

An inside look at Calvetti Culinary Creations

This is a special feature from *PAX International's* October 2024 [IFSA Global EXPO](#) issue.



From left to right: Jamie Calvetti, President; Anthony Jackson, Production Chef; Jose Ibarra, Executive Chef and Chef Robert Shaw in the R&D room at Calvetti Culinary Creations facility in September 2024

CHICAGO, USA—Family-owned [Calvetti Culinary Creations](#) has been a cornerstone in the airline catering industry for half a century, providing premium meat products to airlines around the world.

The headquarters, located in the heart of Chicago's meatpacking district, is steeped in history. The building itself dates back to the 1980s. The administrative offices feature stunning woodwork with vaulted ceilings and an overall Frank Lloyd Wright-esque design. Looking through old black and white photos with Jamie Calvetti, President and son of Founder James Calvetti, on a late-September morning, he says his father had just one request five decades ago when he built the facility: a large window on the north side of the building to frame the Chicago skyline.



Calvetti livestock on exhibit at the International Live Stock Show

And it delivers. The city stretches out on the horizon, visible in what is now the office meeting space. This area of the HQ also houses offices, employee lunchrooms, locker rooms and the R&D kitchen. The meat processing facility, directly attached, balances tradition with cutting-edge technology.

“This place is a testament to our roots,” Calvetti tells *PAX International*.

Touring the facility, it is clear it operates with a deep respect for safety and quality. The tour began in the processing rooms, where skilled workers meticulously handle each cut of meat. The facility serves both domestic and international markets, offering a diverse range of premium quality, portion-cut meats.

“The airlines we supply expect the best, and that starts with the raw materials,” Calvetti says along the tour.



Workers prepare the meat as it is packaged

The facility is designed with efficiency and sustainability in mind. Advanced refrigeration systems and temperature-controlled rooms ensure that products are kept at optimal conditions. Workers are set up at different stations, preparing the product as others make final cuts before it is prepped and packed—some for sous vide cooking techniques which Calvetti specializes in. The products are vacuum sealed through an automated machine and then packed for transportation.

The facility also features one of the only three pieces of equipment in the United States that sears meat for sous vide cooking using infrared light technology.



The searing machine at Calvetti Culinary Creations

Calvetti Meat's dedication to innovation is apparent in every aspect of the business. It has embraced new technologies and is continuously developing new solutions to stay at the forefront of the industry.

"Our approach at Calvetti is all about precision and consistency," Jose Ibarra, Executive Chef, says in the R&D room at the end of the tour. "From the quality of the meat to the way we prepare and package it, every detail matters. Airline catering requires us to be meticulous because the dining experience in the air depends on what we do here on the ground. It's a challenge we embrace every day."



Jamie Calvetti, President (left) and *PAX International* Managing Editor Jane Hobson at the Calvetti Culinary Creations facility in September 2024

The tour of Calvetti Culinary Creations offered a firsthand look at a company that skillfully combines tradition with innovation to serve the airline catering market. With craftsmanship and a forward-thinking approach to technology, the company is well-positioned to continue the charge.

“Our 50-year journey has been about staying true to who we are while also evolving to serve our clients better,” Calvetti remarks as the tour concluded. “This facility is more than just a workplace—it’s a reflection of our passion for the industry and our commitment to the future.”