



CHICAGO  
**ARCHITECTURE**  
CENTER

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**Visuals:**

Photos/video available [here](#)

**Chicago Architecture Center River Cruise aboard Chicago's First Lady  
kicks off 30<sup>th</sup> season March 31**

*2023 season offers new foreign language translation for tour guests - Chicago's only  
architecture River Cruise with this accessible feature*

**CHICAGO**, March 28, 2023 – Recognized two years in a row as one of the best boat tours in North America (*USA Today Readers' Choice 2022 Awards*), the official [Chicago Architecture Center \(CAC\) River Cruise aboard Chicago's First Lady](#) kicks off its 2023 season on Friday, March 31. This year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the tour, operated in partnership by Chicago's First Lady Cruises and the Chicago Architecture Center (CAC). The CAC River Cruise aboard Chicago's First Lady is the only cruise narrated by CAC-certified volunteer docents who thrill guests with their wealth of knowledge about Chicago's "canyon of architecture."

Lauded as a "must-do" activity by locals and tourists alike, the 90-minute CAC River Cruise aboard Chicago's First Lady glides down all three branches of the Chicago River, providing guests with an unobstructed, open-air, 360-degree view of the city's wide variety of architectural styles, including art deco, neoclassicism, mid-century modernism and postmodernism. CAC-certified volunteer docents share the fascinating stories of more than 50 buildings and 13 bascule bridges along the river, and backstories of some of the iconic figures responsible for them.

To further enhance accessibility for guests, the CAC River Cruise aboard Chicago's First Lady will provide complimentary language translation services for the first time—making it the only Chicago architecture River Cruise to offer this service. Guests will have the opportunity to listen to a pre-recorded tour narration on their smartphone in four different languages, including Spanish, French, Japanese and Korean. The translation service is accessible by downloading a free app that connects

directly to a special wi-fi network onboard. The narration is triggered based on the location of the vessel at that time in the tour's route, which will help ensure those who use the technology have the same experience as others listening to live narration.

“For 30 years, we have been committed to providing an innovative experience for Chicagoland residents and tourists alike,” said **Chicago's First Lady Cruises President and Chief Marketing Officer Bob Agra, III**. “The decision to bring together two major cultural and tourism powerhouses 30 years ago enabled us to expand Chicago's cultural footprint further than we could have imagined. The Chicago Architecture Center trains and certifies their volunteer docents to the same high standard we apply to every aspect of Chicago's First Lady's vessels and operations, the result being a truly remarkable and unique experience that is unmatched by any other river cruise in the city. Simply put, there is no better way to hear the stories of the people who designed and built our city and no better venue to enjoy those stories.”

Since 1993, more than 100 CAC-certified volunteer veteran docents have lent their expertise and unique perspectives to guests on the popular CAC River Cruise. They undergo nearly 100 hours to become certified, plus an additional 12 weeks of study about Chicago's architecture. Docents hail from across the city with a variety of personal and professional backgrounds. Some notable docents have included Geoffrey Baer and Dr. Allison Arwady.

“It's an honor to continue our longstanding partnership with Chicago's First Lady after 30 years—this year with an exciting new feature that will make the tour more accessible in other languages,” said **Eleanor Esser Gorski, President and CEO of the Chicago Architecture Center**. “Our mission at the CAC is to inspire people to discover how design has shaped our history and influences the way we live today. The Chicago Architecture Center's expert docent volunteers share fascinating stories that make Chicago's legacy of architecture exciting for everyone who boards the boat.”

A portion of proceeds from each CAC River Cruise ticket supports the CAC's nonprofit educational mission. In pursuit of the CAC's mission to inspire people to discover why design matters, the CAC produces programs for children, students, teens and families. Teen Saturday Studio and Girls Build! programs proactively advance diversity, inclusion and representation in STEM fields and ACED careers, while field trips, award-winning publications and online tools expand the CAC's reach into communities across and beyond Chicagoland.

As a fourth-generation family-owned and operated company, Chicago's First Lady Cruises celebrates other local businesses by offering guests the opportunity to purchase locally-based food and drinks aboard its tours, from Revolution Brewing, Silverland Bakery and Open Water.

## **Boarding and Ticket Information**

The CAC River Cruise aboard Chicago's First Lady departs from the Michigan Avenue Bridge at Wacker Drive on Chicago's Riverwalk just three blocks north of Millennium Park. Daily tours of the CAC River Cruise aboard Chicago's First Lady begin Friday, March 31.

Tickets start at \$53.85 and can be purchased online or in-person at the ticket booth located on the Riverwalk. Passengers can take advantage of visiting the award-winning [Chicago Architecture Center](#) for an additional \$5 and have seven days to visit the Center after their cruise date. Priority boarding tickets are also available and include an exclusive early boarding period, the option to skip the queue during general boarding, and CAC admission.

For additional information on the 2023 season, tickets, boarding location, parking and other details, please visit [CruiseChicago.com](https://www.cruisechicago.com).

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### **About Chicago's First Lady Cruises**

*Located on Chicago's vibrant Riverwalk, Chicago's First Lady Cruises is a critically-acclaimed Chicago experience that connects Chicago locals and visitors alike to the city's rich architectural history and breathtaking beauty through the official Chicago Architecture Center River Cruise and as a first-class venue for private events. This year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Chicago Architecture Center River Cruise. The tour was named the "#1 Boat Tour in North America" by USA Today's 10 Best in 2021. For 87 years, Chicago's First Lady Cruises and its sister company, Mercury, Chicago's Skyline Cruiseline, have been a cornerstone of Chicago's Riverwalk. Both cruiselines are fourth-generation family-owned and operated, and committed to enviro-friendly practices for continued sustainability. Seven of Chicago's First Lady Cruises luxury yachts are available for private charter cruising and special events, complete with catering and beverage options for groups of two to 250 people. All vessels are operated by a U.S. Coast Guard-licensed captain and crew. For more information and for cruise schedules, visit [CruiseChicago.com](https://www.cruisechicago.com) or call 847-358-1330.*

### **About the Chicago Architecture Center**

*The Chicago Architecture Center (CAC) is a nonprofit organization founded in 1966, dedicated to inspiring people to discover why design matters. A national leader in architecture and design education, the CAC offers tours, programs, exhibitions, and more that are part of a dynamic journey of lifelong learning.*

*Opened to the public in 2018, its riverfront location is in the heart of the city, where Michigan Avenue meets the Chicago River, featuring nearly 10,000 square feet of exhibition space with views of a century of iconic skyscrapers.*

*Through partnerships with schools and youth-serving organizations, the CAC reaches approximately 5,000 K-12 students annually, while teacher workshops provide educators with tools and resources they need to advance STEM curricula in their classrooms. Committed to serving under-represented communities in construction, engineering, and design professions, the CAC offers many of its education programs—and all its programs for teens—at no cost to participants. CAC programs for adults and members include talks with acclaimed authors and practicing architects, in-depth presentations on issues and trends in urbanism, and classes unlocking subjects related to the built environment.*

*Proceeds from programs, tours, and the CAC Design Store, as well as from grants, sponsorships, and donations, support its educational mission. Visit [architecture.org](https://www.architecture.org) to learn more and follow @chiarchitecture and #chiarchitecture on social media.*