

## **RULES OF THE ROAD**

By Richard Sorokin

Driving a boat in the vicinity of other boats is like driving a car on a busy highway. However there are no stop signs, traffic lights or marks on the highway to regulate the traffic. You must know the rules and follow them to avoid being a hazard on the water.

To understand the rules you should know that the basic idea is that more maneuverable vessels stay out of the way of less maneuverable vessels. Motor boat gives way to sailboats. Small boats give way to large boats. Overtaking vessels stay out of the way of vessels that they are passing. Regardless of motor or sail.

The rules really come into play when the same type of vessels meet. Two motor boats are approaching each other. If the other vessel is anywhere off your bow to your starboard beam you must give way and let him pass. At night he will be seeing your green running light and will stand on. Your red running light is on your portside (port wine is red) any vessel approaching you from your port side must give way when they see the red light.

With sail boats, starboard tack (wind coming over the starboard side, boom on port side) has right of way over port tack. Close hauled has rights over running free.