



CHICAGO  
ARCHITECTURE  
CENTER

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**Media Contact:**

Michael Queroz  
Public Communications Inc.  
[mqueroz@pcipr.com](mailto:mqueroz@pcipr.com)  
312.558.1770

Ashley Antonini  
Public Communications Inc.  
[aantonini@pcipr.com](mailto:aantonini@pcipr.com)  
312.558.1770

**Chicago Architecture Foundation Center River Cruise aboard Chicago's First Lady  
Sets Sail on March 15, Welcomes New Vessel Chicago's Emerald Lady**

Official architecture tour announces 2020 schedule departing from the Chicago Riverwalk

**CHICAGO**, March 6, 2020 – [Chicago's First Lady Cruises](#) and the [Chicago Architecture Center](#) have announced the 2020 schedule for the official [Chicago Architecture Foundation Center \(CAFC\) River Cruise aboard Chicago's First Lady](#), the premier way to experience Chicago's world-famous architecture and the only cruise narrated by Chicago Architecture Center docents. The organizations officially launch the 2020 CAFC River Cruise season on Sunday, March 15, continuing their 27-year partnership inspiring Chicagoland residents and visitors with the city's rich architectural history.

Ranked the #1 boat tour in Chicago based on [TripAdvisor user reviews](#), the CAFC River Cruise is the most in-depth, authentic architecture river cruise available and is lauded as a "must-do" activity when visiting Chicago. Expertly trained Chicago Architecture Center docents bring their unique perspectives to the tours they lead, sharing their passion for the history and design of more than 50 buildings along the Chicago River and their familiarity with the architects who created them. Tour guests leave the cruise inspired by the city's wide variety of architectural styles including art deco, neoclassicism, mid-century modernism, and postmodernism.

As Chicago's popular Riverwalk continues to grow and evolve, the 90-minute tour – which glides across all three branches of the Chicago River – continues to evolve with it to ensure guests are always learning about the city's continued architectural achievements, including the brand-new Vista Tower, the city's third tallest structure.

Additional CAFC River Cruise offerings include the [Capture Chicago Photography Cruise](#), an early-morning voyage designed with photographers in mind by pausing three times throughout, allowing guests to capture Chicago's finest architectural wonders in all their detailed, dazzling glory. Two [Evening River Cruise](#) departures offer guests a serene experience with stunning views of Chicago's architecture bathed in the soft glow of the setting sun.

A portion of proceeds from tickets purchased for the CAFC River Cruise, Capture Chicago Photography Cruise, and Evening River Cruise help support the work of the Chicago Architecture Center, a nonprofit organization whose education programs run year-round, encouraging children, college students, design lovers,

teachers, and teens to learn more about Chicago's architectural significance and to play active roles in creating the city's future.

Beginning this Summer, expanded classic CAFC River Cruise and Evening River Cruise offerings will be made possible by Chicago's First Lady Cruises' newest addition to its custom luxury fleet, Chicago's Emerald Lady. Upon arrival, the vessel will immediately be placed into the rotation to give guests even more unforgettable and enlightening experiences on the Chicago River.

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.

Guests can complete their experience before or after their cruise at the Chicago Architecture Center, located above the CAFC River Cruise docking area at 111 East Wacker Drive. Permanent and temporary exhibitions on two floors of galleries at the Center unlock secrets behind Chicago and its architectural wonders, with the Chicago City Model Experience and Drake Family Skyscraper Gallery both featuring models of famous buildings along the cruise route. Travelers have the option to purchase a Combination ticket, which includes admission to the Chicago Architecture Center, for an additional \$5, saving them \$7 on Center admission. Guests may visit the Chicago Architecture Center any time within seven days following their cruise. Standalone tickets for the Chicago Architecture Center are \$12 for adults, \$8 for Students (with ID), and free for children under five, with a portion of each ticket sale supporting the Center's mission and education programs.

CAFC River Cruise times vary throughout the season:

- The pre-season schedule lasts from March 15 – March 29 and offers cruises on Saturday and Sunday at 10 a.m., 12 p.m., 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.
- The season opening cruises run daily from April 3 – April 12 and depart at 10 a.m., 12 p.m., 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. Additional cruises depart Friday – Sunday at 11 a.m., 1:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m., and 5:00 p.m.
- Early spring cruises run daily from April 13 – April 30 and depart every hour from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Additional cruises depart Thursday – Sunday at 4 p.m. and Friday – Sunday at 5 p.m.
- Late spring cruises run daily from May 1 - May 21 and depart every hour from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Additional cruises depart Thursday – Sunday at 5 p.m. and Friday – Sunday at 9:30 a.m. 11:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.
- Summer cruises run daily from May 22 – Oct. 12 and depart every hour Monday – Thursday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and every half hour Friday – Sunday from 9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Additional cruises depart at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, 1:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. on Monday and Thursday, 4:15 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and 10:15 a.m., 12:15 p.m., 2:15 p.m., and 5 p.m. on Friday – Sunday
  - The Capture Chicago Photography Cruise runs from May 23 – October 12 and departs every Friday, Saturday and Sunday at 9 a.m.
  - The Evening River Cruise runs nightly from May 22 – Oct. 12 at 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Additional cruises on Oct. 13 – Nov. 1 depart Friday – Sunday at 5:30 p.m.
- Early fall cruises run daily from Oct. 13 – Nov. 1 and depart at 10 a.m., 12 p.m., 1 p.m., 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. Additional cruises depart 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. 2 – Nov. 22 and depart at 10 a.m., 12 p.m., 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. Additional cruises depart Friday – Sunday at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., 3 p.m. and 5 p.m.

Chicago Architecture Center:

- Chicago Architecture Center (CAC) 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](http://CruiseChicago.com) or [Architecture.org/cruise](http://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](http://CruiseChicago.com).

### **Ticket Information**

Tickets start at \$46.29\* for the daytime river cruise and Capture Chicago Photography Cruise. Tickets for the Evening River Cruises start at \$51.02\*.

*\*Prices subject to change.*

Tickets can be obtained the following ways:

- bypassing the box office with e-ticket purchases at [ticketmaster.com/rivercruise](http://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
  - 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 [grouptours@architecture.org](mailto:grouptours@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](http://CruiseChicago.com) or by calling 847-358-1330.

### **Additional CFL and CAC offerings:**

- Chicago's First Lady Cruises offers a relaxing [Sunrise Stretch Yoga Cruise](#) featuring a 45-minute session taught by certified instructors followed by a 15-minute boat ride along the river to relax and enjoy the views. New in 2020, a Friday evening "cocktail" yoga cruise offers a serene atmosphere for enjoying yoga, wine, cocktails, and stunning views of Chicago's colorful evening skies.
- New in 2020, Chicago's First Lady Cruises' [Clover Cruise](#) offers guests the opportunity to witness Chicago's famed dyeing of the river St. Patrick's Day weekend aboard the city's finest fleet. The cruise experience includes live bagpipers, specialty Irish drinks and eats, a festive photo booth and incredible views of the city's spectacular skyline and green waters.
- Chicago's First Lady Cruises, whose fleet of passenger yachts was named a top Illinois venue on the water by [Illinois Meetings + Events](#) readers, is the only private charter company to offer CAC-certified docents to lead full or abbreviated versions of the official CAFC River Cruise to complement any private dinner, weddings, corporate events and other special occasions for groups of two to 250.
- Opening April 15, 2020, "Energy Revolution: Creating Our Carbon-Free Future" is the Chicago Architecture Center's newest exhibit, included with the Combination ticket. Developed in partnership with Chicago-based architecture and design firm Farr Associates, "Energy Revolution" communicates the choices and actions required as cities respond to our global climate emergency.

- Spring 2020 Architect Talks at the Chicago Architecture Center include conversations with Henning Larsen partner and design principal Louis Becker on April 27, German architect Ole Scheeren on May 6, and Vista Tower architect Jeanne Gang on June 22. Architect Talks begin at 6 p.m. and require reservations in advance, online at [architecture.org](http://architecture.org).

## 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 Chicago Architecture Center 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 Chicago locals and visitors alike to the city's rich architectural history and breathtaking beauty through the official Chicago Architecture Foundation Center River Cruise and as a first-class venue for private events. This year marks the 27<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Chicago Architecture Foundation Center River Cruise. For more than 85 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. Six of Chicago's First Lady Cruises luxury yachts are available for private charter cruising and special events, complete with food and beverage 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](http://CruiseChicago.com) or call 847-358-1330.

## About the Chicago Architecture Center

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 the CAC's tours and store, as well as from grants, sponsorships and donations, support this educational mission. Visit [architecture.org](http://architecture.org) to learn more and follow @chiarchitecture and #chiarchitecture on social media.