

The History of IRIE FM

When IRIE FM began test transmissions in July 1990 with a heavy bass line and rocking Reggae rhythms, there were many doubting Thomases who thought that a 24 hour Reggae music station could not work.

IRIE FM has changed the sound of Jamaican radio. The station officially went on air on August 1, 1990. Reggae in the morning, Reggae in the evening, Reggae in the night was the cry. Critics said it was impossible to sustain a 24-hour Reggae music station. In fact, so strong was the impact, it proved that this format was something the Jamaican public yearned for. The 'little station that could' got all media houses in Jamaica to stand up and take note. The 'nay-sayers' did not count on the strength of 40 years worth of rich, pulsating Jamaican music.

IRIE FM had 'reggaelutionised' the airwaves with its Reggae format. Never before has Jamaica and her people been exposed to Jamaican culture and music in the way IRIE FM has done it. IRIE FM has developed a personal relationship with its listeners, unprecedented in Jamaican media; as the acronym states Innovative Radio Inspiring Everyone. And so, the greatest love story in Jamaican radio began and has become a growing force. In no time, IRIE FM carved out a special niche and endeared a large, loyal audience, becoming the people's number one radio station.

IRIE FM has arguably presented more fun, topical, current, controversial and relevant issues, than anyone else in the industry. The radio station has become more than just the Mecca of Reggae music and Jamaican culture. It is the home of the hottest group of announcers and selectors assembled in Jamaica.

IRIE FM is to Reggae music and Jamaican culture what MTV is to America and rock/pop music. This station also has the reputation of being first with dependable, non-aligned news and sports, information on current affairs, community affairs and the music industry. Reggae Bash, which showcased Reggae's brightest talents at our own White River Reggae Park, in Ocho Rios on the north coast, was an IRIE FM production. Reggae Bash was the most popular series of live Reggae shows in Jamaica, between 1990 and 2001.

Technology and IRIE FM has been a wonderful marriage, boasting state of the art digital studios and production facilities. In fact, IRIE FM is reputed to have the most advanced facilities in the Caribbean. The fully-loaded website, with stream, www.iriefm.net has taken the world by storm. Listeners from Australia to Switzerland, from Seattle to Denmark are tuning in to IRIE FM. Thousands of people log on to www.iriefm.net as part of their daily routine. The website has clearly paved the way to become a reggae portal of great substance.

IRIE FM has pioneered new and different ways with the cellular phone, to promote its commanding presence. The station now offers select ringtones and picture logo for cell phones in Jamaica. Another frontier blazed by the 'people's' radio station. IRIE FM has also been the launching pad for some of the industry's most successful acts, like Buju Banton, Sizzla, Tarrus Riley, Etana, Beenie Man, not to mention hosting some of the world's most influential opinion leaders such as Louis Farrakhan, Winnie Mandela and Maya Angelou, to name a few. IRIE FM has truly become the heartbeat of Jamaica, promoting Reggae music and Jamaican culture with no apologies!