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Asymmetric Hydrogenation of α,β -Unsaturated Carboxylic Esters with Chiral Iridium N,P Ligand Complexes

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Author(s) Woodmansee, David H.; Müller, Marc-André; Tröndlin, Lars; Hörmann, Esther; Pfaltz, Andreas

Author(s) at UniBasel Pfaltz, Andreas ; Hörmann, Esther ;

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Enantioselective conjugate reduction of a wide range of α,β -unsaturated carboxylic esters was achieved using chiral Ir N,P complexes as hydrogenation catalysts. Depending on the substitution pattern of the substrate, different ligands perform best. α,β -Unsaturated carboxylic esters substituted at the α position are less problematic substrates than originally anticipated and in some cases α -substituted substrates actually reacted with higher enantioselectivity than their β -substituted analogues. The resulting saturated esters with a stereogenic center in the α or β position were obtained in high enantiomeric purity.

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