

GARDEN & GUN

TRAVEL

A Travel Pro's Predictions for Southern Adventures in 2025

Samantha Brown celebrates twenty-five years on television—and shares some of the Southern travel trends to watch this year

By **TRUDY HAYWOOD SAUNDERS**

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Samantha Brown on North Carolina's Crystal Coast.

PHOTO: PBS

If you've tuned into TV shows about travel since the turn of the millennium, chances are you've seen Samantha Brown. The two-time Emmy-winning host began her television career on the Travel Channel in 2000 and is now the executive producer and host of the award-winning PBS series *Samantha Brown's Places to Love*.

The series' new season, now airing, highlights Southern locations such as North Carolina's Crystal Coast, New Orleans, and the longest stretch of Route 66 in Oklahoma. There's no complex formula for picking the places—"it's just kind of where I want to go, to be quite honest," Brown says. Here are some of her predictions and tips for travel in the South in 2025:

Travelers want authentic experiences.

“I love discovering what people just think is everyday normal, when you can go somewhere and feel like you were absorbed in a place and its culture,” Brown says. For her, such experiences have included meeting a duck decoy maker in Beaufort, North Carolina, and witnessing the Acadian culture in Louisiana, with its vibrant music and foodways. “We went to this place called the Blue Moon Saloon, a turn-of-the-century home turned into a bar and music venue, with creaky wood floors for dancing,” she says. “We listened to a group called the Magnolia Sisters, and I loved them because they were an all-woman band, and they only did songs inspired by Cajun music of the 1920s and ’30s.”

Southern destinations will remain popular.

“In the South, everyone’s invited, and there’s not that sort of air about it—you just walk in,” Brown says. “The food is so accessible; the music, dancing, it’s phenomenal. I think that’s why it does so well.”