



NEWS

[ST. LOUIS CITY / COUNTY](#)
[METRO EAST](#)
[ST. CHARLES](#)
[JEFFERSON COUNTY](#)
[LAW & ORDER](#)
[MISSOURI STATE NEWS](#)
[ILLINOIS STATE NEWS](#)
[NATION](#)
[WORLD](#)
[NEWSWATCH](#)
[EDUCATION](#)
[RELIGION](#)
[SCIENCE & MEDICINE](#)
[DEATH & OBITUARIES](#)
[COMMUTING & TRAFFIC](#)
[COLUMNISTS](#)
[EDITORIAL / COMMENTARY](#)
[SPECIAL REPORTS](#)
[PHOTO GALLERIES](#)
[CORRECTIONS](#)
[NEWS OF THE WEIRD](#)
[P-D ARCHIVES](#)

INTERACT

News

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Full text of archived story

Chicago An architectural tour of the Windy City

- Tom Uhlenbrock - ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH
- St. Louis Post-Dispatch (MO)
- June 15, 2008
- Section: Explore
- Edition: Third Edition
- Page T1

Marshall Jacobson is an architecture aficionado.

Jacobson has chalked up many miles walking the streets of downtown Chicago, admiring the city's classic collection of buildings. He is a volunteer docent with the Chicago Architecture Foundation and a certified professional guide who takes groups on architectural tours by foot and by boat.

An energetic Chicago native, Jacobson, 67, was a natural when we decided to put together a walking tour of the Top 10 Architectural Gems in the downtown area. He gladly accepted the task, with a caveat.

"If you selected another guide, he'd probably come up with a different 10," Jacobson said. "It's like going to an art museum, everybody has his favorites."

We both had our walking shoes on when Jacobson showed up at 9 a. m. at the Trump International Hotel & Tower, where I was staying. The review of it is on Page T5. The hotel is open while construction continues on its upper floors, which will total 92 when completed in mid-2009. Jacobson wanted to have a look-see at the city's new addition.

"I like it," he said. "I'm anxious to see it when the scaffolding comes off."



BLOGS

CONTESTS

EVENT CALENDAR

FORUMS

GET RSS FEEDS

MAPS & YELLOW
PAGES

PERSONALS

SIGN UP FOR E-MAIL
ALERTS

A CAR'S SLOW-MOTION PLUNGE

As we sat in the Trump's sleek, yet subtle, lobby, Jacobson explained that the Great Fire of 1871 created a clean slate for America's renowned architects to show their stuff in rebuilding the city.

"There was a continuing challenge, especially with office buildings, to go up," he said. "Land was expensive, and architects were forced to go higher and higher to make the nut. The result is you have a wonderful, eclectic series of tall buildings in various styles that are interesting and unique. And it continues. We're sitting in one."

Hitting the streets, an obvious problem arose. Jacobson was armed with his list, but it contained 15, not 10, choices. We'd have to whittle it down as we walked.

The twin cylindrical towers of Marina City on the Chicago River had to make the cut. The buildings were made famous in a 1980 movie called "The Hunter," when a circular auto chase around the interior ended with Steve McQueen chasing the bad guy's car right out of the building, several stories up, for a slow-motion plunge into the river.

recalling betty boop

The Wrigley Building, Tribune Tower and Carbide and Carbon Building, with its gold-leaf ornamentation, also made the grade. At the new fabulously successful Millennium Park, the Jay Pritzker Pavilion was chosen, although some have compared architect Frank Gehry's stainless steel curling panels to a fallen airliner or Betty Boop's eyelashes.

The Chicago Cultural Center made the grade because of its lavish interior, with two art-glass domes, as did the ornate lobby of the Palmer House Hilton. It was nearing noon and Miller's Pub, a Loop favorite since 1935, was right outside the hotel door. "We've got more ground to cover," Jacobson said.

At the Marquette Building, we marveled at the mosaic panels made by Tiffany for the lobby that show the adventures of Jesuit explorer Pere Marquette. Our next choice for the list was The Rookery, which has a light-dappled atrium renovated in 1905 by Frank Lloyd Wright.

We decided to omit the 110-story Sears Tower, the world's largest building for 22 years, because it's already a tourist destination. Among the other impressive rejects were the Monadnock Building, at 16 floors the tallest building with weight-bearing brick walls, and the 19-story Inland Steel Building, the first modern skyscraper in the Loop after World War II.

After lunch at Tamarind, an Asian cafe where the wait staff was as wonderful as the food, Jacobson made a pitch for the Reliance Building as No. 10. "It's my favorite," he said. "The percentage of glass used on the exterior compared to terra cotta made it a precursor to modern architecture."

Done by early afternoon, Jacobson invited me to join him the next day for his noon boat tour on Chicago's First Lady. "You've got to see 333 West Wacker Drive," he said. "The building follows the curve of the river and is clad in green glass. Some call it the city's prettiest."

Sounded tempting. Sit for a spell and let the architecture roll on by.

Tour options for Chicago

Visitors have several ways to tour Chicago's architectural wonders.

You can head out on your own, but your first stop should be the visitors center at the Chicago Cultural Center, at 77 Randolph Street, off Michigan Avenue, to grab some free maps and brochures.

The Chicago Architecture Foundation offers more than 80 different tours by foot, boat and bus. All are led by volunteer docents who have been trained by the foundation. Most walking and bus tours depart from the foundation's ArchiCenter at 224 South Michigan Avenue. Tickets are available at 1-312-922-3432 and www.architecture.org.

The river cruises on Chicago's First Lady depart from the lower level and southeast corner of the Michigan Avenue Bridge at Wacker Drive. The season runs through Nov. 23. Tickets are \$28 a person Monday through Friday, and \$30 on weekends and holidays. Tickets are available at the dock, at ArchiCenter, at 1-312-902-1500, and online at www.ticketmaster.com/rivercruise.

The 90-minute river cruises highlight 53 historic and architecturally significant sites, including Trump Tower, Merchandise Mart, 333 West Wacker Drive, Wrigley Building, Tribune Tower, Sears Tower, River City, Marina City and the site of the Chicago Spire, which at 150 stories is scheduled to become the city's tallest building.

Chicago Neighborhood Tours, run by the Office of Tourism, offers bus tours of city neighborhoods and sites. Four new Public Art Tours were launched this year to highlight the city's collection of sculptures, murals, paintings and other artwork. The art tours are from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday throughout the summer. Call 1-877-244-2246, or visit www.cityofchicago.org/tourism.

Finally, you can take a stroll with **Marshall Jacobson**. He is a volunteer with the foundation but also has started his own company, Tours R Us Chicago, which takes groups on private walks. His telephone is 1-773-575-3176, his website is www.toursruschicago.com, and his e-mail is toursruschicago@yahoo.com.

Online

at STLtoday.com/travel

Watch a video tour of "Paris on the prairie." That's what architect and city planner Daniel Burnham (1846-1912) called Chicago. Two of his commissions - the Rookery and Reliance Building - are included in our list on T8.

Take a virtual tour around Chicago with our interactive guide, complete with Google maps to plot your way.

PHOTO - Chicago's impressive skyline is reflected in British artist Anish Kapoor's Cloud Gate, a sculpture affectionately known as "the bean," in Millennium Park. Tom Uhlenbrock Post-Dispatch

PHOTO - The Merchandise Mart, the largest commercial building in the world, is located along the Chicago River.

PHOTO - The Wrigley Building (left) and the Tribune Tower stand over the Chicago River as two of the city's classic skyscrapers.

Tom Uhlenbrock Post-Dispatch

PHOTO - Jacobson

[Back to your search results](#) | [Back to simple search](#) | [Back to advanced search](#)

[E-mail](#) the Online Editor
© 2002 St. Louis Post-Dispatch

[ABOUT US](#) | [ADVERTISE](#) | [CONTACT US](#) | [HELP](#) | [PRIVACY](#) | [TERMS OF SERVICE](#) | [COPYRIGHT](#)