

With compliments of the Author

Convenient Synthesis of Volatile *Streptomyces* Lactones

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Dedicated to Prof. Ian Blair on the occasion of his 60th birthday

Abstract: A convenient three-step synthetic approach towards 3-alkyl-5-methyl-2[5H]furanones is described. The steps involved in the synthesis are domino primary alcohol oxidation–Wittig reaction, acid-catalysed lactonisation and isomerisation. This synthetic approach has been exploited to synthesise four *Streptomyces* lactones.

Key words: domino reaction, Wittig reaction, isomerisation, lactone, oxidation

Butenolide (3-alkyl-5-methyl-2[5H]furanone), a five-membered unsaturated lactone, is widely encountered in many natural products.¹ Butenolides are of interest² due to their broad range of biological activities e.g. butenolide **1a** is a component of mushroom flavour,³ **1b** has fungicidal activity,⁴ **1c–g** are metabolites from *Streptomyces griseus*,^{1b,5} while **2** and **3** isolated from leaves of *Hortonia* exhibited mosquito larvicidal activities (Figure 1).⁶ 3-Substituted-5-methyl-2[5H]furanone is believed to be one of the essential subunits responsible for the cytotoxicity of acetogenins.^{2g}

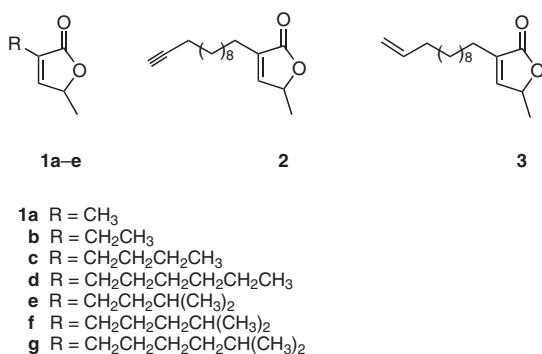


Figure 1

Domino reactions have attracted considerable attention⁷ as they result in the reduction in the amount of by-products, solvents, eluents, time and energy used. In continuation of our research work dealing with the use of domino primary alcohol oxidation–Wittig reactions,⁸ we were interested in testing functionalised Wittig reagent **5** for its own and its products' stability towards the domino reac-

tion conditions (Scheme 1). Thus, butanol was subjected to the domino primary alcohol oxidation–Wittig reaction, after three hours the alcohol was found to be consumed (TLC). On usual work-up, only one product was obtained. As the product could be *E* or *Z*, it was necessary to know the geometry of the product. As the product was a trisubstituted olefin it was necessary to compare the ¹H NMR chemical shift values with *syn* and *anti* protons attached at the β-carbon of the unsaturated system. To do this, stable phosphorane **5** was condensed with formaldehyde to give **6a** (Figure 2). The protons at the β-carbon appeared at 5.77 and 6.20 ppm. The signal at 5.77 ppm was due to the *anti* proton and the signal at 6.20 ppm was due to the *syn* proton with respect to carboethoxy group and thus **6c** was confirmed to be the *E*-isomer. Prolonging the reaction time (> 4 h) resulted in a decrease in yield showing just how sensitive the product was to reaction conditions. The *E*-ester **6c** was then subjected to acid-catalysed lactonisation followed by isomerisation using RhCl₃·3H₂O as depicted (Scheme 1), to yield racemic 3-butyl-5-methyl-2[5H]furanone (**1c**), a naturally occurring butenolide. Optically active compound **1c** is a precursor⁹ to (+)-blastmycinone and (–)-3-*epi*-blastmycinone. Similarly, hexanol and 3-methyl butanol were subjected to the above protocol to obtain (±)-butenolides **1d,e**. For volatile aldehydes direct condensation of phosphorane **5** with 37% formalin and 20% aqueous acetaldehyde was necessary to obtain **6a,b**. In our hands, pure butenolide **1a** was not obtained by the isomerisation of **7a**. Incidentally all the (±)-γ-methyl-α-alkylidene-γ-lactones (**7b–e**) have exclusive *E*-geometry.¹⁰

In conclusion, we have demonstrated that functionalised Wittig reagent **5** can also be used for the domino primary alcohol oxidation–Wittig reaction. Using this protocol, four volatile *Streptomyces* lactones were synthesized as racemates in just three steps in a convenient manner. Synthesis of two of them (**1d** and **1e**) is reported for the first time.

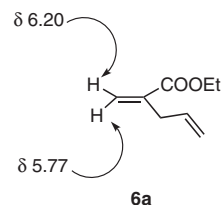


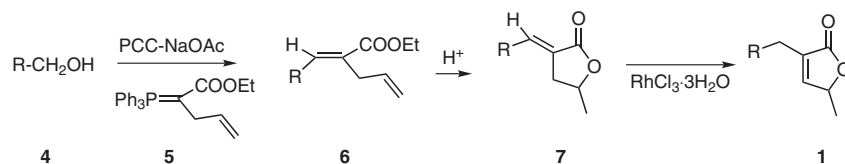
Figure 2

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Scheme 1

Table 1 Yields for the Three-Step Synthesis

Compound	R	Yield (%)		
		6	7	1
a	H	50 ^a	87	–
b	CH ₃	50 ^a	85	92
c ^b	CH ₂ CH ₂ CH ₃	57	92	77
d	CH ₂ (CH ₂) ₃ CH ₃	60	89	93
e	CH ₂ CH(CH ₃) ₂	65	90	94

^a Yield based on phosphorane consumed.

^b Yield: 49%, obtained using IBX.¹¹

Column chromatography was performed on silica gel (60–120 mesh) and TLC on silica gel (13% CaSO₄ as binder). IR spectra were recorded on Shimadzu FT-IR spectrophotometer (KBr pellet or neat sample). ¹H NMR and ¹³C NMR were recorded on a Bruker-300 MHz instrument. The multiplicities of carbon signals were obtained from DEPT experiments. Low resolution mass spectra were recorded on triple quadrupole MS/MS instrument (Applied Biosystem Inc.) and high resolution mass spectra (HRMS) were recorded on a MicroMass ES-QTOF Mass spectrometer.

Phosphorane 5

A mixture of carboethoxymethylenetriphenylphosphorane (10 g, 2.87 mmol) and allyl bromide (4.16 g, 3.44 mmol) was refluxed in CHCl₃ (25 mL) for 5 h. The solvent was evaporated under vacuum. H₂O (100 mL) was added and the reaction mixture was washed with benzene (2 × 20 mL). Benzene (50 mL) and phenolphthalein (2 drops) were added to the aqueous layer and 2 N NaOH was added dropwise with vigorous shaking till a pink colour persisted. The benzene layer was separated, washed with H₂O (20 mL), brine (10 mL), dried over Na₂SO₄ and concentrated to get a thick syrupy liquid which on scratching after addition of anhyd hexane (15 mL) resulted in a solid product. The solid, on recrystallisation (benzene–hexane), yielded phosphorane 5 (7.8 g, 70%); mp 122 °C.¹²

Esters 6a,b; General Procedure

To a solution of phosphorane 5 (1 mmol) in MeOH (10 mL) was added an aq solution of aldehyde (2 mL, 5 mmol) and the reaction mixture was refluxed for 2 h. After the completion of reaction, hexanes (20 mL) was added and the reaction mixture was shaken vigorously. The upper layer was separated, evaporated and the resulting crude product was purified by silica gel column chromatography (hexanes) to afford a pleasant-smelling volatile liquid.

Ethyl-2-methylidenepent-4-enoate (6a)

Yield: 50%.

IR (neat): 1727 (C=O), 1640 (C=C) cm⁻¹.

¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 1.31 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3 H, OCH₂CH₃), 3.07 (br d, *J* = 6.6 Hz, 2 H, CH₂CH=CH₂), 4.22 (q, *J* =

7.1 Hz, 2 H, OCH₂CH₃), 5.11 (m, 2 H, CH₂CH=CH₂), 5.57 (br s, 1 H, HCH=C), 5.84 (m, 1 H, CH₂CH=CH₂), 6.20 (br s, 1 H, HCH=C).

¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 14.10 (CH₃), 35.82 (CH), 60.60 (OCH₂), 116.65 (CH=CH₂), 125.08 (=CH₂), 135.10 (=CH), 139.18 (C), 166.86 (C=O).

MS: *m/z* (%) = 141 (28, M⁺ + 1), 113 (100), 112 (12), 95 (48), 67(36).

(E)-Ethyl-2-ethylidenepent-4-enoate (6b)

Yield: 50%.

IR (neat): 1722 (C=O), 1660 (C=C), 1643 (C=C) cm⁻¹.

¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 1.28 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3 H, OCH₂CH₃), 1.79 (d, *J* = 6.9 Hz, 3 H, CH₃), 3.08 (d, *J* = 6.0 Hz, 2 H, CH₂CH=CH₂), 4.19 (q, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 2 H, OCH₂CH₃), 5.00 (m, 2 H, CH₂CH=CH₂), 5.81 (m, 1 H, CH₂CH=CH₂), 6.95 (q, *J* = 6.9 Hz, 1 H, =CHCH₃).

¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 14.12 (CH₃), 14.21 (CH₃), 30.45 (CH₂), 60.36 (OCH₂), 114.91 (CH=CH₂), 130.96 (C), 135.19 (CH=CH₂), 138.28 (=CH), 167.45 (C=O).

MS: *m/z* (%) = 155 (22, M⁺ + 1), 127 (100), 109 (54), 99 (48), 81 (39), 79 (11).

Esters 6c–e; General Procedure

To a magnetically stirred suspension of PCC (1.5 mmol) and NaOAc (1.5 mmol) in anhyd CH₂Cl₂ (10 mL), alcohol 4 (1 mmol) in anhyd CH₂Cl₂ (5 mL) was added followed by phosphorane 5 (1 mmol) in one portion. After 3 h, Et₂O (5 mL) was added and the supernatant solution was decanted from the black granular solid. The combined organic layers were filtered through a short pad of celite. The residue obtained after evaporation of the solvent was further purified by column chromatography using hexanes as the eluent to afford a pleasant-smelling liquid.

(E)-Ethyl-2-(prop-2-enyl)hex-2-enoate (6c)

Yield: 57%.

IR (neat): 1716 (C=O), 1654 (C=C), 1643 (C=C) cm⁻¹.

¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 0.95 (t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 3 H, CH₂CH₃), 1.29 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3 H, OCH₂CH₃), 1.49 (q, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 2 H, CH₂CH₃), 2.17 (q, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 2 H, CH₂CH₂CH₃), 3.07 (d, *J* = 6.0 Hz, 2 H, CH₂CH=CH₂), 4.19 (q, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 2 H, OCH₂CH₃), 4.99 (m, 2 H, CH₂CH=CH₂), 5.80 (m, 1 H, CH₂CH=CH₂), 6.84 (t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 1 H, =CH).

¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 13.80 (CH₃), 14.15 (CH₃), 21.89 (CH₂), 30.46 (CH₂), 30.75 (CH₂), 60.30 (CH₂), 114.00 (CH=CH₂), 130.02 (C), 135.55 (CH=CH₂), 143.45 (CH), 167.52 (C=O).

MS: *m/z* (%) = 183 (6, M⁺ + 1), 155 (3), 137 (73), 109 (100), 67 (43).

(E)-Ethyl-2-(prop-2-enyl)oct-2-enoate (6d)

Yield: 60%.

IR (neat): 1722 (C=O), 1653 (C=C), 1643 (C=C) cm⁻¹.

¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 0.82 (t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 3 H, CH₂CH₃), 1.11–1.35 (m, 9 H, OCH₂CH₃ and 3 × CH₂), 2.11 (m, 2 H, =CCH₂), 3.00 (d, *J* = 6 Hz, 2 H, CH₂CH=CH₂), 4.12 (q, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 2 H,

OCH₂CH₃), 4.91 (m, 2 H, CH₂CH=CH₂), 5.74 (m, 1 H, CH₂CH=CH₂), 6.77 (t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 1 H, =CH).

¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 13.97 (CH₃), 14.28 (CH₃), 22.49 (CH₂), 28.40 (CH₂), 28.54 (CH₂), 30.84 (CH₂), 31.62 (CH₂), 60.44 (OCH₂), 114.96 (CH=CH₂), 129.86 (C), 135.66 (CH=CH₂), 143.92 (=CH), 167.69 (C=O).

HRMS: *m/z* calcd for C₁₃H₂₃O₂ (M + H⁺): 211.1698; found: 211.1696.

(E)-Ethyl-5-methyl-2-(prop-2-enyl)hex-2-enoate (6e)

Yield: 65%.

IR (neat): 1720 (C=O), 1650 (C=C) cm⁻¹.

¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 0.90 [d, *J* = 6.6 Hz, 6 H, CH(CH₃)₂], 1.22 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3 H, OCH₂CH₃), 1.69 [m, 1 H, CH(CH₃)₂], 2.01 (m, 2 H, CH₂), 2.99 (d, *J* = 6.0 Hz, 2 H, CH₂CH=CH₂), 4.11 (q, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 2 H, OCH₂CH₃), 4.91 (m, 2 H, CH₂CH=CH₂), 5.73 (m, 1 H, CH₂CH=CH₂), 6.79 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 1 H, CH₂CH=C).

¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 14.23 (CH₃), 22.32 (CH₃), 22.66 (CH₃), 29.08 (CH), 31.58 (CH₂), 37.58 (CH₂), 60.38 (OCH₂), 114.98 (CH=CH₂), 130.48 (C), 135.56 (CH=CH₂), 148.13 (=CH), 167.58 (C=O).

HRMS: *m/z* calcd for C₁₂H₂₀O₂ + Na (M + Na⁺): 219.1361; found: 219.1361.

7a–e; General Procedure

To a flask containing ice-cold ester **6** (1 mmol) was added ice-cold concd H₂SO₄ (2 mL) and the reaction mixture was stirred in an ice bath for 1 h. After the completion of reaction sufficient crushed ice (10 mL) was added to the reaction mixture and the reaction mixture was extracted with Et₂O (3 × 5 mL). The combined organic extracts were dried over anhyd Na₂SO₄ and the crude product was purified by silica gel column chromatography (EtOAc–hexanes, 1:9) to yield liquid lactone.

5-Methyl-3-(methylidene)dihydrofuran-2(5H)-one (7a)

Yield: 87%.

IR (neat): 1765 (C=O), 1665 (C=C) cm⁻¹.

¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 1.43 (d, *J* = 6.3 Hz, 3 H, CHCH₃), 2.56 (ddt, *J* = 16.8, 5.7, 2.7 Hz, 1 H, HCHCH), 3.10 (ddt, *J* = 16.8, 7.2, 2.7 Hz, 1 H, HCHCH), 4.66 (m, 1 H, CHCH₃), 5.63 (t, *J* = 2.7 Hz, 1 H, HCH=C), 6.23 (t, *J* = 2.7 Hz, 1 H, HCH=C).

¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 21.88 (CH₃), 35.10 (CH₂), 73.82 (CH), 121.91 (CH₂), 134.80 (C), 176.20 (C=O).

MS: *m/z* (%) = 113 (8, M⁺ + 1), 95 (17), 67 (100), 65 (20), 43 (13).

5-Methyl-3-[(E)-ethylidene]dihydrofuran-2(5H)-one (7b)

Yield: 85%.

IR (neat): 1756 (C=O), 1680 (C=C) cm⁻¹.

¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 1.35 (d, *J* = 6.3 Hz, 3 H, CHCH₃), 1.84 (dt, *J* = 6.9, 2.1, 1.8 Hz, 3 H, =CHCH₃), 2.35 (ddt, *J* = 16.8, 5.2, 1.8 Hz, 1 H, HCHCH), 3.01 (ddt, *J* = 16.8, 7.8, 2.1 Hz, 1 H, HCHCH), 4.61 (ddq, *J* = 7.8, 6.3, 5.2 Hz, 1 H, CHCH₃), 6.78 (m, 1 H, =CH).

¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 15.55 (CH₃), 22.20 (CH₃), 32.65 (CH₂), 73.85 (CH), 127.55 (C), 135.38 (CH), 170.64 (C=O).

MS: *m/z* (%) = 127 (7, M⁺ + 1), 109 (29), 81 (100), 79 (37), 77 (6), 43 (5).

5-Methyl-3-[(E)-butylidene]dihydrofuran-2(5H)-one (7c)

Yield: 92%.

IR (neat): 1753 (C=O), 1690 (C=C) cm⁻¹.

¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 0.95 (t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 3 H, CH₂CH₃), 1.42 (d, *J* = 6.3 Hz, 3 H, CHCH₃), 1.51 (m, 2 H, CH₂CH₃), 2.16 (m, 2 H, =CHCH₂), 2.44 (m, 1 H, HCHCH), 3.01 (m, 1 H, HCHCH), 4.66 (m, 1 H, CH), 6.73 (m, 1 H, =CH).

¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 13.78 (CH₃), 21.47 (CH₂), 22.26 (CH₃), 32.16 (CH₂), 32.91 (CH₂), 73.94 (CH), 126.67 (C), 140.55 (=CH), 170.72 (C=O).

MS: *m/z* (%) = 155 (6, M⁺ + 1), 137 (50), 109 (100), 95 (26), 81 (28), 67 (96), 65 (10), 43 (8).

5-Methyl-3-[(E)-hexylidene]dihydrofuran-2(5H)-one (7d)

Yield: 89%.

IR (neat): 1753 (C=O), 1685 (C=C) cm⁻¹.

¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 0.90 (t, *J* = 6.6 Hz, 3 H, CH₂CH₃), 1.25–1.50 (m, 6 H, 3 × CH₂), 1.42 (d, *J* = 6.3 Hz, 3 H, CH₃), 2.18 (q, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 2 H, =CHCH₂), 2.40 (m, 1 H, HCHCH), 3.00 (br dd, *J* = 16.8, 7.8 Hz, 1 H, HCHCH), 4.65 (m, 1 H, CH), 6.72 (t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 1 H, =CH).

¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 13.91 (CH₃), 22.25 (CH₃), 22.40 (CH₂), 27.80 (CH₂), 30.13 (CH₂), 31.43 (CH₂), 32.88 (CH₂), 73.94 (CH), 126.45 (C), 140.87 (=CH), 170.96 (C=O).

HRMS: *m/z* calcd for C₁₁H₁₉O₂ (M + H⁺): 183.1385; found: 183.1376.

5-Methyl-3-[(E)-3-methylbutylidene]dihydrofuran-2(5H)-one (7e)

Yield: 90%.

IR (neat): 1752 (C=O), 1680 (C=C) cm⁻¹.

¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 0.94 [d, *J* = 6.6 Hz, 6 H, CH(CH₃)₂], 1.41 (d, *J* = 6.0 Hz, 3 H, CHCH₃), 1.81 (m, 1 H, CHCH₃), 2.06 (t, *J* = 6.6 Hz, 2 H, =CHCH₂), 2.40 (m, 1 H, HCHCH), 3.00 (br dd, *J* = 16.8, 7.8 Hz, 1 H, HCHCH), 4.66 (m, 1 H, CH), 6.76 (t, *J* = 7.8 Hz, 1 H, =CH).

¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 22.25 (CH₃), 22.39 (CH₃), 28.09 (CH₃), 33.05 (CH₂), 39.28 (CH₂), 73.93 (CH), 127.17 (C), 139.68 (=CH), 170.86 (C=O).

HRMS: *m/z* calcd for C₁₀H₁₇O₂ (M + H⁺): 169.1228; found: 169.1219.

1b–e; General Procedure

To a solution of lactone **7** (1 mmol) in degassed EtOH (10 mL) was added RhCl₃·3H₂O (0.01 mmol) and the reaction mixture was refluxed for 15 h. The crude product was purified by silica gel column chromatography (EtOAc–hexanes, 1:9) to yield liquid butenolide.

3-Ethyl-5-methyl-2[5H]furanone (1b)

Yield: 92%.

IR (neat): 1750 (C=O), 1650 (C=C) cm⁻¹.

¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 1.19 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3 H, CH₂CH₃), 1.34 (d, *J* = 6.6 Hz, 3 H, CHCH₃), 2.22 (q, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 2 H, CH₂CH₃), 4.94 (m, 1 H, CH), 6.93 (br s, 1 H, =CH).

¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 11.43 (CH₃), 18.24 (CH₃), 18.98 (CH₂), 77.23 (CH), 134.86 (C), 148.54 (=CH), 173.57 (C=O).

MS: *m/z* (%) = 127 (88, M⁺ + 1), 109 (100), 99 (26), 69 (34).

3-Butyl-5-methyl-2[5H]furanone (1c)

Yield: 77%.

IR (neat): 1750 (C=O), 1650 (C=C) cm⁻¹.

¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): δ = 0.87 (t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, 3 H, CH₂CH₃), 1.19–1.53 (m, 4 H, 2 × CH₂), 1.34 (d, *J* = 6.0 Hz, 3 H, CHCH₃), 2.22

(t, $J = 7.5$ Hz, 2 H, =CCH₂), 4.95 (q, $J = 7.5$ Hz, 1 H, CH), 6.90 (m, 1 H, =CH).

¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): $\delta = 13.68$ (CH₃), 19.13 (CH₃), 22.18 (CH₂), 24.78 (CH₂), 29.43 (CH₂), 75.45 (CH), 134.24 (C), 148.73 (=CH), 173.60 (C=O).

MS: m/z (%) = 155 (32, M⁺ + 1), 137 (47), 109 (100), 67 (20).

3-Hexyl-5-methyl-2[5H]furanone (1d)

Yield: 93%.

IR (neat): 1750 (C=O), 1650 (C=C) cm⁻¹.

¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): $\delta = 0.88$ (d, $J = 6.3$ Hz, 3 H, CH₂CH₃), 1.26–1.60 (m, 8 H, 4 × CH₂), 1.47 (d, $J = 6.6$ Hz, 3 H, CHCH₃), 2.27 (t, $J = 7.5$ Hz, 2 H, =CCH₂), 5.00 (m, 1 H, CH), 6.99 (br d, $J = 0.9$ Hz, 1 H, =CH).

¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): $\delta = 14.01$ (CH₃), 19.12 (CH₃), 22.51 (CH₂), 22.16 (CH₂), 27.35 (CH₂), 28.82 (CH₂), 31.48 (CH₂), 73.87 (CH), 134.35 (C), 148.83 (=CH), 173.87 (C=O).

HRMS: m/z calcd for C₁₁H₁₉O₂ (M + H⁺): 183.1385; found: 183.1393.

3-(3-Methyl-butyl)-5-methyl-2[5H]furanone (1e)

Yield: 94%.

IR (neat): 1750 (C=O), 1650 (C=C) cm⁻¹.

¹H NMR (300 MHz, CDCl₃): $\delta = 0.93$ [d, $J = 6.6$ Hz, 6 H, CH(CH₃)₂], 1.18–1.65 (m, 3 H, CH₂, CH), 1.42 (d, $J = 6.3$ Hz, 3 H, CHCH₃), 2.28 (t, $J = 7.8$ Hz, 2 H, =CCH₂), 4.99 (m, 1 H, CH), 6.98 (d, $J = 1.2$ Hz, 1 H, =CH).

¹³C NMR (75 MHz, CDCl₃): $\delta = 19.22$ (CH₃), 22.36 (CH₃), 23.12 (CH₃), 27.74 (CH₂), 29.69 (CH), 36.41 (CH₂), 77.02 (CH), 134.59 (C), 148.65 (=CH), 170.01 (C=O).

HRMS: m/z calcd for C₁₀H₁₇O₂ (M + H⁺): 169.1228; found: 169.1232.

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