



FOR YOUR INFORMATION

CONTACT: Anita Pedersen
p: 630-690-7706
c: 630-803-7593
anitawarrenpr@sbcglobal.net

MERCURY, CHICAGO'S SKYLINE CRUISELINE – A HISTORY

WHAT: Mercury, Chicago's Skyline Cruiseline is Chicago's oldest, continuous sightseeing boat company showcasing Chicago's architectural, historical and maritime sights. Now in its second half-century of operation, Mercury is operated by third-generation owners Bob, Jr. and Holly Agra from the dock at Riverside Gardens on the lower level and southeast corner of the Michigan Avenue Bridge.

FLEET: Mercury is two companies operating six vessels. The flagship company, Mercury, Chicago's Skyline Cruiseline owns and operates the *Skyline Queen* and the *Skyline Princess* offering daily and nightly commentated river and lake sightseeing cruises as well as specialty cruises. The second company, Mercury Yacht Charters, Inc., (MYC) owns and operates *Chicago's First Lady*, *Chicago's Little Lady* and *Chicago's Fair Lady*, custom-designed luxury vessels that are popular venues for private parties and corporate events in the custom cruise market. They are also the official vessels for the Chicago Architecture Foundation Architecture river cruise. The smallest member of the MYC fleet is *Lady Grebe*, a 1961-vintage cruising yacht, accommodates two-six passengers and marketed toward the small special event, and private business markets.

HISTORY: Portuguese immigrant Arthur Agra started the original Mercury boat company as a speedboat operation at Navy Pier in the 1930s and in 1941 moved to the Michigan Avenue bridge location (southwest corner). Mercury, named after the Roman messenger of the gods, became a family business in 1943 when son Robert joined the two-wooden boat, 40-passenger operation. To accommodate increased business, Agra replaced the wooden originals with larger, steel-hulled boats. In 1956, Agra designed a brand, new flagship, a steel-hulled, 110-passenger boat that had its maiden voyage as Mercury, April 1956. Agra's son, Robert, and wife Marion, expanded their family business in boat tours by beginning Skyline Sightseeing in 1962 at a State Street dock.

In 1973 the third generation of the Agra family, Bob, Jr., entered the business and remains as the current owner along with his wife, Holly, co-owner and vice president of marketing, at the current Riverside Gardens location. In 1991, Holly expanded the business into the upscale private party, corporate event and wedding market and created Mercury Yacht Charters, Inc. a certified WBE business doing business as Chicago's First Lady Cruises which today consists of custom luxury yachts *Chicago's First Lady*, *Chicago's Little Lady*, *Chicago's Fair Lady* and *Lady Grebe*. In 2007, *Chicago's First Lady Cruises* celebrates a 15-year partnership with the Chicago Architecture Foundation as the official vessels for the Chicago Architecture Foundation river cruise.

THE MERCURY FLEET: Mercury, Chicago's Skyline Cruiseline's flagship sightseeing fleet includes the 125-passenger *Skyline Queen* and the 105-passenger *Skyline Princess*. The steel-hulled, twin-Detroit diesel vessels both feature open-air seating in the bow and enclosed seating in the stern. Windows curve overhead in the enclosed area to offer a panoramic view of the city sights. Two crew members, a captain and mate operate the tour and provide the commentary. Each boat has two rest rooms and carries 100% adult and 100% child life preservers. Mercury's fleet is inspected and certified annually by the U.S. Coast Guard and the City of Chicago.

RECORDED INFORMATION: 312-332-1353 **WEBSITE:** www.mercuryskylinecruiseline.com

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CHICAGO FIRST LADY FLEET: *Chicago's First Lady* and *Chicago's Little Lady* are both styled after the 1920s luxury cruising yachts such as the former Presidential yacht, "Sequoia," and are very popular with groups seeking unique and exclusive-use venues. Both vessels have climate-controlled main deck salons decorated in hunter green and burgundy hues with mahogany-toned and brass accents. Comfortable, upholstered chairs at round tables are positioned by large, oblong windows providing all passengers with a never-ending view of Chicago's world-famous skyline.

Chicago's First Lady can provide formal seated dinners for up to 75 passengers and features a full-service bar, prep kitchen and an open-air upper deck expanding the passenger capability to 225 for reception-style entertaining.

Chicago's Little Lady, the smaller sister vessel, can accommodate up to 149 passengers and features two full-service bars.

Chicago's Fair Lady, accommodating 149 passengers, joined the fleet in 2006 and like her 1920s cruising yacht style sister vessels, offers an open-air upper deck. Unique to *Chicago's Fair Lady* is a 180-degree, window-wrapped main deck salon providing unobstructed, big-picture views of Chicago's skyscrapers.

Chicago's Fair Lady follows her sister cruisers and transforms into a private party yacht offering passengers sparkling, panoramic views of Chicago's famous lakefront skyline from both the upper deck and the comfortable, enclosed main deck. Her elegant, temperature-controlled salon, decorated in burgundy and hunter green with mahogany-toned wood and brass accents, echoes the luxurious yachting style of her sister ships. She also features handicapped restrooms and full service bars.

Lady Grebe is a 1961-vintage cruising yacht accommodating two to six passengers. The luxurious 48-foot mahogany yacht, epitomizes the golden era of yachting with the teak fore and aft deck space perfect for open-air cruising and sunbathing. The graceful and Chicago-bred *Lady Grebe* is built on a double-planked mahogany hull with a white oak frame and features paneled salons, large staterooms, tiled baths, integrated sound system, a full galley and crew facilities. The target market for *Lady Grebe* is the very small, upscale private and business communities.

Chicago's First Lady Cruises is the official cruise line of the Chicago Architecture Foundation. Each vessel is manned by a captain and two crew members. The fleet is inspected and certified annually by the US Coast Guard and the City of Chicago and carries 100% adult life preservers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: 847-358-1330

WEBSITE: www.cruisechicago.com