



2019 Press Kit

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CHICAGO
ARCHITECTURE
CENTER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Chicago Architecture Foundation Center River Cruise
aboard Chicago's First Lady Launches 2019 Season on March 30**

Number one rated tour in Chicago announces 2019 schedule departing from the Chicago Riverwalk

CHICAGO, March 20, 2019 – [Chicago's First Lady Cruises](#) and the [Chicago Architecture Center](#) (CAC) have announced the 2019 schedule for Chicago's #1 rated tour: [Chicago Architecture Foundation Center \(CAFC\) River Cruise aboard Chicago's First Lady](#). The world-renowned tour, which begins daily departures on Saturday, March 30, has inspired both Chicagoland residents and visitors with the city's rich architectural history for decades.

Ranked the #1 tour in Chicago based on [TripAdvisor user reviews](#), the CAFC River Cruise is the most in-depth, authentic architecture river cruise available and is the only one led by CAC-certified volunteer docents, who share the secrets and stories behind more than 50 significant buildings and the legendary architects who created them, educating guests about the city's wide variety of architectural styles like neo-classical, art deco, postmodernism and more. This year marks the 26th anniversary of the partnership between the CAC and Chicago's First Lady Cruises.

The 90-minute tour, which glides across all three branches of the Chicago River, is lauded as the best way to see world-famous architecture in Chicago, the birthplace of the skyscraper, with panoramic views that simply cannot be seen by foot. In 2018, Reader's Digest named the tour one of the top seven most breathtaking river cruises around the world.

Additional CAFC River Cruise offerings include the Capture Chicago Photography Cruise on summer Saturdays and Sundays, which is designed with photographers in mind by pausing three times throughout, allowing guests to capture some of Chicago's finest architectural wonders in all their detailed, dazzling glory. The Twilight River Cruise, which runs summer Sundays through Fridays, offers guests stunning views of Chicago against the backdrop of a colorful, serene sunset.

In fall 2018, the CAC opened its new home at 111 East Wacker Drive, just above the docking area of the CAFC River Cruise, thus creating "Chicago's architecture corner," where all design discoveries begin. Guests can learn more about the city's rich architectural history by choosing the Combination ticket and adding \$5 to their cruise admission to discover the CAC's fascinating exhibits and supersized scale skyscraper models.

All cruises depart from the southeast corner of Michigan Avenue and Wacker Drive and offer unparalleled, Instagram-worthy photo opportunities. Guests enjoy the experience with comfortable open-air top deck seating, with 360-degree views of Chicago's glittering skyscrapers, and include climate controlled interior salons with large oblong windows, upscale restrooms and full-service bars. Chicago's First Lady Cruises' fleet of six [passenger yachts](#), recently named by [Illinois Meetings + Events](#) readers as a top Illinois venue on the water, also offers a memorable setting for private weddings, corporate events and other special occasions for groups of two to 250.

CAFC River Cruise times vary throughout the season:

- The opening schedule lasts from March 30 – April 11 and offers cruises from Monday – Sunday at 10 a.m., 12 p.m., 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.
- Early spring cruises run daily from April 12 - May 2 and depart at 10 a.m., 12 p.m., 1 p.m., 2 p.m., 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. Additional cruises depart at 11 a.m. on Thursday – Sunday and 5 p.m. on Friday – Sunday.
- Late spring cruises run daily from May 3 - May 16 and depart every hour from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Additional cruises depart on Thursday at 5 p.m. and Friday – Sunday at 9:30 a.m. 11:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m. and 5 p.m.
- Summer cruises run daily May 17 - Oct. 14 and depart Monday – Thursday at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 12 p.m., 1 p.m., 2 p.m., 3 p.m., 4 p.m., 5:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m. and every half hour from 9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m., 5 and 5:30 p.m. Friday - Sunday. Additional cruises depart at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, 1:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. on Monday and Thursday, 9 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday, and 7:30 p.m. on Friday and Sunday.
 - The Capture Chicago Photography Cruise runs on Saturday and Sundays only at 9:00 a.m.
 - Twilight Cruise runs at 7:30 p.m. Sunday – Friday only.
- Early fall cruises run daily Oct. 15 – Nov. 3 and depart at 10 a.m., 12 p.m., 1 p.m., 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. with additional cruises Friday – Sunday at 11 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 4 p.m., 5 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.
- Late fall cruises run daily from Nov. 4 – Nov 24 and depart at 10 a.m., 12 p.m., 2 p.m. and 4 p.m., with additional cruises departing at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. on Friday – Sunday.

Chicago Architecture Center:

- Chicago Architecture Center exhibits are open every day from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

For more information on Chicago's First Lady Cruises or the Chicago Architecture Center please visit [CruiseChicago.com](#) or [Architecture.org/cruise](#).

Boarding Location and Details

The CAFC River Cruise aboard Chicago's First Lady departs from the southeast corner of the Michigan Avenue Bridge at Wacker Drive just three blocks north of Millennium Park. A blue awning marks the entrance to the stairway leading to the Chicago Riverwalk docking area. Discounted self-park is located at 111 East Wacker Drive. Guests with limited mobility may find an ADA ramp located at State Street and Wacker Drive, and limited mobility drop-off directions can be found at [CruiseChicago.com](#).

Ticket Information

Tickets are \$44.48 plus tax for the daytime river cruise and Capture Chicago Photography Cruise, and \$49.21 plus tax for the Twilight River Cruise. A portion of each ticket sale supports CAC's educational mission.

Guests can choose the Chicago Architecture Center Combination ticket by adding \$5 to their cruise admission at time of purchase for exclusive access to the Chicago Architecture Center, saving \$7 off full-priced

admission. Guests may visit the Chicago Architecture Center any time within 7-days following their cruise. Standalone tickets for the Chicago Architecture Center are \$12 for adults, \$8 for Student (with ID), free for children under five.

Tickets can be obtained the following ways:

- bypassing the box office with e-ticket purchases at [ticketmaster.com/rivercruise](https://www.ticketmaster.com/rivercruise) (highly recommended option due to tour popularity)
- in-person at Chicago's First Lady Cruises' dockside box office, 112 E. Wacker Dr., Riverwalk level
- in-person at Chicago Architecture Center's box office, 111 East Wacker Drive - 1 block east of Michigan Avenue
 - by phone at 1-800-982-2787 (within the U.S.) or 011-949-333-4001 (outside the U.S.)

Groups of 10 or more may reserve in advance by contacting the Group Sales Department at groupstours@architecture.org or by calling 312-322-1131. Chicago's First Lady Cruises' fleet of yachts may be chartered on a private basis complete with custom food, beverage and a docent-led tour. More information can be found at [CruiseChicago.com](https://www.cruisechicago.com) or by calling 847-358-1330.

Visuals

High-resolution photos and broll of the CAFC River Cruise can be found here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/q7hdob2rkst03ei/AAA51IXS5OOvjwbZ9Q8BZSFOa?dl=0>

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/5pashnrbtolk0ac/Chicago%20Architecture%20Foundation%20Center%20River%20Cruise%202018.mp4?dl=0>

High-resolution photos of the CAC can be found here:

<https://caf.box.com/s/txbos6hv01tsro3fakajcmanrz5k3gg3>

High-resolution photos of Chicago's First Lady Cruises' private charters can be found here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/uq3ko6hjb1cuoll/AACuQEJYv2wsbzu81JCtFfd-a?dl=0>

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About Chicago's First Lady Cruises

Docked on Chicago's vibrant Riverwalk, Chicago's First Lady Cruises is a critically-acclaimed Chicago experience that connects Chicagoland residents and visitors alike to the city's rich history and breathtaking beauty through the official Chicago Architecture Foundation Center River Cruise and as a first-class venue for private events. For more than 80 years, Chicago's First Lady Cruises and its sister company, Mercury, Chicago's Skyline Cruiseline, have been a cornerstone of Chicago's vibrant Riverwalk. Both cruise lines are fourth-generation family-owned and operated, and committed to enviro-friendly practices for continued sustainability. All six of Chicago's First Lady Cruises luxury yachts are available for private charter cruising and special events. For more information and for cruise schedules, visit [CruiseChicago.com](https://www.cruisechicago.com) or call 847-358-1330.

About CAC

The Chicago Architecture Center (CAC), formerly the Chicago Architecture Foundation (CAF), is a nonprofit organization dedicated to inspiring people to discover why design matters. As an education leader in architecture and design, The CAC is a hub for everything architecture in Chicago offering tours, programs, exhibitions, field trips, curricula and online tools that are part of a dynamic learning journey for all ages. Proceeds from CAC's tours and store, as well as grants, sponsorships and donations, support this educational mission. For more information, visit www.architecture.org.

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Chicago's First Lady Cruises 2019 Fact Sheet

About Chicago's First Lady Cruises

- This year marks the 26th anniversary of Chicago's First Lady Cruises and the Chicago Architecture Center (CAC)'s – formerly known as the Chicago Architecture Foundation (CAF) – partnership connecting Chicago locals and visitors to the city's rich architectural history through the official Chicago Architecture Foundation Center River Cruise aboard Chicago's First Lady.
- The CAFC River Cruise aboard Chicago's First Lady is the #1 ranked tour in Chicago based on TripAdvisor user reviews.
- Guests often praise the cruise as the best way to see Chicago's world-famous skyscrapers in their entirety and at angles that cannot be seen by foot.
- The 90-minute boat cruise is the most authentic and in-depth architecture river tour available. They include interpretations by passionate CAC-certified volunteer docents of more than 50 buildings along the Chicago River, representing a wide variety of architectural styles that showcase the city's architectural significance.
- CAC-certified docents undergo nearly 100 hours of rigorous training on Chicago architecture through the CAC.
- Guests can continue learning about the city's rich architectural history by choosing the Combination ticket and adding an additional \$5 to their cruise admission to visit the renowned Chicago Architecture Center and get the most complete architecture experience.
- The Twilight River Cruise, which occurs at sunset, offers guests the same stunning views of Chicago as the daytime cruise experience but in a dim-lit, serene atmosphere.
- The Capture Chicago Photography Cruise is a docent-led tour designed for photographers by including three pauses throughout the cruise for optimal opportunity to capture some of the city's finest architectural marvels.
- Chicago's First Lady Cruises' Sunrise Stretch Yoga Cruise welcomes skilled and novice yogis alike aboard for a rejuvenating yoga session under the morning sun. Cruises include a 45-minute session led by a certified instructor followed by a 15-minute boat ride to soak up the picturesque views.
- Tours include views of iconic buildings including: Tribune Tower, Wrigley Building, Marina City, Merchandise Mart, Civic Opera House and more.
- Each vessel offers comfortable open-air seating with 360-degree skyline views and climate controlled interior salons with large oblong windows, upscale restrooms and full-service bars.

Pricing and location

- Tours depart from Michigan Avenue on the Chicago Riverwalk at the dock with the blue awning (112 E. Wacker Dr.), just three blocks north of Millennium Park.
- The dock is located conveniently near the Chicago Architecture Center (111 E. Wacker Dr.), a brand-new world-class gateway connecting visitors and locals with all things Chicago architecture.
- Discount parking available across the street at 111 E. Wacker Dr.

- Advance tickets are recommended due to tour popularity.
- Tickets may be purchased at [Ticketmaster.com/rivercruise](https://www.ticketmaster.com/rivercruise) or at the dockside ticket office at 112 E. Wacker Dr. Prices are \$44.48 plus applicable taxes for the daytime river cruise and Capture Chicago Photography Cruise, and \$49.21 plus applicable taxes for the Twilight River Cruise.
- A portion of each cruise ticket supports architecture education and exhibits provided by the CAC.
- Guests can continue their architectural journey by building an additional \$5 into their cruise admission for access to the renowned Chicago Architecture Center.

Company history and commitment

- Chicago's First Lady Cruises is a fourth-generation family-owned passenger vessel company and its sister company, Mercury, Chicago's Skyline Cruiseline, has been in operation for more than 80 years.
- Both companies are committed to protecting Chicago's waterways by using enviro-friendly practices for continued sustainability.
- Both companies celebrate local businesses by selling Chicago-based food and beverages like Mama's Nuts and Revolution Brewing craft beverages aboard its tours.
- Both companies share a fleet of eight custom-built passenger vessels that are inspected annually by the U.S. Coast Guard and undergo required stability testing to ensure all of their passengers and crew are safe during their waterway experience.
- The safety of Chicago's First Lady Cruises' passengers and crew is a number one priority.
- The licensed captains and crew members go through a weekly drilling program that goes above and behind the standards set by the USCG.

About charter events

- Chicago's First Lady Cruises offers its fleet of yachts for private event rentals, including weddings, corporate events and more, and partners exclusively with celebrated Chicago-based caterers for a variety of customized food and beverage menus.
- Guests are able to host private events for groups of two to 250 passengers aboard Chicago's First Lady Cruises' fleet of six passenger yachts and may choose to cruise along the Chicago River, Lake Michigan or both.
- Yachts range in size and features, including options for open-air upper decks, full-service bars, climate-controlled salons, upscale marble and granite restrooms, and a private boat.



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Mercury, Chicago's Skyline Cruiseline Celebrates its 84th Season Cruising Chicago's Waterways

Chicago's premiere sightseeing experience announces season schedule filled with epic fun for all ages starting April 26

CHICAGO, April 18, 2019— From summer-time cruises with dogs, to Instagram-worthy views of the Chicago River and Lake Michigan, [Mercury, Chicago's Skyline Cruiseline](#) launches its 84th season on Friday, April 26 with a schedule full of fun, special-themed daytime and evening cruises and tours for all ages. Known for lively tour guide narrations, Mercury Cruises offers tourists and Chicagoland residents front row seats to the city's breathtaking skyline, historic landmarks and modern marvels.

"As one of the first permanent tenants of the Riverwalk, we're honored to continue providing Chicago families and visitors epic fun as they experience Chicago's dazzling skyline and make lasting memories with their families and friends," said Bob Agra III, Mercury Cruises' vice president.

Mercury Cruises' wide-ranging route helps guests plan the remainder of their Chicago trip by orienting themselves to the city and seeing other must-visit attractions. Tours feature unparalleled views of iconic landmarks and skyscrapers – from the Willis Tower and Marina City to the John Hancock Building and Museum Campus – and are led by professionally trained tour guides that offer a local's take on Chicago, informing guests about the city's best dining options, sports and entertainment destinations and more that will help guests maximize their time in the city.

Mercury Cruises offers the following daytime and evening tours for the 2019 season. For a complete schedule and to purchase advance tickets, visit [MercuryCruises.com](#).

Urban Adventure Cruise ®

Mercury Cruises' signature tour dazzles guests with stunning views of legendary skyscrapers and bridges while gliding along the main branch of the Chicago River, through the Chicago Harbor Lock and into the downtown harbor of Lake Michigan. The 90-minute narrated cruise is perfect for families of all ages and offers a picture-perfect view of the famous Chicago skyline.

- April 26 – Oct. 14: Departs daily at 10:15 a.m.; 12:15 p.m.; 2:15 p.m.; 4:15 p.m. and 6:15 p.m.
- \$36 for adults; \$15 for kids under 15; free for children under five.

CHICAGO BY NIGHT! Cruise

Guests will be captivated by the sparkling skyline and Buckingham Fountain's dazzling light display on this 90-minute, river and lakefront evening cruise with live commentary. Wave your complimentary "neon light wand" as you feel the night breezes and see Chicago's skyline transformed into a glittering jewel. Mercury Cruises' boats also have beer, wine and soft drinks available to complement the entire family's voyage.

- May 24 – Aug. 30: Departs at 8:15 p.m. (excludes Wednesdays and Saturdays).
- Sept. 6 – Oct. 11: Departs at 8:15 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays only.
- \$38 for adults; \$16 for kids under 15; free for children under five.
- Special Offer: Wine Down with any Monday, Tuesday and Thursday evening (through Aug. 29) or any Friday evening (Sept. 6 - Oct.11) and enjoy a special date night offer: two tickets + a bottle of wine to share for \$65 (retail \$102)!

3D Fireworks Cruise

Cruise on to Lake Michigan for a two-hour evening getaway that begins with a lakefront tour of the skyline and concludes with the most unique way to see Chicago's Wednesday and Saturday night fireworks – through the lens of "3D" glasses.

- May 29 – Aug. 28: Departs Wednesdays at 8:15 p.m.
- May 25 – Aug. 31: Departs Saturdays at 9:00 p.m.
- \$40 for adults; \$16 for kids under 15; free for children under five.

Mercury's Canine Cruise

A fan favorite, pooches and their people embark on a 90-minute getaway with plenty of spacious outdoor seating, water bowls and newspaper-lined restrooms. The canine-centric cruise includes a narrated tour of the city's famous skyline and dog-friendly sites. Leashes are required on this cruise. Guests receive a Chicago dog-friendly map and guide at the conclusion of the tour.

- July 6 – Oct. 7: Departs at 10:15 a.m. on Saturdays and Sundays only.
- \$36 for adults; \$15 for kids under 15; \$8 for dogs; free for children under five.
- Pet owners can also bring their dogs aboard for two Halloween Canine Cruises departing at 10:15 a.m. on Oct. 6 and 7.

Science Is Fun Cruise

School, summer camp and scout groups can reserve this 90-minute science-themed cruise that gives children a memorable, educational experience through hands-on, interactive science experiments and sweeping skyline views. Led by Professor Mercury, the cruise turns kids into scientists for the day and educates them about the Chicago River, Lake Michigan, how a skyscraper is built and the invasive species that threaten city waters.

- April 26 – Oct. 14: Tour is available for groups only and scheduled by request. Individual tickets are not offered. For group reservations and additional information, please contact 312-332-1368 or grouptours@mercurycruises.com.

Boarding Location

Mercury Cruises departs from Chicago's Riverwalk at Michigan Avenue and Wacker Drive. Look for the street-level blue awning at the southeast corner of the Michigan Avenue Bridge and follow the stairs down to the Riverwalk. Discounted parking with validation is located at 111 E. Wacker Dr.

Tour Tickets

Guests may purchase tickets in the following ways:

- Online at MercuryCruises.com
- At the Mercury Cruises ticket window, 112 E. Wacker Dr., Riverwalk level, beginning April 26
- For groups of 20 or more, please call 312-332-1368 or email grouptours@mercurycruises.com for special rates and additional information

Visuals

High-resolution photos of Mercury Cruises' tours can be found here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/mxe4humcycw7y9r/AACAAqy5NTkiAzlqDT3Y8Amga?dl=0>

Video of Mercury Cruises' tour offerings can be found here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/096hn4wknjyikkg/Mercury%20Cruises%202018.mp4?dl=0>

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About Mercury, Chicago's Skyline Cruiseline

Mercury, Chicago's Skyline Cruiseline, brings Chicago's stunning views and vibrant culture to life through a variety of fun, narrated family-friendly cruises and special tours for both visitors and Chicagoland residents. A cornerstone of the city's Riverwalk for more than 80 years, Mercury Cruises is a fourth-generation owned and operated cruise line. It is also the sister company of Chicago's First Lady Cruises, an authentic tourism experience that explores the city's rich architectural history through the official Chicago Architecture Foundation Center River Cruise. Both cruise lines are committed to fueling their vessels with only clean energy sources. All vessels are operated by a U.S. Coast Guard-licensed captain and crew. For more information on Mercury Cruises, visit MercuryCruises.com or call 312-332-1353.



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Mercury, Chicago's Skyline Cruiseline 2019 Fact Sheet

About Mercury, Chicago's Skyline Cruiseline

- Mercury, Chicago's Skyline Cruiseline offers guests a front row seat to the city's breathtaking skyline, historic landmarks and modern marvels through a variety of fun, special themed cruises and tours for all ages.
- Notable landmarks seen on the tours include the Willis Tower, Aon Center, Marina City, John Hancock Building and the Museum Campus. Cruises zip across the Chicago River and Lake Michigan, offering 360-degree picture-perfect views of the city's skyline.
- Entertaining narrated cruises are 90-minutes to 2-hours and are offered during daytime and evening hours.
- The cruises' wide-ranging route helps guests plan the remainder of their Chicago trip by orienting themselves to the city and seeing other must-visit attractions.
- Mercury Cruises' tours:
 - The **Urban Adventure Cruise**®, Mercury Cruises' signature tour, dazzles guests with stunning views of iconic skyscrapers and bridges while gliding along the main branch of the Chicago River, through the Chicago River Lock and into the downtown harbor of Lake Michigan. The 90-minute narrated cruise is perfect for families of all ages and offers a picture-perfect postcard view of the famous Chicago skyline.
 - The **CHICAGO BY NIGHT! Cruise** captivates guests with views of the city's sparkling skyline, cool night breezes and complimentary neon light wands. Mercury Cruises' boats also offer soft drinks and adult beverages to compliment the voyage, making the cruise a night to remember for couples or friends.
 - The **3D Fireworks Cruise** gives cruisers a unique view of Chicago's Wednesday and Saturday night fireworks through the lens of "3D" holographic glasses. Cruise on to Lake Michigan for a getaway under bursts of color.
 - The **Canine Cruise** turns Mercury Cruises into a pooch's haven and an owner's adventurous escape with their best friend.
 - The **Science is Fun Cruise** is a special tour available for school, summer camp and scout groups that gives children a fun and educational experience through hands-on, interactive science experiments and sweeping skyline views.

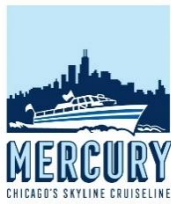
Pricing and location

- Tours depart from Michigan Avenue on the Chicago Riverwalk at the dock with the blue awning (112 E. Wacker Dr.), just 3-blocks north of Millennium Park.
- Discount parking available at 111 E. Wacker Dr.

- Tickets may be purchased at [MercuryCruises.com](https://www.mercurycruises.com) or at the dockside ticket office at 112 E. Wacker Dr.
 - **Urban Adventure Cruise** @: \$36 for adults; \$15 for kids under 15; free for children under five.
 - **Chicago By Night Cruise**: \$38 for adults; \$16 for kids under 15; free for children under five.
 - Weekly date night wine special available on Thursday and Friday nights, which includes two tickets and a bottle of wine for \$60.
 - **3D Fireworks Cruise**: \$40 for adults; \$16 for kids under 15; free for children under five.
 - **Mercury's Canine Cruise**: \$36 for adults; \$15 for kids under 15; \$8 for dogs; free for children under five.
 - **Science is Fun Cruise**: For reservations and additional information, please contact 312-332-1368 or group tours@mercurycruises.com.
- Children under five years of age ride free aboard all cruises.

Company history and commitment

- Mercury, Chicago's Skyline Cruiseline is a fourth-generation family-owned and operated company for more than 80 years. The company was founded by Portuguese immigrant Arthur Agra and his wife Myrtle in the 1930s and remains the city's longest contiguous-running sightseeing boat company.
- Mercury Cruises is the sister company of Chicago's First Lady Cruises, which operates the official Chicago Architecture Foundation Center River Cruise aboard Chicago's First Lady and hosts private events.
- The company is committed to protecting Chicago's waterways by using enviro-friendly practices for continued sustainability.
- The company celebrates local businesses by selling Chicago-based food and beverages like Mama's Nuts and Revolution Brewing craft beverages aboard its tours.
- The safety of Mercury Cruises' passengers and crew is a number one priority. After more than 80 years cruising Chicago's waterways, the company is proud of their perfect safety record.
- The company's eight vessels are inspected annually by the US Coast Guard and undergo required stability testing to ensure all of their passengers and crew are safe during their waterway experience.
- The licensed captains and crew members go through a weekly drilling program that goes above and beyond the standards set by the USCG.



Spokespeople Biographies

Holly Agra

Holly Agra is president of Chicago's First Lady Cruises and vice president for Mercury, Chicago's Skyline Cruiseline. Managing a fleet of eight U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Passenger vessels and a seasonal team of 120 employees, Holly and her husband/business partner, Captain Bob Agra, continue an 84-year family tradition of showcasing Chicago's skyline to visitors and residents from their home port on Chicago's Magnificent Mile. Holly is deeply committed to promoting Chicago as a world-class tourist destination and is an active member of numerous organizations, including Choose Chicago, The Magnificent Mile Association, Chicago Economic Club, and the International Association of Amusement Parks & Attractions, among others. Holly and Captain Agra both reside in Chicago and were thrilled to have their oldest son, Bob III, vice president, join the family business in 2011 as a fourth-generation owner-operator. Their son Tim, a recent graduate of USC Gould School of Law, is a new USCG Captain.

Captain Bob Agra

Captain Agra is a 44-year veteran of Chicago's waterways and is the third-generation owner of the Mercury Cruises family. He began working for his father and grandfather while living in Barrington, Illinois at the age of 15 and took the helm at the age of 18. He has piloted all of the vessels, and led the construction of five Chicago's First Lady Cruises vessels designed and built in U.S. shipyards. His fondest memory is piloting the First Lady from Bayou La Batre, Alabama up the Mississippi River in 1991 on a seven-day journey to Chicago, which included traversing through 27 sets of locks. Captain Agra is very proud of the young men and women he has trained throughout his career, included those listed below. He also serves as the company Chief Financial Officer. He is an avid Cubs and Bears fan and resides in Chicago with his wife, Holly.

Captain Gabriel Argumedo

Captain Argumedo began working with Mercury Cruises and Chicago's First Lady Cruises when he was 15 years old and began piloting at 19 years old. In addition to piloting the vessels, he serves as the Director of Vessel Operations and manages the winter maintenance team during the off-season. Captain Argumedo's brother, David, also works as a captain for the company and is the Manager of the Paint Department during the offseason. Both are from Barrington, Illinois and reside in Chicago.

Captain Tom Hacker

Captain Hacker is a 12-year veteran of Mercury Cruises and Chicago's First Lady Cruises and serves as the Company Security Officer, as prescribed by the U.S. Coast Guard. Captain Hacker is also a member of The Magnificent Mile Association's Safety & Security Committee. He is from Barrington, Illinois and currently resides in Lincoln Park.

Captain Jennifer Kramer

Captain Kramer began sailing with Mercury Cruises and Chicago's First Lady Cruises five years ago and is the fourth female captain in the companies' history. She got her start with the company as a Mercury Cruises tour

guide and continues to share her enthusiasm for Chicago by helping train new guides. Captain Kramer is originally from Washington D.C. and currently lives in Chicago. She is an avid runner in her free time.

Captain Christy Fell

Captain Fell began sailing with Mercury Cruises and Chicago's First Lady Cruises seven years ago and is the third female captain in the company's history. During the cruise line off-season, she serves as Manager of the Wood Varnishing Department. Captain Fell also once served as president of the Chicago Lodge/Chapter of International Shipmasters Association. She resides in Chicago and enjoys roller skating, refurbishing her home and spending time with her two adopted dogs.

Captain Jorge Navarrete

Captain Jorge is proud to have worked with Mercury Cruises for the past six years. As a dual citizen of the U.S. and Mexico he is fluent in both English and Spanish. Captain Jorge is celebrating his fourth year as a U.S. Coast Guard-licensed captain. He works in the Winter Maintenance Department in the off-season and also takes time to visit his family in Sahuayo Michoacan, Mexico. He is an avid fisherman and loves being on the water whenever possible.