely recycled.

**- What are the company's future plans and development strategy?**

- Our company drew up a lot of ambitious plans before the pandemic, and although we had to implement them a little bit late we still managed to do so. We have expanded and upgraded our production infrastructure and machinery. We have introduced a well-known German company to the region, as this has great experience in the field of automation and innovation in various parts of the world, and impressive customers such as BMW and Volkswagen. Most importantly we remain loyal to our core strategy of being export-oriented, and expanding in different areas of the market.

# Caucasus Auto Import – a Special Company

*The best companies and businessmen of the year were once again revealed at the XXI consecutive Georgian National Business Awards ceremony organized by The Georgian Times Media Holding. Caucasus Auto Import and Giorgi Surguladze won awards for having high social responsibility and being a stable partner. In particular, the company received a special award for its contribution to the #StopCov Foundation.*

Caucasus Auto Import is the largest auto importer company and an undoubted leader in the Caucasus region. Company was founded in 2004 in Georgia. It offers car dealers and individuals the opportunity to purchase automobiles from anywhere in the world.

During the successful 17-year history, the company has imported and sold more than 250,000 vehicles and established a wide network of 42 branches throughout the region, including Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Ukraine and now Kyrgyzstan.

Here GT interviews the Director-General of Caucasus Auto Import - **Aleksandre Vekua**, about the company's future plans and challenges.

**- How did you deal with the pandemic?**

- It was strongly essential for us to keep all our employees, which we managed to do. After having 17 years of experience in the market, we know exactly how important professional staff is for the development of the company. It is the

result of their hard work that we survived this period of crisis with the fewest possible losses. However, the pandemic is still raging and still there are many challenges ahead.

We undertook a number of initiatives to maintain our position. As part of our crisis management, we launched a new project - Caucasus Auto Market, through which we gave the auto dealers the opportunity to place their cars on our market completely free of charge and provide their selling. Hundreds of auto dealers have used our platform within this project. Today, Caucasus Auto Market employs approximately 50 people.

**- How important is your company's work for your country?**

- This is a little bit of an awkward question... I cannot really tell how important it is, but I can say that our company's Georgian branches employ approximately 400 people, while thousands of people work in this whole sector where our company has a large



share. Our country is the regional hub of automobiles and this sector pays a significant amount of taxes to the state. In terms of export, automotive sector has the leading place in Georgia.

**- How does the state support your business?**

- The state's contribution in developing our business is enormous. One notable example is the postponement of customs clearance, which en-

ables dealers not to expedite the customs clearance procedure and avoid fines. These actions played a big role in saving the sector.

**- How important is it for your company to win these awards? What does this mean for you?**

- Firstly, I would like to thank The Georgian Times for the award that was given to us for our contribution to fight against Covid pandemic. With-

in the framework of social responsibility, our company donated 150,000 GEL to the fund to fight Covid-19 and 161,000 GEL to the nurses.

We are well aware of the important role the business plays in fighting the pandemic. Business is a living organism and fully involved in global processes, so we believe that as a business and as the ordinary citizens, it is our duty to unite to defeat the pandem-

ic in a timely manner and with the fewest losses.

**- What are your plans for the near future?**

- Caucasus Auto Import is always optimistic towards innovations and new challenges. As you know, we have branches in five other countries besides Georgia. We intend to expand further in the near future and make Caucasus Auto Import well-known in Central Asia and Eastern Europe.



# TAM Management - Innovative Projects in the Field of Aviation



*The main activities of TAM Management are aircraft repair and upgrading. At present, the Sukhoi Su-25 and L-39 type airplanes and Mi-8, Mi-17, Mi-24 and Mi-61 helicopters are being upgraded.*

However the company is also working on a number of new, innovative projects. It plans to build a 9-seat business aircraft made of composite materials. It will also manufacture T-31 drones (unmanned aerial vehicles) fully adapted to take part in various military missions.

At the XXI Georgian Times Georgian National Business Awards on June 29 TAM Management and Pantiko Tordia won awards for devising innovative projects and being a responsible and stable partner. Here GT interviews **Pantico (Vazha) Tordia**, Founder of TAM Management.

**Can you outline your company's achievements?**

We have been participating in the Georgian Times business awards since 2003. The original aviation factory was one of the most successful companies in the country. Then it was taken over and the existing staff were fired.

I came to the factory in 2015. All we had then was an assembly workshop for temporary use, so we started working with limited resources. We now repair and modernization of aircraft and are also working on a 9-seat business jet project.

When we started working there were only five aircraft companies working with new technologies in the whole world: the Austrian company Diamond, Adams, Sirius, Honda and us. The USA has been using special composite materials to build military aircraft for 10 years, and was once the sole manufacturer. In 2003 it began using composite materials to build civil aircraft, and

we got involved in this too. Initially we got acquainted with the technology, and made decision to send 30 specialists to America, including 12 constructors, who mastered the technology within two and a half years. Our constructors designed and assembled a 7-seat aircraft in America, which we brought to Tbilisi. We are focused on manufacturing with new technologies, and the process really works.

**You have talked about the drone project. Specifically, when and with what technologies will you build it?**

We published information about the drone (unmanned aerial vehicles) last year. This type of aircraft is now very fashionable. It became especially popular after the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia, however there is also a boom from other parts of the world.

We have developed a project for constructing a military unmanned aerial vehicle. We are now looking for an investor, because we need to develop the manufacturing facility appropriately and purchase technological appliances.

A hermeneic room needs to be arranged, as we will build aircraft with composite mate-

rials. The requirements are very strict. Four technical parameters must be met in the room at all times: temperature, air purity, humidity, and pressure. Machinery needs to be purchased and manufacturing processes to be prepared. We will complete the air testing in 8 months from the day of funding, a very accelerated deadline.

The airplane for the testing will have engines, an autopilot and navigation systems. Our design includes 350 kg of armament. It can fly 24 hours a day. If it is used solely for intelligence/surveillance purposes to observe a particular area, it will be able to fly for 72 hours, because it will carry fuel tanks instead of weapons. We will receive specifications from the customer and prepare accordingly.

We will get the equipment we need from Belgium, and we know the price. The customer will tell us what purpose a particular jet will serve, and the price will depend on that purpose. We think drones and business jets have a great future.

We will also build the 9-seater plane using similar composite material. This is more durable than the aluminum alloys widely used in the aerospace industry. An aircraft made of composite material is 30% lighter. We have a competent team which can design these types of aircraft.

**How did the pandemic period affect your company?**

We suspended operations for a week or two during the toughest times, when there was a complete lockdown. Our clients are African and Asian countries. We worked as hard as we could, we did not stop working completely, but we followed the regulations set by the government and the healthcare agency.

**How does the state support your business, and the business sector in general?**

This question is frequently asked by colleagues from the West. I always answer: the biggest support the government can give is not to interfere in the manufacturing process.



საინჟინერო-ტექნოლოგიური ჯგუფი  
Georgian Industrial Group

ONE TEAM - MULTIPLE ENERGIES

## Gianti Logistics - We Make It Happen



*Gianti Logistics is one of the largest transport companies in Georgia. It has 200 employees, offices in Tbilisi, Poti, Batumi and Zestafoni and a Customs terminal in Poti, and further representative offices in Azerbaijan, Central Asia and Europe.*

At the 2021 Georgian Times Georgian National Business Awards Gianti Logistics and David Tughushi won awards for adopting European standards of workplace health and safety, the professionalism of its team and being a loyal partner. Here GT interviews David Tughushi, head of the company, about its future plans.

**How did last year proceed for the company amid Covid-19? What challenges did the company overcome?**

The pandemic has equally affected big and small companies, and caused similar inconveniences to the business sector here and around the world. Our company was certainly no exception. Developing responses to new threats was the most important challenge we faced, and from today's perspective, we believe our responses were correct, and most importantly timely.

We didn't change our working strategy, we didn't stop, and this made our approach towards our team members much more responsible. We allowed our staff to work remotely, but the executive officers, drivers, brokers, customs warehouse staff and tech-

nical staff continued to work in their usual locations in full compliance with safety measures and Covid-19 regulations.

This was not easy, as we, though members of one team, found ourselves in an automatically unequal environment, as part of our staff worked non-stop in parallel with the remote workers. The company suffered significant financial losses as well as moral distress. Numerous projects were suspended and postponed for an unspecified period of time, but in the face of all this, we managed to maintain a salary fund, which is probably our greatest achievement.

The difficulties caused by the pandemic are still with us, we still have to live and work in this reality. We have re-evaluated many approaches, both in life and business, and are trying to adapt to new regulations and maintain a development strategy.

**What are the company's future plans, future strategy?**

We continue developing in spite of the above-mentioned difficulties. Gianti Logistics is one of the largest transport companies in Georgia, with 200 employees, offices in Tbilisi, Poti, Batumi and Zestafoni and a Customs terminal in Poti, Our branch office in Azerbaijan has been operating for three years now, and this year we have registered further representative offices in Central Asia and Europe.

What sets our company apart is the range of our service-

es. We offer all types of logistics services, including oversized load and wide load, divisible or indivisible cargo transportation by sea, land, air or rail. We try and develop equally in all directions, and not occupy only one niche.

Gianti Logistics has been involved in all the important projects in the region over the years. These projects, undertaken for clients such as BP and its contractors, have significantly improved the style and quality of our work. Today, our established standards and norms allow us to easily adapt to international requirements, and we have the ambition to expand our coverage area and increase the number of our branches.

**What is the company's corporate social responsibility portfolio?**

As I mentioned, the requirements and standards set by our clients have significantly improved the style and quality of our work. These requirements have been, and still are, beyond the legal requirements or recommendations effective in our country. Social responsibility is an important criterion clients look for when evaluating and selecting a supplier company.

Our responsibility is manifested in: business ethics and environmental protection - we are constantly trying to update our facilities and grounds in accordance with European standards, use high quality fuel, properly implement repair works, adhere to occupational safety standards and increase our awareness in this regard, properly assess risks and fully meet our obligations to the client.

Our company "speaks" less than some others. We are mostly known to the groups with which we have business relations. We do not make ourselves stand out by making resonant statements, and probably do not speak enough about our projects and social activities. So we are doubly pleased with this award. Thank you again for appreciating our work.



## Improving the Quality and Style of Life – Vision of NCC



*Despite the difficulties caused by the pandemic, NCC construction company has conducted a number of major strategic infrastructural projects in the country. Restoration of the viaduct to the international airport, repair of Baratashvili Bridge and nearby ramps, restoration of the Dry Bridge, renovation of Gulua Bridge, the building of a two-level road junction at the intersection of Marshal Gelovani Street and Sarajishvili Street near the banks of the river Mtkvari, the construction of a motorway bridge in the settlement of Zahesi, the building of a new bridge on the Zestafoni-Baghdati motorway, a new bridge on the river Mtkvari which replicates the appearance of a historic bridge, structurally and technologically one of the most difficult of bridge constructions – these are some of the numerous from NCC projects.*

At this year's Georgian Times Georgian National Business Awards NCC took home a prize for devising customer-centred innovative projects. Here GT interviews Gegi Kelbakiani, founder of NCC, about its work.

**What is the concept of NCC infrastructure projects?**

We aim to improve the quality and style of life and

take a customer focused approach in our projects. We seek to benefit each citizen by taking account of their interests and performing quality construction work, introducing modern materials and adopting new approaches and solutions.

We are implementing different types of infrastructural projects, including building parks, squares, bridges, buildings and roads, and repairing water supply and sewage networks. In fact, the Quality Life, European approach is already visible in all the projects implemented by NCC. The company always considers the impact that specific project will have on people and the environment, whether it is innovative and positive for them and what it might bring to each citizen.

In order to achieve the desired result, close cooperation with clients is of paramount importance, as is effective coordination. This creates results visible after the implementation of each project.

NCC not only builds but creates. It not only undertakes the actual construction but guides the process of project creation. This involves taking creative approaches which make the process particularly interesting.

Finding creative solutions

is the main motivation for all NCC employees. But the most important person is the customer, and their satisfaction is the greatest driver of the implementation of a project.

Almost all projects implemented by NCC provide visible good proof of this – the Native Language Garden, Dry Bridge, Avchala Bridge, Vashlijvari Overpass, Rike Park, Bridge over the Kvirila River, new roads throughout Georgia, the Gurjaani Historical Park which will be completed in the nearest future, etc.

**What projects is the company working on now? What innovations will you be offering to your customers?**

A number of interesting, different projects are currently underway. I will focus on one of them - as is known, the government has decided to renovate the regional centres. NCC rehabilitates rehabilitate the Zestafoni, Kharagauli, Baghdati, Marneuli, Gardabani and Bolnisi regional centres by the end of the year. This will be an interesting portfolio of tasks for our company, and by taking our tested approaches we will do our best to help the people of the regions gain additional benefits through our work.

## Adjarabet – Supporting Georgia’s Sports



*Adjarabet has been operating on the Georgian market for 20 years and has conducted many unprecedented social responsibility projects. It is focused on the development of responsible game innovations and technologies to support Georgian sports and creative people.*

Lasha Shavdatuashvili, Geno Petriashvili, Varlam Liparteliani, Irma Khetsuriani and other world-class athletes have become honorary ambassadors of Adjarabet due to the special reputation of the company. Eight of these honorary ambassadors participated in the Tokyo Olympics Games, and four earned silver medals.

At a special reception following the games Adjarabet gifted 100,000 GEL to every silver medal holder and 20,000 GEL to the other ambassadors who

took part in the Games. Olympic Team Doctor Zura Kakhbrishvili was also awarded 20,000 GEL, making the total donation half a million GEL.

At the 2021 Georgian Times Georgian National Business Awards Adjarabet and Archil Kakhidze won awards for both corporate social responsibility and customer-oriented high technologies in recognition of its work. Here GT interviews Archil Kakhidze, head of the company, about its future direction.

**What did the pandemic year look like for the company?**

Adjarabet took a number of important steps during the pandemic. We were one of the first companies to switched to online working, and suspend the operations of our casinos, bookmakers and slot clubs to

prevent the spread of the virus. We launched an information campaign, and posted important information about the prevention recommendations in all advertising channels.

In addition, Adjarabet transferred half a million GEL (500,000 GEL) to the state for the purchase and import of rapid testing, within the framework of its corporate social responsibility programme.

The Initiative corporate social responsibility platform, which we run, also held a charity concert, performed by Stefane, to aid the 1 Anobi Foundation. In addition to the money raised by the concert, Adjarabet allocated additional financial resources on its own initiative and provided necessary assistance to the foundation’s beneficiaries.

**What are the company’s future plans? What new projects will you offer your customers?**

Adjarabet has always focused on innovation. We will release a lot of interesting and important news in the near future, as we plan to conduct a number of essential and useful projects.

**What does the company’s social responsibility package look like this year?**

We believe that corporate social responsibility means voluntarily taking certain responsibilities and fulfilling them for the people.

One of the important missions of Adjarabet is to support Georgian athletes. The company is constantly trying to increase awareness of Georgian athletes, give them the opportunity to show their full potential and help them compete in major competitions and tournaments.

The promotion of Georgian sports and athletes is an important mission for us, and a lot of projects are being implemented in these areas. We are making a significant contribution to this area.



## Askaneli – Tradition For The Present Day

*The two-centuries-old success story of Askaneli began with the legendary pitcher of the Chkhaidzes and the magnificent grains of Chkhaveri made into wine within it. The winemaking initiated by Antimos Askaneli in 1880 has been continued by his descendants, who have turned it into the success of the whole country.*

The global economic crisis caused by the pandemic has not made life easy for Askaneli. However, the company has continued operating under Covid-19 regulations, retained 100% of its employees, and donated 100,000 GEL to the Stop Covid fund. The pandemic has opened new opportunities as well as challenges for Askaneli, and the company has launched several important new projects.

At the 21st Georgian Times Georgian National Business Awards Askaneli and Irakli Uglava won in three categories - Georgian brand with international recognition, promoting national traditions and innovative management. Here GT interviews Gocha Chkhaidze, Founder of the company, about its future plans.

**What did this pandemic year look like for the company? What challenges did it overcome?**

Despite the pandemic and the related challenges, 2020 turned out to be quite a productive year for the company, as is evidenced by the successful overcoming of these challenges. In addition to the numerous problems caused by the virus, and the necessity of adhering to the regulations concerning this, it also presented us with a lot of opportunities. Our factory didn’t stop working for a minute, and we performed all the necessary tasks in accordance with all the necessary regulations.

The management found the time to address a number of issues, looking at certain situations from different angles, and see new opportunities in



areas considered unimportant before. The pandemic allowed us to start rebranding the company and completely changing the image of our organisation, through developing new means of communication and brand identifiers. This rebranding process is still underway, and is being refined to improve the brand according to the company’s concept.

It is noteworthy that the company’s export sales increased by 35% in parallel with this rebranding process. Our team coped with all the various difficulties successfully, which shows once again that the organisation is viable even in a crisis.

**What are the company’s future plans? What innovations will you be offering to customers?**

As I have already mentioned, the company had to reevaluate a lot of things during the pandemic. Plenty of opportunities emerged, and ideas for new projects were born as well. It was during the pandemic, in 2020, that our new factory opened in Kvareli. This is fully operational, and uses new high-tech equipment.

A new cognac factory is

currently being built at an old factory site in Lilo, Tbilisi, which will further increase the scale of our production. We are also building a specialised wine shop, which will create additional jobs and a completely new space for wine lovers.

We are additionally building an 80-room hotel and spa in Kvareli, under the Askaneli brand, which will contribute to the development of wine tourism. We plan to hold special wine festivals in this hotel, a very good tourist opportunity which will develop the wine industry as a whole. The company has several other new projects on the go, including the purchase and cultivation of new vineyards, cooperation with international organisations, etc.

**What does the company’s corporate social responsibility portfolio consist of?**

Social responsibility is a very important aspect of our company. We would highlight our work with small family wineries, which we provide consulting services for using the resources available in our company. We also share experience with them and undertake various promotional actions.

We also consider the efforts we have made to promote Georgian wine part of our social responsibility work. The event held in Monte Carlo in June 2021 saw one of the greatest contributions Askaneli have made to the promotion of Georgian winemaking. We promoted Georgian wine and culture as a whole at this event, introduced several other wineries and tried to showcase the most important Georgian cultural products to European winemakers. This event had great resonance, and we hope it is only the beginning for Georgian wine and wineries. There will be a lot of success stories ahead.





## Gurieli - the Georgian for Tea

*What is the word "Gurieli" associated with for you? In Georgia, the answer will definitely be "tea".*

Gurieli has only been around for 11 years, but they have had no doubts about their success. In only one decade, the brand has created a new epoch of tea production, has become synonymous with Georgian tea and been awarded numerous prizes.

At the 21st Georgian Times National Business Awards Gurieli and Mikheil Chkuaseli won prizes for high quality standards and dynamic growth and ongoing development. These demonstrated the progress the company has made. Here GT interviews Mikheil Chkuaseli, Director of the company.

**How do these awards motivate business?**

We always participate in the Georgian Times Awards. We believe that similar evaluations are a great motivation for businesses to reflect on their previous year, look at all the challenges they have faced and successes they have achieved and introduce themselves to other companies and to the public. It is always a great honour for companies to participate in these awards and to be recognised and appreciated by the business sector.

**What is Gurieli?**

We conducted a survey in which we asked this question. Practically 100% of respondents answered that "Gurieli" is tea. When we asked, "name the tea you know", 8 out of 10 answered "Gurieli". The brand has become synonymous with local tea.

This is the product of all our hard work. It reflects the product's quality, and the unique and distinctive design of its packaging. I can hardly remember a brand that has remained virtually unchanged for 11 years or operated with very little change. In our case the packaging design changed, but the logo remained unchanged, which is really unique.

The few changes in the design were either not noticeable or readily accepted. For example, we produced the line "Gurieli Export" and shortly afterwards launched "Gurieli Classic". Customers did not consider this a big change, although the change of a product's name is always a big deal. Most importantly, the brand has been positioned so carefully, the name chosen so correctly and the exclusive logos created so expertly that their development is important, but not as important as the brand itself.

**What was the most important element of creating the brand?**

The main thing for us was to create brand values. From the beginning we decided not to compromise on quality and



brand value. Significant investments were made to equip the enterprise with the highest standard and latest model lines.

We introduced the production line technology of leading Italian manufacturer IMA to produce disposable tea, as the most famous tea brands in the world use it. Our Pyramid Packing Line uses a novel technology from the famous Japanese company Fuso International, the pioneer of pyramid type packaging. Indian machines are used for primary production. All these determine the high quality of the Georgian tea production process.

It is noteworthy that we have built a new tea packaging plant, the first in the history of independent Georgia. It was constructed in accordance with the applicable food safety standards and ISO standards. We acquired our first ISO standard a few months after opening and have held it up until now.

**How long did it take you to get from business idea to production?**

We produced our first tea box in June 2010, but the project dates from the spring of 2008. It took us more than 2 years to create a brand, introduce the technologies, prepare the machines, start production and supply our products to the market.

Our team worked with American partners. Representatives of the Ogilvy company came to Georgia to make an in-depth analysis of our tea market and consumer behaviour. They identified the key factors to which the customer responds and how we can address their needs in a timely manner. Armed with this, we started production.

**Why "Gurieli"?**

There is a very interesting story about the name. We had a list of more than 25 possible names to choose from. Five or seven were shortlisted, and Gurieli wasn't amongst them. However, no one liked the names which had been shortlisted.

During this period, one of our shareholders went on vacation but remained in constant touch with us. When his wife complained at him for

doing this, he told her we had a problem choosing the name for the tea. So she advised us to use the name Gurieli.

Then we began studying history, and found that the last Duke of Guria, Mamia V Gurieli, was connected with the introduction of tea to the region. The first tea tree was planted in his botanical garden, and the other tea bushes in Georgia derive from that one. The history of Georgian tea is very interesting.

**How does Gurieli perform on the Georgian market?**

The Georgian market is very specific one. It can be said to be divided into two parts - one part where they drink a lot, another where there are different traditions of tea consumption - this includes Kvemo Kartli and other regions. We occupy about a quarter of the market in Georgia as a whole.

Gurieli has a broad brand coverage. There are several lines under the Gurieli umbrella: the Classic Line, Prince Gurieli, Guriel Tea Gardens and Guriel Fruit. However we know the brand can do more, which is why introduced Guriel Cold Tea three years ago.

**Will you be introducing any more new products?**

I cannot give you the details, but we have big and very interesting plans regarding both hot and cold tea, which are intended to be implemented by 2023. The pandemic has delayed these by 1 year, but we nevertheless added a new product to the cold tea line in 2020. This is another pandemic year, but we are adding another new product. We are not going to stop at cold tea, nor are we going to stop in the direction of drinks.

**How does Gurieli perform at export markets?**

No matter how paradoxical it may seem, this year has been very interesting in terms of exports. We have sold tea in as many countries we had never sold in before. We are now represented in 7 areas: Qatar, Ukraine, Canada, the Baltic countries, Russia and Uzbekistan, and we believe that all these countries have great potential. We are intending to improve our position in these countries.

## Averssi – Who Else?



*Averssi has been operating for 27 years, has created more than 10,000 jobs, owns 281 pharmacies, produces quality medicines, offers customers the lowest prices and renders professional pharmaceutical services.*

Averssi is the largest pharmaceutical company of international standards in the South Caucasus, and also incorporates the Alpha insurance company and the Averssi charity fund.

The Averssi Clinic Network is one of the brand's most successful projects. It includes the K. ERISTAVI NATIONAL CENTRE OF EXPERIMENTAL AND CLINICAL SURGERY, the Medalfa Hospital Network, The New Life Multi-Profile Maternity Hospital and the Academician Vakh tang Bochorishvili Clinic, which is one of the leading actors in the fight against Covid-19.

Averssi is again a winner at The Georgian Times Georgian National Business Awards. Paata Kurtanidze and the Averssi Company received awards for having a professional team, being a large employer and being a quality guarantee. Here GT interviews Lali Bregvadze, the head of the company's public relations department, about its future plans.

**Averssi is a traditional favourite of the Georgian Times awards. How do you maintain your standards?**

Averssi won the grand prize at these awards two years ago. This year we have been honoured with three further awards. This is very important recognition and stimulus for the company, which will motivate us to do even more for the benefit of customers and employees.

**What did the pandemic year look like for your company? What challenges did you overcome?**

The pandemic year has been pretty challenging for the country as a whole, and of course the private business sector, including Averssi. We found it difficult to import

medicines and certain types of products at a certain period. The pandemic made it difficult for suppliers to provide certain types of products. However we soon fixed this problem, and managed to import products through alternative means.

Furthermore, we have been able to reduce prices on the most in-demand medications since October 1, despite the volatility of the dollar rate. This is a kind of social responsibility undertaken by the company.

**What are the company's short term plans and longer term development strategy?**

Our future plans are to meet the needs of our customers for their own benefit. In 2021 we plan to open new pharmacies in new locations requested by customers. We plan to introduce new brands of face and body care products, and most importantly we try to offer our customers the highest quality medications and healthcare products at the lowest price.

For example, we have projects such as the pigeon card, a pharmacy shelf which allows customers suffering from chronic diseases to buy medications and healthcare

products at the cheapest price every day. We also offer "heart" promotions, which allow customers to enjoy 50% discounts on face and body care products. We also have weekend promotions and so forth.

**What is the company's corporate social responsibility portfolio?**

Averssi is one of the most socially responsible companies. It conducts numerous projects in this direction.

The company gives products of a certain value to large families who welcome their fifth and subsequent children. We have signed a memorandum with the Olympic Committee which will provide free medical treatment and delivery of healthcare services for veterans and sportsmen. The company helps children who are deprived of parental care, supports elderly homes and conducts environmental protection and landscaping work.

The company funds the education of young students and provides medical services and medications to indigent persons. We supported various organisations which helped individual citizens amidst the pandemic, and also persons with disabilities and the organisations which aid them.



# PSP – 27 Years in Service of the Country



*The choice of 2 million people, with over 5,000 employees and 282 pharmacies in all parts of Georgia and in all districts of Tbilisi, PSP is one of the most recognized names in the Georgian business world.*

PSP has been on the front-line of public welfare since the onset of the Covid pandemic. It has expanded its online pharmaceutical service area across the regions and set up a free telephone booking service in Tbilisi to ensure a continuous supply of medicines and pharmaceutical products. At the initial stage of the pandemic, The Association of Pharmaceutical Companies has donated the ultra-modern real-time PGR system QuantStudio 5 Dx for free to the Infectious Diseases, AIDS and Clinical Immunology Research Centre, at the initiative of General Sponsor PSP. This is used to conduct molecular diagnostics of COVID 19 cases.

PSP has once again won prizes at the Georgian Times Georgian National Business Awards. The company and its Administrative director, Mr. Mamuka Bregvadze have won awards for having the biggest chain of pharmacies in Georgia, having a positive public image and displaying high corporate standards. Here GT interviews Mr. Mamuka Bregvadze.

**PSP has traditionally been a winner of Georgian Times Business Awards. What did the pandemic year look like for the company? What challenges did you overcome?**

Despite the fact we had to face a new reality in 2020, the company has continued operating and providing a non-stop

supply of medicines, preventive health and beauty products. PSP was the first company to develop and implement an anti-crisis plan from the first day of the new reality, which included protecting employees, creating a “green zone” in the pharmacy

and providing a safe environment for customers. It required us to equip the pharmacies with all the necessary appliances which have now become an integral part of our daily life.

Ensuring the transport of employees was one of the biggest challenges during lockdown, however PSP did its best to handle the situation and enabled our staff to take taxis so that the pharmacists were always available for customers.

In further responses, we consolidated our online pharmacies and expanded its coverage area from the capital city to the major regional centres of Georgia. We did this in the very first days of lockdown. We created this online pharmacy in 2007, and when lockdown came we swiftly expanded it to the regions with the help of financial investment. Customers can simply order their desired pharmaceutical products on the website [psp.ge](http://psp.ge) and receive the product at their desired address promptly and easily.

**What are your future plans? What is your development strategy?**

The pandemic has established new rules, but despite all regulations and difficulties we have again set ourselves the challenge to increase access to medicines and pharmaceutical products. We are opening new pharmacies and increasing the range of medicines in all price ranges, including beauty care

and hygiene and preventive health products.

**What novelties are you planning to offer your customers in 2021?**

Customers are used to being offered novelties by PSP. We offered three new cosmetics brands to customers in 2021, including the Swiss brand - Hormeta, French brand - SVR and Spanish brand - Martiderm; we are also continually expanding our range of medicines to reflect the achievements of modern medicine, so that Georgian customers can have easy access to all modern products and innovations in medicine and beauty care.

**What is the company's corporate social responsibility portfolio?**

The activities of PSP are conducted as a part of a social responsibility mission. This is to ensure that people can access health and wellness products so that a healthy society can create a strong country.

PSP Pharma employs more than 5,000 people. The company is involved in a number of landscaping and environmental projects on an ongoing basis, and PSP was one of the first companies to introduce biodegradable bags throughout its network across Georgia.

The company supports a number of charitable and student activities, retirement homes, disability organisations and social enterprises. It promotes sports and a healthy lifestyle, and is a supporter of basketball, judo and other different sports, including the schools futsal league. It is worth mentioning that the company's futsal team has been champion of Georgia multiple times.



# Georgian Carriage Building Holding Remains at the Forefront



*The Georgian Carriage Building Holding - the largest holding in the Caucasus following historic manufacturing traditions, combines the Carriage Building Company, the Rustavi Steel Plant and the Electrical Car Repair Plant. It renders services to the railways of Georgia, Russia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Baltic states.*

The main activities of Georgian Carriage Building Holding are the construction of new freight wagons, electrical trains and locomotives, the overhaul of existing equipment, and the production of spare parts and nodes for the railway rolling stock.

At this year's Georgian Times Georgian National Business Awards the Carriage Building Company and Badri Tsilosani won awards for effective management and being a longstanding success story. Here GT interviews **Guram Ratiani**, Director General of the Carriage Building Company, regarding its achievements.

**The Carriage Building Company is a regular winner of these awards. What**

**did this pandemic year look like for your company? What challenges did you face and how did you overcome them?**

The pandemic year turned out to be rather challenging for both us and the rest of the business sector. Although production didn't stop for a single day, it became rather difficult to supply the factory with the necessary foreign materials and components for carriage production. The situation was complicated by a shortage of these materials creating a sudden increase in their prices.

However, the main purpose of the holding management has always been to properly address such challenges. We had to select new suppliers in the shortest period of time, and I believe we did this successfully.

Another challenge was to find new customers when a complete lockdown was declared almost all over the world. Our main buyers include foreign private companies. With all this in mind, were still managed to keep the factory operating as before.

From this perspective, we can evaluate the past pandemic year as full of challenges which were successfully overcome. “Something that does not kill us makes us stronger.”

**What kind of innovations will the company be offering in the near future?**

We are going to gradually abandon the production of freight cars with standard load capacity and m/3 capacity. We will be replacing them with new, innovative, increased load capacity cars. This process began two years ago, and our factory has already been able to obtain an international license for the construction of three innovative cars: a closed wagon, semi-wagon and wheat-carrying wagon. We are currently working on the development of other types of innovative wagon, and we plan to develop two additional types of wagons per year.

In a pandemic year, we decided to try our luck at the production of metal structures. We have made quite solid investments in this direction, and therefore expect a number of orders by the end of the year.



# Badagoni Winery - A Guarantee of Quality, Success and International Recognition for Georgian Wine



*Badagoni is an Ambassador of Georgia to more than 30 countries around the world. It produces the best quality wines from Georgian Grape varieties*

The year 2020 was full of challenges and risks, however the Badagoni team managed to continue working around the clock as usual. Despite the crisis, the company increased sales by 4 percent and maintained the job security of all employees.

Within the framework of the “Badagoni for Georgia” project the company has started producing disinfectant sprays. These have been donated free of charge to the Ministry of Health, State Emergency Situations Service, Tbilisi City Hall, Kakheti Region, The Georgian Orthodox Church, the Bar Association, the Border Service and so on.

At the 2021 Georgian National Business Awards Badagoni and Mari Giorgadze won awards for being an am-

bassador of Georgia abroad, protecting employees’ interests and having high levels of social responsibility. Here GT interviews Mari Giorgadze regarding the future plans of the company.

**Badagoni is again one of the winners at the Georgian Times Georgian National Business Awards. What was the pandemic year like for the company? What challenges have you overcome?**

We are very proud of the fact that Badagoni Winery has once again been recognised at the Georgian Times business awards. Being a leading wine-making company in the birth-

place of wine is a great responsibility, but also a great pleasure and pride. We perfectly understand that the wine we produce is the image of the country, so we introduce Georgia to the world with our wine.

Our country has an 8,000-year history of winemaking. History, traditions, locality, ancient Georgian vines, modern research and modern technologies together create the quality and sustainability of Badagoni wine.

2020 was full of challenges, which the Badagoni team addressed with its usual diligence and dedication. We even ended 2020 with a 4% increase

in sales compared to 2019.

**What are your future plans, and what innovations do you intend to offer your customers?**

In 2020, despite the pandemic, Badagoni offered its customers new Qvevri wines made in the historic 11th century cellars of the Alaverdi Monastery, which had been restored by the Badagoni company to revive the eight thousand-year-old traditions of pitcher winemaking. Qvevri versions of Kisi, Khikhvi and Saperavi are amongst the exclusive wines which have been added to our portfolio.

However we are constant-

ly working on new projects, and this year will be no exception. In 2021 we will offer our customers new a premium wine and premium chacha. We are always studying the needs of the global market and of our customers, and continually offer appropriately high quality products.

**What is the company’s corporate social responsibility package?**

For us, Corporate Social Responsibility means to produce the highest quality product and to create a safe, secure and pleasant working environment for our employees and take care of them. Today the company employs 600 people, and is well aware of the fact that these are 600 families, and we try to contribute to improving their lives.

The Badagoni company was the first to offer the full remuneration of the pension savings of its employees. We are also actively involved in various social support programmes, sponsorships and charities, but we don’t often talk about them. However we can announce that our sparkling wine Maestro has been created with the idea of donating a certain amount from each bottle sold to the foundation which buys instruments for the state orchestra.



Located on the central avenue of the capital, Tbilisi Marriott Hotel, which has a history of more than a century, returns with fully renovated conference facilities.

From now on, the hotel will host all types of business meetings, conferences or trainings in the newly renovated meeting rooms, following all the regulations and safety standards.

Marriott offers its loyal customers a complete package of conference services, including all the necessary technical equipment for fully or semi-hybrid conferences.

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 BADAGONI - MARI GIORGADZE	 GEORGIAN CARRIAGE BUILDING HOLDING - GURAM RATIANI	 GEORGIAN INDUSTRIAL GROUP - DAVIT BEZHUASHVILI	 GIANTI LOGISTICS - DAVID TUGHUSHI
 GURIELI - MIKHEIL CHKUASELI	 NCC - GEGI KELBAKIANI	 PSP PHARMA - VAZHA OKRLASHVILI	 TAM MANAGEMENT - PANTICO (VAZHA) TORDIA