

Dierks Bentley, from sky to beach to NH's Lakes Region

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Dierks Bentley's single "Somewhere on a Beach" sounds like the same character in his hit "Drunk on a Plane" has landed and hit the nearest sandbar.

"It's funny you ask that," said Bentley in a recent telephone interview. "It never occurred to me how similar those songs are until someone else asked me about it, and I was like, 'You are such an idiot, the songs are about the same person.' You worry what people will think, but people love 'Beach' as much as 'Plane.'"

NH Bound

Bentley is excited to be headed to New Hampshire's Lakes Region next week,

even if he can't stay quite as long as he'd like.

"I've heard some great things about your state," said Bentley. "I would love to get there and stay for a few days, but with this crazy tour it looks like it will just be a quick hit — in and out for the show — but we'll have a lot of fun while we're there."

Bentley plays the Bank of New Hampshire Pavilion in Gilford Friday night, June 3, kicking off the venue's 2016 Eastern Propane Concert Series, and he's bringing Randy Houser and newcomer Cam as support acts for the tour.

"I've toured with Randy before, and he's just a great dude — on stage and backstage," he adds. "And I've gotten to know Cam a little over the last year, and she's fun as hell, too, and so talented. It's going to be a big summer for sure."

The tour comes with Bentley on a roll. Since 2001 all eight of his major-label albums have landed within the Top 5 on the country chart, and five have hit No. 1. Throw in 14 No. 1 country radio hits, including the current hit "Somewhere On a Beach," 12 Grammy Award nominations and a pair of Country Music Association Awards — plus a co-hosting slot with buddy Luke Bryan for this year's Academy of Country Music Awards — and it's easy to see Bentley is at the top of his game.

"This is a big tour," Bentley, 40, said by phone. "There's a lot going on. We've spent a lot of time going over the set pieces, and we're excited to let everyone have the chance to see what we've put together. Who knows? That pilot from the 'Drunk on a Plane' video — he might just make an appearance."

Shrouded in 'Black'

Bentley said the Somewhere on a Beach Tour hits New Hampshire just after his new album, "Black," drops; release date is this Friday.

"I feel like I'm making my best records now," said Bentley. "I feel really comfortable with my life and writing about my life and getting that injected in my records. This album is about all phases of a relationship, including the breakups. 'Beach' is a pretty blunt take on that wild rebound we've all had, or maybe imagined having. The carefree attitude is exactly the spirit we wanted to bring out on the road this year.

"Gilford will be one of those rare shows where you have a new record that just came out, and the energy from that and being on the road converges," Bentley said.

The album is all about relationships — the good, the bad, and the sometimes ugly.

“I had this concept two years ago about following a guy on this journey through relationships, how maybe he leaves one relationship for another, the temporary high that it can provide, and the way that the bottom can drop out on you in love and relationships,” said Bentley. “From start to finish, it just takes you on a journey, and the songs wind down through jealousy and deceit, new love and a new feeling.”

Joining him on the album are more female voices than he’s ever had on a record, including Elle King on “Different for Girls.”

“I just loved her voice,” said Bentley, when asked about working with King. “I didn’t know her, but I felt like I knew her through her music, just her attitude. She seemed really cool, and it turns out she is — down-to-earth, self-deprecating and so talented. I flew down to Austin, and I was only in Austin for about three hours, and we recorded the song together.”