

HIGH SPEED WEEKEND

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Intro and captions by Wally Cahill (Arizona's Motorsports Maniac)

Twice a year Avondale Arizona becomes the largest city in Arizona—due to the fact that the best race drivers on the planet converge at Phoenix International Raceway to compete for the Sprint Cup. The fall 2009 race was special for a lot of people, especially if your name was Jimmie Johnson or any of his fans. You see, Jimmie was in the history-making mode of winning his fourth consecutive Sprint Cup Championship, which had never been done before in the history of NASCAR.

With everyone's eyes trained on the #48 team, we thought it might be fun to take a peek behind the scenes of a typical NASCAR race weekend at PIR. Your correspondent has the privilege of doing video of all the great activities that make the PIR fan experience second to none on the NASCAR circuit. So we figured the best way to follow all the action was through the eyes of a man who eats, breathes and dreams in high gear with his foot to the floor.



Our race weekend starts on Thursday evening in the Octane Lounge, where we met up with Arizona Diamondbacks pitching hero Brandon Webb (far left) and Childress Racing driver Clint Bowyer (near left). The two had teamed up to support "Offspeed," a charity reception benefiting the NASCAR-themed Victory Junction and Webb's K Foundation.



Papa is in the house! John Schnatter (left), founder of Papa John's pizza, is not just a friend of Tony Stewart, he was on hand all weekend with the cool 1971 Z28 he actually used to deliver pizza as a high school student—a long-lost car he located and repurchased for \$250,000 last fall (see the November/December 2009 issue).



OCTANE AT PIR



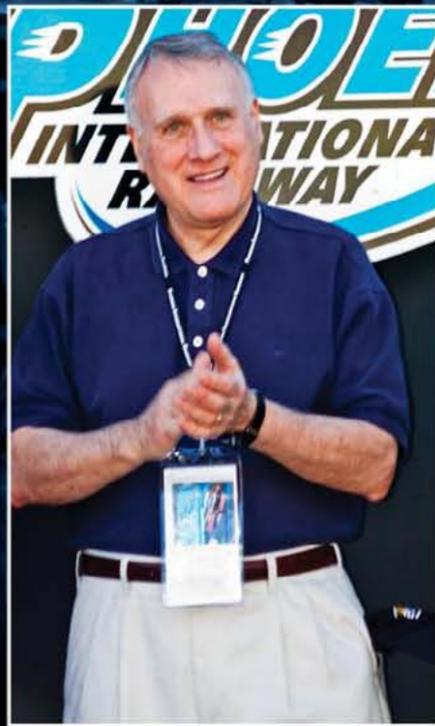
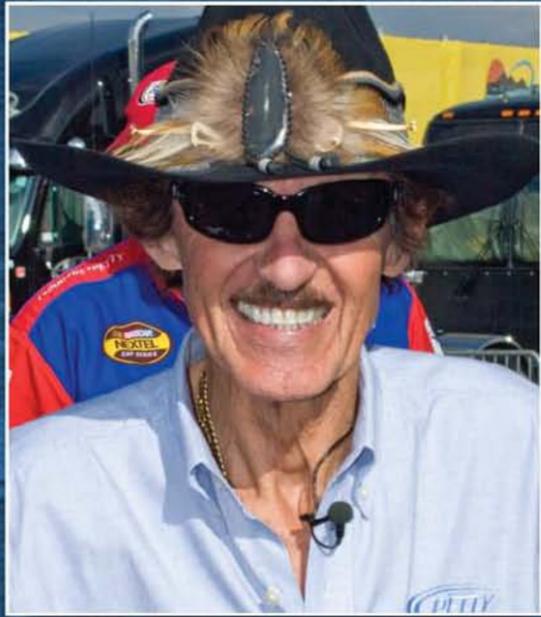
Phoenix International Raceway offers VIP treatment in Octane, their luxury lounge, a venue perhaps unmatched in NASCAR. A full-service concierge, sushi bar and other high-end dining options and enhanced by mountain sunsets from a private veranda. Octane includes the following amenities:

- One ticket per race day
- Unlimited fine foods and beverages
- Octane-exclusive driver appearances
- Live music
- Wine tastings
- Hand-rolled cigars
- Exclusive pit access
- A guided tour of the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series garage

This all-inclusive package is available for \$1900 per guest for the two-day April NASCAR event weekend, and for \$2400 per guest for the three-day November NASCAR event weekend. A season package, which includes access to Octane on all five days throughout the season, is \$4000. All guests of Octane must be at least 18 years of age.

Email the PIR Corporate Sales Team for more information at corporatesalesteam@phoenixinternationalraceway.com.

Photos courtesy Phoenix International Raceway [4]

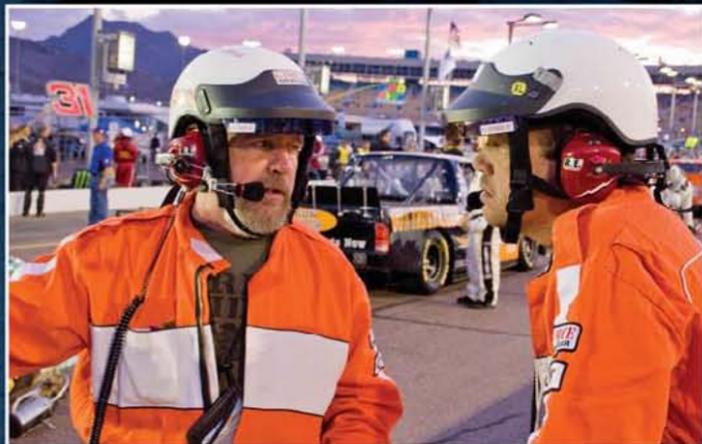


The event was graced by royalty on Friday when "The King" Richard Petty (above left and center) showed up to open his own go-cart race track, modeled after the fastest one-mile track on the NASCAR circuit. The King was his normal gracious self and showed the southern hospitality that has made him a fan favorite to this day.

Friday's activities included chasing down Juan Pablo Montoya (above right), one of the hottest drivers in the chase, or at least the most aggressive. Here we catch up with JPM as the Colombian-born driver is interviewed by Spanish-language media.

Arizona's US Senators John McCain and Jon Kyl (a NASCAR regular) were on hand to support the racing and the race fans.

KEEP RIGHT >>





There was fun for all as PIR's Speed Cantina hosted an '80s concert on Saturday evening (above). If you're too young to remember the '80s, this party could not only show you how people partied back then, it showed the funky styles of the era, too.

The Budweiser Roll-Bar was the place to catch drivers Kasey Kahne and Clint Bowyer (second row) as they did a Q&A session with race fans. One of the highlights of race weekend are all the activities offered in the Budweiser Roll-Bar. The Roll-Bar also offers a great out-door concert venue where Lifehouse rocked the race fans.

On Sunday, Race Day, everything gets very serious as there are a lot of things that happen before the green flag is waved. Miss Sprint Cup Monica Palumbo (second row) greets her fans, as TV Channel 3's Javier Soto, well prepared in his driver's suit, conducts pre-race interviews.

Pre-race activities and driver introductions (Tony Stewart and Mark Martin, third row) signal that the race is about ready to start. Wrestling great Sgt Slaughter, shown at left with Miss Phoenix Ursulline Okonkwo, was on hand—useful if anyone got out of line?

Jimmie Johnson and his wife Chandra—now carrying their first child—(left) celebrate in Victory Lane after the race.

