

Q & A with Cinco de Mario's Mario Lopez

Written by Lauren Grifol

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This past week we got the opportunity to interview the ultimate interviewer, Mario Lopez. Best known as the Extra TV host, iHeart Radio host and Slater from *Saved by the Bell*, Lopez updated us on his upcoming trip to the Valley—and boy are we excited! Being of Mexican descent and a huge family man, Lopez thought he would take his yearly Cinco de Mario radio bit and make it into a fun, family-friendly festival right here in Scottsdale (Cinco de Mario takes place May 5 at Scottsdale Civic Center Plaza from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.). Tacos, tequila and Mario Lopez—what else do you need to celebrate the ultimate celebration?



AFM: So, Mario, have you ever visited the Valley?

ML: Oh, I've been to the Phoenix/Scottsdale area many times. That's why I decided to do my Cinco de Mario party there. The weather is always great, the people are awesome, and they know how to party, and it's a very cool, hip town that is outside LA so I thought it was perfect.

AFM: How did the idea for Cinco de Mario spark?

ML: This is the first time we are actually going to do it as a festival. I have done it as a sort of fun and funny campaign around my radio show and my show, *Extra*. It was always just catchy and cool and then I thought, why don't we put it together as a taco and tequila festival and have some mariachi bands and make it a real thing. When thinking about a really great city to launch it I thought that nothing could be better than Scottsdale so that's where we are, and I am excited to be there and we are fortunate enough to have Cinco de Mayo land on a Saturday this year.

AFM: So, then, this is the first time you are hosting this party?

ML: Yes! This is the inaugural event. We have done it as a radio bit and teased about it on *Extra* for fun but this is the first time it is actually happening.

AFM: There will be a 'Saved by the Bell' lookalike contest at Cinco de Mario. Have you ever hosted one? If so, has there ever been a scary resemblance?

ML: This is actually my first time doing this as well; we wanted to encourage people to come out. However, every Halloween I see great replicas and resemblances and it seems like it is a lot of fun and I thought that people could get a kick out of this since they can now win cool prizes.

AFM: Growing up, did your family practice any Mexican traditions? If so, what is your favorite and have you practiced them with your kids?

ML: Yeah, the culture is important to me. I am first-generation American, and it is important to my kids. We are very traditional in a lot of ways. My wife is Italian so we try to represent both cultures. We have very family-oriented, we go to church and, of course, we cook the food. The best is tamale season during the holidays!

AFM: I saw the cutest clip of you and your daughter playing "Big Star Little Star." Have you done something like that since?

ML: My daughter and I had a blast, and we ended up winning. It was awesome, she was great and she was the youngest competitor. In addition, she is doing a lot; she is on "Elena of Avalor," she's going to be on this other Disney show called "Walk the Prank," she is presenting with me at the Emmy's and she does stuff on *Extra*. She likes to perform, and she told me one day that she wanted to do it, and I said 'OK'! So today I am taking her on *Ellen* with me. She's really into it. Oh, and by the way, NO it does NOT take me five hours to get ready. She's very

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dramatic and exaggerated. It takes me like 20 to 25 minutes to get ready.

AFM: I know you have a couple things in the works right now, but what's something new your fans can be expecting soon?

ML: Well, they can watch me on Extra every night, hear me on iHeart Radio every night on 'On with Mario,' hopefully everyone in the Phoenix/Scottsdale area will come to the Cinco de Mario event. It will be fun, and some other cool projects that I cannot talk about at the moment but there is some other stuff coming that I am really excited about. So be on the lookout!

AFM: I saw also that you are a big sports fan. Do you plan on going to any sporting events while you are in town?

ML: I actually got invited to throw out the first pitch for the Diamondbacks, but they are keeping me pretty busy so I am not going to be able to do that, but I would love to come back and do that next time.

For more information about Cinco de Mario and to purchase tickets, click [here](#).