

Perhaps no model of lava lamp is as universally admired as the Coach Lantern series of lamps. The workmanship is top notch, and the copper or brass colored bases nicely compliment the warm glow of the lava. The glass globes are 52 oz, like the Aristocrat and century models. A fair bit of confusion surrounds the Coach Lantern model line-up. Hopefully the following descriptions will make this clearer.

The Crestworth Company in the UK is generally credited with the first version of this Coach Lantern: the *Copper Coach Lantern*. This lamp was market in the UK and in Continental Europe (versions of this lamp with French and German wiring have shown up in those countries). A U.S. version of the lamp exists (with North American wiring), and was marketed by Lava Corp in distinctly Lava packaging. There are two opinions as to the origin of the *U.S. Copper Coach Lantern*. One theory is that the U.S. version was manufactured and marketed by Lava Corp. The other theory is that the lamps were made by Crestworth in the UK, and sold to Lava Corp. which then packaged the lamps in their own boxes and marketed them in the U.S. The author of this article tends to lean towards the latter theory.

The finish on the *Copper Coach Lantern* is copper plate on aluminum. The small fake oil filler cap is on the right of the base. The bail wire consists of 3 pieces (two sides and a top bail wire). The two side bail wires are threaded into round-top steel nuts which are riveted into the base. Small variations in filler cap design and the placement of the scribed lines on the base and top exist.

In early UK versions of the lamp the bail wires were screwed into the top nuts with *slotted* screws. On all later versions of the model *knurled headed thumb screws* were user to hold the bail wires to the top.

In the UK, both a “port” version (red lava/red liquid) and a “starboard” version (red lava/green liquid) of the *Copper Coach Lantern* were made. The starboard version (red lava/green liquid) seems to be the rarer of the two versions. So far the author hasn’t seen a starboard version of this model outside the UK, though such a lamp may exist.

As far as is known, the *Copper Coach Lantern* is the only version of Coach Lantern marketed in the UK. All late model versions of this lamp, while hardly commonplace, are fairly easy to find for sale. The U.S. version is slightly rarer than the others.



Copper Coach base



Copper Coach top



Early UK version (note the slotted screws that hold the bail wires to the top).

In the U.S. the model line continued with what is known as the *Matte Finish Coach Lantern*. This lamp is similar to the Copper Coach lantern in that the filler cap is located on the right side of the base, and the side bail wires are screwed into nuts in the base. The lamp top and upper bail wire are different in design than those used on the Copper Coach Lantern. The entire finish on this aluminum lamp is a kind of salmon colored matte plating.

An early gift catalog advertisement from 1974 shows this model. This lamp is quite rare:



Matte Finish base



Matte Finish top

Next we have what is known as the *Semi-copper Coach Lantern*. The fake oil filler cap has been moved to the left of the base and doesn't have the two scribed lines on it like the earlier models. Two versions of this lamp exist:

1. Brass colored base and short brass colored top. Filler cap and bail wires are finished in a copper color.
2. Brass colored base and tall copper colored top (similar to the one seen on the Matte Finish Coach Lantern). Filler cap and bail wires are finished in a copper color. The author first noted this version in 2007.

The difference between the two varieties is the design and finish of the lamp top:



Semi-copper base



Semi-copper top (short brass colored top)



Semi-copper lamp with the tall copper colored top

The next version of the Coach Lantern came in the mid 70's. It's commonly referred to as the *Brass Coach Lantern*. The lamp is made of lacquered aluminum. The finish is distinct to this lamp as it is indeed a brassy color, unlike the gold color of many of the other early lava lamps (e.g. the Aristocrat). The cap top is short, there's no fake filler cap on the base, and the one piece bail wire assembly clips into holes in the base and is fastened to the top with screws and riveted brackets.



Brass Coach base



Brass Coach top

Lava Lite®

(D) LAVA "COACH LANTERN". Copper finish. 18 1/4" high. Wt. 8 lbs. 6696-012-1W Your Cost \$23.96 \$39.95

(E) MEDITERRANEAN LAVA LITE. Wrought iron base. 13 1/2" high. Wt. 5 lbs. 6696-009-7W Your Cost \$14.97 \$22.95

(F) CLASSIC LAVA LITE. Satin brass base. Orange lava, yellow liquid. 17" high. Wt. 7 lbs. 6696-001-4W Your Cost \$17.97 \$32.95

(G) SOOTHING LAVA LAMP. Satin brass base. Green lava, blue liquid. 17" high. A welcome addition to any room. Wt. 7 lbs. 6696-005-5W Your Cost \$17.97 \$32.95

(H) "ENCHANTRESS" LAVA LITE. Planter light with artificial foliage. Green lava, blue liquid. Satin brass base. 16" high. Wt. 5 lbs. 6696-010-5W Your Cost \$15.97 \$27.50

1976 State Jewelers catalog ad

Here's a picture of all 4 of the basic vintage Coach Lantern models:



Left to right: Copper Coach Lantern, Matte Finish Coach lantern, Semi-copper Coach lantern, Brass Coach Lantern (Some uncertainty exists as to the proper chronological order of the Matte Finish and Semi-copper lamps).

In 2007 a new version of the Coach Lantern was released in the U.S.:



Although vintage Coach Lanterns with the bail wires screwed into the base can be picked up by the top bail wire (don't dare try this with a *Brass Coach Lamp* or you'll end up with a big mess on the floor!) it's recommended to always support the lamp by the base when carrying it.

Most Crestworth *Copper Coach Lantern* globe colors tend to be red/clear. The red/green version is fairly uncommon. The red/clear and red/green (Port and Starboard) colors were, as far as is known, used only on the UK lamps. The possibility exists that US *Copper Coach Lanterns* may turn up with a red/green globe. The US version of the *Copper Coach Lantern* has been seen listed in catalogs in red/clear, green/blue and orange/yellow, the three standard 70s colors. It's believed the other Coach Lantern models were offered in these colors too. After the early 1980s, the *Brass Coach Lantern* was cut back to red/clear (other 80s lamps were red/yellow or white/blue). White/blue was added to the *Brass Coach Lantern* around 1989. This color combination is fairly uncommon. The *Brass Coach Lantern* was discontinued in 1991 or 1992.

Copper Coach Lantern lamps can be cleaned up with a non abrasive metal polish provided the copper plating is in good condition.

As with other lava lamps, it's possible that other Coach Lantern models may appear in the future.

Rarity:

Early model Copper Coach Lantern (UK, either globe color): unknown, but scarce

Later model Copper Coach Lantern ("port" colored globe, UK or Continental European wiring): ***

Later model Copper Coach Lantern ("starboard" colored globe): ****

Later model Copper Coach Lantern (US wiring): ****

Matte Finish Coach Lantern: *****

Semi-copper Coach Lantern (tall copper colored top): unknown

Semi-copper Coach Lantern (short brass colored top): ***

Brass Coach Lantern: **

2007 Coach Lantern: *

* A very common lamp

** A lamp that's seen on a fairly regular basis

*** A lamp that's seen once in awhile

**** An uncommon lamp; quite hard to find

***** A very rare lamp. Rarely (or never) seen in any condition