



## Comparing the Coleman Instant Up Silver, Gold & Dark Room Tents

Since their beginnings, the Coleman Instant Up tents have experienced 2 facelifts, welcomed an 8 person version to the range, introduced a Gold Series or 'top-shelf' range of these popular tents, and most recently welcomed the Northstar Dark Room series to the family. It was the addition of the original Gold series tents that had our customers asking themselves, "What is the difference between the Silver and Gold Series Instant Up tents". Furthermore, with the introduction of the Northstar Dark Room range, our customers are now asking, "What are the benefits of the Dark Room tents?" Truth is, it's pretty straightforward. For starters, the frame is exactly the same for all three, the differences are in the fabrics and extras. But, before we delve into explaining the differences let's answer the question – **"Why should you buy a Coleman Instant Up Tent?"**



*The Instant Northstar Dark Room, Instant Up Gold 6P and Instant Up Silver 4P side by side.* The answer? Because they are a perfect lightweight substitute to heavy-duty canvas touring tents. Their lower price, smaller pack size and ease of handling make them the quick pitch tent of choice for family campers and 4WD tourers alike.

How's that for a sales pitch!

There's a long list of tents in the Instant Up Range now, all referred to in this article. Here's a snapshot of the range to paint a clear picture for you...

### **Models in the Silver range:**

- Instant Up Northern 4P
- Instant Up Silver 4P
- Instant Up Silver 6P
- Instant Up Silver 8P

### **Models in the Gold range:**

- Instant Up Gold 4P
- Instant Up Gold 6P
- Instant Up Gold 10P

### **Models in the Northstar Dark Room range:**

- Instant Up 4P Lighted Northstar Dark Room
- Instant Up 6P Lighted Northstar Dark Room
- Instant Up 10P Lighted Northstar Dark Room

Below, we compare the Silver and Gold series Instant Up tents. Then we put the Northstar Dark Room tents up against the rest of the range.

First up – the Instant Up Silver vs Instant Up Gold. There are eight differences, so let's get started...

*If you prefer to watch a video comparing the Silver and Gold tents, then hit the play button above.*



## **What are the differences between the Silver and Gold series Instant Up Tents?**

### **1. The fabric quality**

This is a bit technical, bear with me. The Silver series use a PU coated 150 denier polyester with a thread count of 150 (150D/150T). This is a durable and reasonably heavy duty fabric. The gold series, however, utilise a PU coated 75 denier polyester with a thread count of 185T (75D/185T) plus it has a rip-stop fibre sewn into the fabric. This gold series fabric is a softer and denser fabric that packs away easier whilst maintaining strength and durability.

### **2. Higher water-head ratings**

Waterwhaaat...?! Not everyone understands what water-head means. Basically, it's a measure of how waterproof the fabric is. It's measured with a machine that places water pressure on a section of the fabric until it starts to seep through. For most conditions, the 1500mm waterhead on the Silver series Instant-Up tents will keep you dry. The gold series, however, boast a 3000mm waterhead, which I wouldn't say is twice as waterproof, but they certainly offer extra peace of mind if you're caught out in torrential rain.



*The Gold's floor (left) is a little easier to fold. It's also a bit more durable compared to the Silver (right). Image: Coleman Australia*

### **3. Nicer floor material**

Both series have a bucket floor, and they offer similar levels of water protection, the difference is in the type of fabric. In the Silver series, you get a Polyethylene floor (PE), which is the same stuff regular tarps are made of. It's tough and waterproof, but noisy to walk on and requires a little bit of wrangling to fold away. The gold series tents have a nice PVC coated Polyoxford floor. This is basically like the fly fabric, only thicker with a durable rubbery coating on it. This fabric is softer and quieter to walk on, packs away easier and still offers the durability of the PE flooring.

### **4. Door & window mesh**

Coleman doesn't advertise this much and I'm not sure why, but the mesh on the gold series tents is finer than that on the Silver series. It's not no-see-um mesh, but it's definitely much finer and softer which probably also aids in ease of packing away.



*The Instant Up Gold tents have ground level vents that open up to create a nice cross breeze.*



## 5. Better ventilation

All the Instant-Up tents have large windows finishing at waist level with internal privacy screens, along with entrances with mesh and solid panels. So, ventilation is good on all these tents. The gold series tents have the added benefit of ground-level vents that can be opened internally. This is called Coleman Circle Ventilation and, talking from experience, is a welcome addition to your tent in warm weather. It creates a cross breeze at the base of the tent, right where you're sleeping!

## 6. Bonus awning

While all entrances to the Instant Up tents can be extended as awnings, the 4P and 6P version of the gold series come with an extra removable awning that can be fixed above the windows on either side. It's easily attached/removed with a zipper and features three eyelets so the awning can be extended with a peak to shed water. What's more, the extra awning poles are included.

## 7. More storage

While internal storage pockets feature on the internal walls of every Instant Up model, the 4P and 6P Gold and the 4P and 6P Northstar Dark Room series have the added benefit of a gear hammock that attaches under the internal peak of the tent. It's a perfect place to store the car keys so all can access, or maybe some emergency midnight munchies... up where the kids can't reach them!



*A doormat is a nice addition to the Gold tents. Image: Coleman Australia*

## 8. Last and most importantly... a doormat!

Every gold series Instant Up tent comes with its very own doormat. There's no witty welcome phrase or fancy patterns, it's just a panel of mesh Polyethylene fabric with peg out points. But, it offers a clean and dry place to rest your shoes in the vestibule.

## Now - the Northstar Dark Room Tents?

The Instant Up Northstar Dark Room tents are a newer addition to Coleman's Instant Up family, and certainly a very popular one. First introduced was the Instant Northstar Dark Room 10P tent, the Northstar Dark Room 6P and 4P followed, and now they've even applied their Dark Room technology to a pop-up tent!

## What are the differences between the Instant Up Gold



## **Dark Room tents when compared to the Gold and Silver series?**

### **1. Models**

The Northstar Dark Room range currently comes in three sizes in the Instant Up configuration – the Instant Up 10P Lighted Northstar Dark Room, Instant Up 6P Lighted Northstar Dark Room and Instant Up 4P Lighted Northstar Dark Room.

Not including the vestibule, the 4P Silver, 4P Gold and 4P Dark Room tents all share the same internal dimensions and the same can be said for the 6P tents.



*The Instant Up Gold 10P pictured above has two rooms. Image: Coleman Australia*  
However, in the 10 person category, the Northstar Dark Room 10P boasts three rooms compared to the Instant Up Gold 10P's two. This makes the Northstar Dark Room a slightly more spacious and livable tent.



*The Instant Northstar Dark Room 10P has three rooms. Image: Coleman Australia*

### **2. Features**

The Northstar Dark Room series feature the same instant up frame and share the same 75D/185T fabric featured in the Gold series.

The main difference that separates the Northstar Dark Room tents from the Silver and Gold Instant Up tents is a light blocking coating on the back of the flysheet. This special black coating on the underside assists with blocking out 95% of light while helping to reduce the interior temperature inside your tent by up to 5°C. This fly is what makes these models so popular with families with young kids who need to stick to their bedtime routines!

The second difference is that the Dark Room 6P and 4P have an extra pole in the front to create a much larger vestibule. This can be used for additional living or storage space but will add a little to your setup time.

The third difference is that all three Northstar Dark Room tents feature silicone flexible strip lighting with integrated LED lights for easy illumination inside your tent.

It's also worth mentioning that the Dark Room tents don't come with the bonus removable awning featured in the regular 4P and 6P Gold Series tents.



*The interior of the Dark Room tents vs the Instant Up Gold Tents. Images: Coleman Australia*

## **So, there you have it - the differences between the Gold, Silver and Northstar Dark Room Instant Up Tents!**

That's pretty much it. In terms of performance in wind, the Gold, Silver and Northstar Dark Room series are comparable. Setup time is similar for all series and the packed size only



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varies slightly. In summary, the silver series is very affordable whilst the Gold series offers extra bells and whistles and a few creature comforts that you may appreciate if you can afford the extra. If sleeping in is your thing, then the Dark Room models may help get the extra shut-eye you're longing for.

My old Coleman Instant Up 4P (not the Gold version) has seen me and my family through two big outback touring trips and numerous weekend escapes. It's still fully functional and apart from a few rub spots on the floor, it's in great condition.

However, if I had my time again, I'd certainly consider upgrading to the Gold series, or even the Dark Room to help get the kids to bed easier, or more importantly to make them sleep in longer!

**The Instant Up Gold, Silver and Northstar Dark Room tents are both very comparable, but which one would you pick if you had to make a choice?**