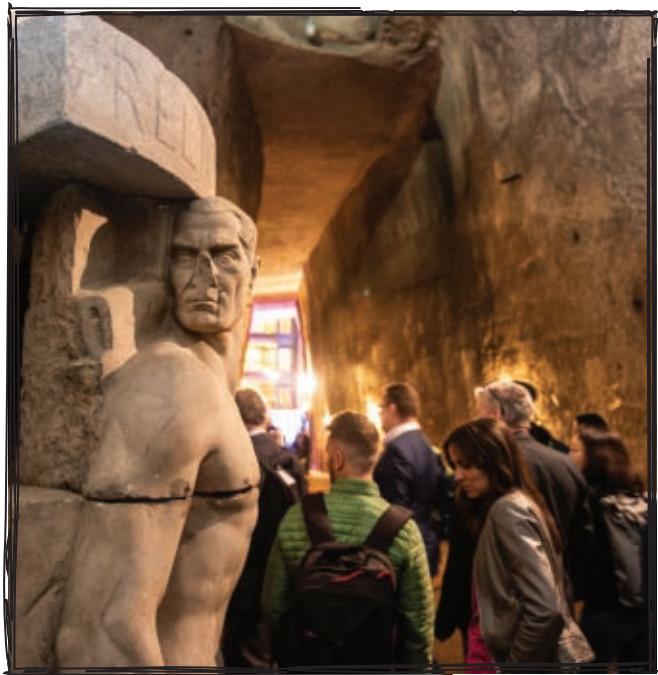
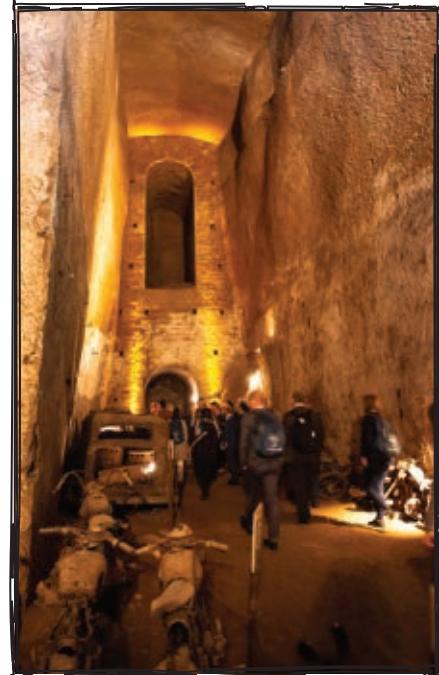




**‘THE OFF-SITE
EVENTS AT UNIQUE
LOCATIONS GAVE
[THIS] A STRONG
IDENTITY.’**

TUNNEL VISION

- World Tunnel Congress (WTC) 2019
- May 3-9
- Mostra D’Oltremare Congress Center in Naples, Italy, as well as off-site locations in and around the city
- 2,700 attendees



Rosangela Quietì

‘Offering personalized experiences [answers] client needs.’



Below Ground WTC spread out underground.

Deep Underneath Participants explored ancient and new tunnels.

The annual World Tunnel Congress gathers worldwide experts on design and construction of underground works, focusing on tunneling, engineering, and innovation. For their 2019 congress, congress organizers — the International Tunnelling and Underground Space Association (ITA-AITES) and the Italian Tunnelling Association (SIG) — tasked Professional Congress Organizer AIM Group International with adding disciplines previously considered unrelated to engineering. The result was an innovative program that also tapped into Italian culture and all that Naples has to offer as a host city.

AIM organized the event around two increasingly important trends — personalizing events and ensuring that they provide attendees with a sense of place. The PCO was able “to personalize the congress program by leveraging the local heritage and professional community,” Rosangela Quietì, managing director of AIM’s Congress Division, told *Convene* via email. “The off-site events at and technical visits to unique locations gave a strong identity to this edition [of the WTC].”

For the first time ever, some sessions focused on art, archaeology, and architecture, all of which are abundant in

Naples, and gave organizers a chance to connect attendees to unusual local experiences, many of which included tunneling, of the ancient and recently built varieties. Participants visited a Greek-Roman tunneling system, the underground sections of the Galleria Borbonica, and the Toledo Metro Station, which won an award in 2015 for its innovative use of underground space. Social occasions included working lunches at Pausilypon archaeological site and the Seiano Caves, and a historical train ride to the gala dinner at the Pietrarsa Railway Museum.

“Being able to manage the complex mechanism of large congresses and offering personalized experiences to delegates are the right answers,” Quietì said, “to the clients’ needs and participants’ expectations.”

—Curt Wagner

WTC BY THE NUMBERS

- 2,700 attendees
- 73 countries represented
- 2,500 square meters of exhibition area
- 230 exhibitors and sponsors
- 280,000 post views on social media
- 750 scientific papers presented
- 180 oral presentations

