

SUBSCRIBER CONTENT:

Manufacturing

## Pompeian invests \$10M in HQ to meet surging wholesale club demand



The Baltimore-based olive oil company is expanding its footprint in the city and at Tradeport Atlantic in the coming years.

MELODY SIMMONS



By [Garrett Dvorkin](#) – Reporter, Baltimore Business Journal  
Apr 13, 2026

Listen to this article 5 min

### Story Highlights

- Pompeian Olive Oil invested \$10 million in a new automated production line.
- Membership club stores like Costco now represent 60% of Pompeian's sales.
- The Baltimore company will likely need a new facility within five years.

Baltimore's Pompeian Olive Oil is pouring \$10 million into a new production line to keep up with demand from some of the country's largest retailers.

The company has been processing olive oil at its East Baltimore factory since 1906, and more recently, the company has been investing in that facility thanks to the success of its largest product, a 3-liter bottle of oil. Pompeian produced around 55 million bottles of olive oil in 2025 and is set to surpass that number by 10% this year, with the help of the new, state-of-the-art automated production line, which recently went into operation and is designed to make the large bottles. Even with that recent addition, Pompeian CEO Mouna Aissaoui said the demand for olive oil is so strong that the company will likely outgrow its longtime home in five years.

Membership club stores like [Costco](#), [Sam's Club](#) and BJ's are driving the growth. Aissaoui, [who became CEO in 2024](#), said these stores are the company's "fastest-growing channel," and represent about 60% of Pompeian's sales. That's a big jump compared to just five years ago, when warehouse stores represented just 40% of the company's business.

"We had a meeting 18 months ago with one of these retailers and they asked how we plan on keeping up with their demand. We showed them some plans, and they said it wasn't enough," said Aissaoui. "So we made the decision to invest more, and that conversation gave us the confidence to go big."

The key to Pompeian's new production line is all in the automation. Salim Benjelloun, the olive oil company's vice president of operations, said the recently added line is three times faster than any of the company's other production lines.





Pompeian invested \$10 million into a new automated production line.

POMPEIAN

---

When it comes to manufacturing, the last thing a company wants is downtime, and Benjelloun said roughly half of Pompeian's downtime is due to what he calls "minor stoppages." The new production line consists of a dozen machines that can work at various speeds. When a machine needs to be refilled, a computer can ramp up activity beforehand to compensate for the downtime, meaning the line can keep producing the entire time.

More automation at the factory has not stopped Pompeian from needing to add to its workforce. The company now has 220 employees, including 12 new employees hired to run the new production line. Pompeian has been in growth mode since the pandemic, hiring 50 additional employees over the past five years.

Pompeian is still trying to catch up to a thirst for olive oil that started during the pandemic. Aissaoui said the company saw demand "rise 40% overnight" in 2020 after the country went on lockdown. That demand didn't dissipate after restaurants reopened, and Aissaoui said the company has been able to grow around 9% year-over-year ever since.

The growth spurred the need for major changes to Pompeian's factory to meet the demand. In addition to the new production line, the company has added employee amenities like renovated break rooms and also overhauled

added employee amenities like renovated break rooms and also overhauled its corporate offices over the past two to three years.

Pompeian has also tried to stay in line with new trends in olive oil. The company added a production line for squeeze bottle “drizzle” olive oil in late 2024, following a [trend started by buzzy olive oil brand Graza](#). That line is almost entirely manual, which makes it less than half as efficient as Pompeian’s new automated line.

If Benjelloun got his wish, all of Pompeian’s production lines would be updated with the new automated machines in a week, Aissaoui said. However, not only would it be too expensive to make such a large move – Pompeian tries to spend around \$5 million to \$10 million on facility improvements a year – there is also the issue of space. Aissaoui said the company has enough space at its current facility for the next five years. But Pompeian needs to keep up with its customers, and its current footprint can’t support much more growth.

When the company added its new production line, it had to move some storage from East Baltimore to a [300,000-square-foot warehouse at TradePoint Atlantic](#), which Aissaoui said is also essentially full. The company will have to make a tough choice in 2031 about whether to open a new facility or move to a new, larger location, away from its home of more than a century.

“We would like to stay here, but we’re not sure what is going to happen over the next five years,” Aissaoui said. “The challenge is space; we can’t just keep expanding. In a couple of years, it is going to get really hard.”