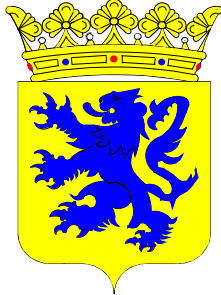


## Gramont



### Description of Arms :

Ecartelé : au 1, d'or au lion d'azur armé et lampassé de gueules (Gramont) ; au 2 et 3, de gueules à 3 flèches d'or, possées en pal empennées et armées d'argent ( Aster ) ; au 4, d'or à la levrette de gueules accolée et bouchée d'azur à la bordure de sable chargée de 8 besaznts d'or ( Aure ) ; sur le tout, de gueules à 4 otelles d'argent (Commingses).

### Index

**Principal Title :** Duke of Gramont.

**Creation :** France, 1663.

**Subsidiary Titles :** Count of Guiche, Duke of Guiche (1700), Prince of Bidache (1570), Duke of Lesparre, 1739.

**Family Name :** Gramont.

**Family History :** The origins of this fascinating family are lost in the mists of time. The present duke comes down directly from the Dukes of Gascony - and they were of Merovingien descent. From 1570, the Gramonts were sovereign princes of Bidache, a rather small state in the heart of Gascony, not from from Biarritz. The story is that this independant country was illegally annexed to France in 1790 ; otherwise it would now have the same status as, say, Monaco. The duke spends part of his time in America but his son has taken charge of the magnificent ruins of the family château. By tradition, he is known by the secondary title of Duke of Guiche. It seems he is less sanguine than his father about losing his "country".

Antoine III de Gramont was a *maréchal de France*. After serving abroad and in the Thirty Years War, he returned to France, remained faithful to the Crown during the Fronde and was rewarded with a duchy. He married a niece of Cardinal Richelieu. His brother also distinguished himself in battle, as did his eldest son. This latter, Armand, blotted his copy-book by pursuing Henriette d'Orléans and then Mlle de la Vallière. This brought down disgrace at the hands of Louis XIV. His nephew, Antoine IV, took up the reins and, in his turn, became a Marshal. Another Antoine ( the Fifth ) was prominent at the crucial time when Prussia was threatening the stability of Europe, which led to the Franco-Prussian War.

Next we hear of Ludovic, known as the Duke de Gramont-Caderousse. He was a follower of form and aimed to be the best jockey in France. A distinguished journalist was not so sure and the affair ended in a duel, in the Forest of Saint Germain, in October 1862. The duke won, killed his opponent and then offered the widow a pension. He then further disgraced himself by a pursuing a friendly actress known as the "Grand-Duchess of Gérolstein". It all ended tragically; having wasted his fortune, he died, bringing up blood.

The dukedom of Lesparre is now held by a branch of the main family.

# Gramont

François de Gramont,  
Sire of Bidache

