

"Fast & Furious" Star Cody Walker Brings FuelFest to Arizona

Written by Melissa Larsen

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Update: FuelFest will now take place on Saturday, Sept. 19, at Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park. All purchases for the April 4 date will be honored for the new event day.

The temperatures won't be the only thing heating up the Valley this spring as Cody Walker, star of "Fast & Furious" and co-founder [FuelFest](#), brings the festival to Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park on April 4. FuelFest promises an action-packed lineup of celebrities (Walker and Tyrese Gibson are slated to appear), live music, food, drinks and art alongside a showcase of top custom, exotic, rare and exclusive cars and trucks. A portion of the proceeds benefits [Reach Out WorldWide](#) (ROWW), the nonprofit founded by Walker's brother, Paul. Here, Walker talks about why FuelFest will appeal to more than just car lovers and his passion to support ROWW.

What is FuelFest? Is it just for car lovers? FuelFest is an idea I came up with while hosting car shows to raise funds for ROWW, the disaster relief charity founded by my brother, Paul. I traveled to places like Japan, Australia, China and even Malaysia and the passion I witnessed was not just for cars, but for the charity aspect, the Walker family and, of course, our ties to "Fast and Furious." We were creating events that no one else could replicate and the fans were so incredibly supportive. Creating FuelFest is a way for me to continue to combine these passions in a way that has never been done before. Unlike many car shows, we don't just focus on one genre of vehicles. In fact, we don't even just focus on cars. Of course that's the primary purpose, but we also integrate art, music, celebrities, food and drink, etc. to really create that "festival" atmosphere that you just don't see at other car shows.

What brought you to Arizona for FuelFest's third year? The car culture in Arizona is amazing. The more time I spend out here the more I love it. There's so many car events going on and it's so diverse, but there's nothing like FuelFest. We found an amazing venue at Wildhorse Pass and decided to go for it!

What prompted your interest in automobiles? Was it something you grew up with? I've always been a fan of cars. When I was four years old, I got a Power Wheels army Jeep for Christmas, and I drove that car all over the place. As you can imagine, my oldest brother was and is my greatest inspiration. And like so many other aspects of my life, he heavily influenced my love of cars. The car obsession began when the "Fast and Furious" franchise was born and its success allowed Paul to acquire and enjoy cars that he always wanted but couldn't previously obtain. The franchise portrays characters that love cars, but Paul was the real deal. He really did love cars – on and off screen. By the time I was in high school, he had acquired a collection. In college, I remember going to his garages and taking his cars out for rides. He'd just throw keys at me. It was a blast. He was the one who taught me cars were meant to be driven, and price tags aren't what make cars cool. Sure he had some exotics in his collection, but he also had a Toyota Tundra.

What are your hopes for FuelFest in years to come? In 2018 we did one show, last year we did two, and we've already got at least four on the books for 2020. So we're growing really fast and the support we're receiving is absolutely incredible. My goal is to bring the show to fans around the world that are looking for an addition to the static car shows they're used to. As FuelFest grows, so does our ability to contribute to

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ROWW. We're bringing insane energy, creative brand integration, and VIP experiences you can't get at any other car shows. My goal at every show is to have a driving component. I want fans to smell rubber.

Proceeds benefit Reach Out WorldWide. Can you tell us about that nonprofit and why was this cause so important to your brother? As much as Paul loved cars, he loved helping people even more. Next to his daughter, one of Paul's proudest accomplishments was founding Reach Out WorldWide. He just had this genuine desire to help and to do something bigger than himself. ROWW gave him the opportunity to actually get on the ground and make a difference. When Paul passed, there was not a second of hesitation when I was asked to move down to LA to continue his legacy through ROWW. For the last almost six years I have worked to build this awesome organization that will carry out Paul's passion for helping others for years to come. Part of carrying on that legacy is the integration into events like FuelFest, where we can continue to spread the word to Paul's fans that may not otherwise know about the charity work he did behind the scenes.

Quickfire:

What is your dream car? Porsche GT3 RS (any generation).

What was your first car? a 1964 Chevy Nova Wagon that Paul got me. It was seafoam green and had a 350 crate motor dropped in it. It would over heat all the time during summer (was originally equipped with a 6 cylinder and the cooling was never upgraded.) A year later, he took it from me because he wanted to upgrade it the right way. I told him to leave it alone (he had too many project cars at the time) and I knew that meant I'd never see it again but he promised me I'd get it back. He gave me an Infiniti G35 to drive in the meantime before purchasing my own Toyota Tacoma. I never saw that Chevy Nova again. In fact, it's still in 100 pieces, and I'm not sure where all the parts are scattered at this point. I would love to put it back together one day, but sadly I'm not sure that will ever be possible.

Did you pass your driver's test on the first try? Of course, crushed it.

Do you name your cars? No.

What is your favorite racetrack in the world? That would have to be one of my local tracks that I frequent, ButtonWillow!