Synthesis of Polycyclic Spiroindolines via the Cascade Reaction of 3-(2-isocyanoethyl)Indoles

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1. General Information

Reactions were carried out using commercial reagents in over-dried apparatus. CH₂Cl₂ was dried over powdered CaH₂ and distilled under nitrogen just before use. ¹H NMR spectra were recorded on commercial instruments (400 MHz). Chemical shifts are recorded in ppm relative to tetramethylsilane and with the solvent resonance as the internal standard (CDCl₃, δ = 7.26). Spectra are reported as follows: chemical shift, multiplicity (s = singlet, d = doublet, t = triplet, m = multiplet), coupling constants (Hz), integration and assignment. ¹³C NMR data were collected on commercial instruments (101 MHz) with complete proton decoupling. Chemical shifts are reported in ppm from the tetramethylsilane with the solvent resonance as internal standard (CDCl₃, δ = 77.0). Melting points (m. p.) were measured on the electrothermal digital melting point apparatus. HRMS was recorded on a commercial apparatus (ESI Source). All 2-isocyanoethylindoles¹ and 2,2-diester aziridines² were prepared according to the literature.

2. Optimization of Reaction Conditions

2.1 Screening of reaction solvents

N H 1a	NC +	$Ph \begin{array}{c} Ts \\ N \\ CO_2Et \\ CO_2Et \end{array} - 2a \end{array}$	Y(OTf) ₃ (10 mol%) 4 Å MS Solvent, rt, 20 h		Ph
-	Entry ^a	Solvent	Yie	eld $(\%)^b$	
-	1	CH ₂ Cl ₂		78%	
	2	ClCH ₂ CH ₂ C	21	73%	
	3	CHCl ₃		73%	
	4	CH ₃ CN		22%	
	5	1,4-Dioxan	e	13%	
	6	THF		trace	
	7	Toluene		trace	
	8	DMF		N.R	

^{*a*}Unless otherwise noted, the reactions were performed with $Y(OTf)_3$ (10 mol%), 4 Å MS (50 mg), **1a** (0.2 mmol) and **2a** (0.3 mmol) in solvent (1.0 mL) at rt for 20 h. ^{*b*}Yield of isolated product.

2.2 Screening of reaction temperature



^{*a*}Unless otherwise noted, the reactions were performed with $Y(OTf)_3$ (10 mol%), 4 Å MS (50 mg), **1a** (0.2 mmol) and **2a** (0.3 mmol) in CH₂Cl₂ (1.0 mL) at rt for 20 h. ^{*b*}Yield of isolated product.

2.3 Screening of concentration of reaction



^{*a*}Unless otherwise noted, the reactions were performed with $Y(OTf)_3$ (10 mol%), 4 Å MS (50 mg), 1a (0.2 mmol) and 2a (0.3 mmol) in CH₂Cl₂ at rt for 20 h. ^{*b*}Yield of isolated product

3. General Procedure and Spectral Data of Products 3



A dry reaction tube was charged with 2-isocyanoethylindoles 1 (0.2 mmol), aziridines 2 (0.3 mmol) and 4 ÅMS (50 mg). Under N₂ atmosphere, CH₂Cl₂ (0.5 mL) was added. The mixture was stirred at room temperature for 15 min, then Y(OTf)₃ (0.02 mmol, 10.8 mg) and dry CH₂Cl₂ (0.5 mL) was added in the tube. The reaction mixture continued stirring at room temperature for indicated time. The residue was directly purified by flash chromatography on silica gel using petroleum ether/ethyl acetate/dichloromethane = 5/1/1 as eluent to afford the desired products **3**.



diethyl 4-phenyl-1,2,6a,7-tetrahydro-6H-pyrrolo[3',2':4,5]pyrido[3,4-b] indole-6,6-dicarboxylate 3aa

The reaction was run at rt for 20 h, affording product **3aa** in 78% yield (67.4 mg) as a yellow solid. $R_f = 0.3$ (PE:EA:DCM = 5:1:1), m.p. 123-125 °C.

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.91 – 7.82 (m, 2H), 7.36 – 7.21 (m, 3H), 6.95 – 6.85 (m, 2H), 6.57 (td, *J* = 7.5, 0.8 Hz, 1H), 6.40 (d, *J* = 7.8 Hz, 1H), 5.16 (d, *J* = 5.0 Hz, 1H), 4.38 (qd, *J* = 7.1, 2.5 Hz, 2H), 4.30 (td, *J* = 9.2, 4.5 Hz, 1H), 4.22 – 4.15 (m, 2H), 4.13 – 4.02 (m, 2H), 2.67 – 2.49 (m, 2H), 1.33 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3H), 1.12 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3H).

¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 169.0, 168.5, 167.9, 166.5, 149.1, 134.8, 131.4, 131.0, 129.1, 128.6, 128.2, 122.6, 119.6, 110.0, 76.0, 70.8, 62.7, 62.6, 62.4, 60.4, 41.3, 14.2, 13.9.

HRMS (ESI) calcd for $C_{25}H_{26}N_3O_4$ ([M+H⁺]) = 432.1923, Found 432.1920.

dimethyl 4-phenyl-1,2,6a,7-tetrahydro-6H-pyrrolo[3',2':4,5]pyrido[3,4 -b] indole-6,6-dicarboxylate 3ab



The reaction was run at rt for 24 h, affording product **3ab** in 49% yield (39.5 mg) as a yellow solid. $R_f = 0.2$ (PE:EA:DCM = 5:1:1), m.p.

153-155 °C.¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.96 – 7.94 (m, 2H), 7.43 – 7.38 (m, 1H), 7.35 – 7.31 (m, 2H), 7.00 – 6.94 (m, 2H), 6.66 (td, *J* = 7.5, 0.8 Hz, 1H), 6.49 (d, *J* = 7.8 Hz, 1H), 5.27 (d, *J* = 5.3 Hz, 1H), 4.43 – 4.35 (m, 1H), 4.30 – 4.24 (m, 2H), 4.00 (s, 3H), 3.68 (s, 3H), 2.73 – 2.57 (m, 2H).

¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 169.8, 168.8, 167.8, 166.9, 149.0, 134.5, 131.6, 131.0, 129.1, 128.6, 128.3, 122.6, 119.8, 110.2, 76.1, 71.2, 62.7, 60.5, 53.6, 53.5, 41.3.
HRMS (ESI) calcd for C₂₃H₂₂N₃O₄ ([M+H⁺]) = 404.1610, Found 404.1606.



diethyl 4-(3-chlorophenyl)-1,2,6a,7-tetrahydro-6H-pyrrolo[3',2':4,5] pyrido[3,4-b] indole-6,6-dicarboxylate 3ac

The reaction was run at rt for 18 h, affording product **3ac** in 91% yield (84.6 mg) as a yellow solid. $R_f = 0.2$ (PE:EA:DCM = 5:1:1), m.p. 155-157 °C.

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.02 (t, J = 1.8 Hz, 1H), 7.82 (td, J = 8.0 Hz, 1.2 Hz, 1H), 7.38 – 7.36 (m, 1H), 7.28 – 7.24 (m, 1H), 6.99 – 6.95

(m, 2H), 6.65 (td, *J* = 7.5, 0.9 Hz, 1H), 6.50 – 6.48 (m, 1H), 5.23 (d, *J* = 4.0 Hz, 1H), 4.49 – 4.43 (m, 2H), 4.41 – 4.34 (m, 1H), 4.30 – 4.23 (m, 2H), 4.20 – 4.10 (m, 2H), 2.70 – 2.56 (m, 2H), 1.42 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3H), 1.20 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3H).

¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 168.8, 167.5, 167.2, 166.2, 149.0, 136.3, 134.5, 131.5, 130.8, 129.5, 129.2, 128.2, 127.0, 122.6, 119.8, 110.1, 76.2, 70.8, 62.7, 62.7, 62.6, 60.5, 41.2, 14.2, 13.9.
HRMS (ESI) calcd for C₂₅H₂₅ClN₃O₄ ([M+H⁺]) = 466.1534, Found 466.1512.



diethyl 4-(m-tolyl))-1,2,6a,7-tetrahydro-6H-pyrrolo[3',2':4,5] pyrido[3,4-b] indole-6,6-dicarboxylate 3ad

The reaction was run at rt for 24 h, affording product **3ad** in 92% yield (82.0 mg) as a yellow solid. $R_f = 0.2$ (PE:EA:DCM = 5:1:1), m.p. 158-160 °C.

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.82 (s, 1H), 7.69 (td, J = 4.0, 1.2 Hz, 1H),

7.21 - 7.19 (m, 2H), 6.99 - 6.93 (m, 2H), 6.64 (td, J = 7.2, 0.8 Hz, 1H), 6.47 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 5.23 (d, J = 2.0 Hz, 1H), 4.46 (qd, J = 7.2, 2.8 Hz, 2H), 4.40 - 4.34 (m, 1H), 4.29 - 4.22 (m, 2H), 4.17 - 4.10 (m, 2H), 2.71 - 2.56 (m, 2H), 2.32 (s, 3H), 1.41 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 3H), 1.19 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 3H).

¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 169.0, 168.7, 167.9, 166.5, 149.1, 137.9, 134.6, 132.4, 131.0, 129.1, 128.5, 128.1, 126.2, 122.6, 119.6, 110.1, 76.0, 70.9, 62.8, 62.6, 62.5, 60.4, 41.3, 21.3, 14.2, 13.9.

HRMS (ESI) calcd for $C_{26}H_{28}N_3O_4$ ([M+H⁺]) = 446.2080, Found 446.2076.



diethyl 4-((4-fluorophenyl))-1,2,6a,7-tetrahydro-6H-pyrrolo[3',2':4,5] pyrido[3,4-b] indole-6,6-dicarboxylate 3ae

The reaction was run at rt for 40 h, affording product **3ae** in 61% yield (54.5 mg) as a yellow solid. $R_f = 0.2$ (PE:EA:DCM = 5:1:1), m.p. 149-151 °C.

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.00 – 7.97 (m, 2H), 7.03 – 6.94 (m, 4H), 6.64 (td, *J* = 7.6, 1.2 Hz, 1H), 6.49 (dd, *J* = 8.0, 0.8 Hz, 1H), 5.22 (s, 1H),

4.49 – 4.42 (m, 2H), 4.40 – 4.34 (m, 1H), 4.30 – 4.22 (m, 2H), 4.20 – 4.10 (m, 2H), 2.71 – 2.56 (m, 2H), 1.41 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3H), 1.19 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3H).

¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 168.9, 167.8, 167.2, 166.2, 165.1 (d, *J* = 253 Hz), 149.0, 131.0 (d, *J* = 3 Hz), 130.9, 130.8, 129.2, 122.5, 119.7, 115.3 (d, *J* = 20 Hz), 110.1, 76.0, 70.7, 62.7, 62.7, 62.5, 60.4, 41.3, 14.2, 13.9.

HRMS (ESI) calcd for $C_{25}H_{25}FN_{3}O_{4}$ ([M+H⁺]) = 450.1829, Found 450.1825.

diethyl 4-(4-chlorophenyl)-1,2,6a,7-tetrahydro-6H-pyrrolo[3',2':4,5] pyrido[3,4-b] indole-6,6-dicarboxylate 3af



The reaction was run at rt for 33 h, affording product **3af** in 71% yield (66.0 mg) as a yellow solid. $R_f = 0.2$ (PE:EA:DCM = 5:1:1), m.p. 107-109 °C.

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.95 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 7.31 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 6.99 – 6.96 (m, 2H), 6.66 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 6.50 (d, J = 8.0 Hz,

1H), 5.24 (s, 1H), 4.50 – 4.43 (m, 2H), 4.41 – 4.35 (m, 1H), 4.32 – 4.27 (m, 2H), 4.21 – 4.11 (m, 2H), 2.72 – 2.57 (m, 2H), 1.42 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3H), 1.21 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3H).

¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 168.8, 167.6, 167.3, 166.3, 149.0, 137.8, 133.1, 130.8, 129.9, 129.2, 128.5, 122.5, 119.7, 110.1, 76.1, 70.7, 62.7, 62.7, 62.5, 60.5, 41.2, 14.2, 13.9. HRMS (ESI) calcd for C₂₅H₂₅ClN₃O₄ ([M+H⁺]) = 466.1534, Found 466.1532.



diethyl 4-(4-bromophenyl)-1,2,6a,7-tetrahydro-6H-pyrrolo[3',2':4,5] pyrido[3,4-b] indole-6,6-dicarboxylate 3ag

The reaction was run at rt for 33 h, affording product **3ag** in 77% yield (78.0 mg) as a yellow solid. $R_f = 0.2$ (PE:EA:DCM = 5:1:1), m.p. 137-139 °C.

 1 H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.90 – 7.86 (m, 2H), 7.50 – 7.47 (m, 2H),

7.00 - 6.96 (m, 2H), 6.66 (td, J = 7.6, 1.2 Hz, 1H), 6.50 (d, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 5.24 (d, J = 3.6 Hz, 1H), 4.52 - 4.44 (m, 2H), 4.42 - 4.36 (m, 1H), 4.32 - 4.24 (m, 2H), 4.22 - 4.12 (m, 2H), 2.70 - 2.60 (m, 2H), 1.43 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 3H), 1.21 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 3H). ¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 168.8, 167.6, 167.4, 166.2, 149.0, 133.5, 131.5, 130.8, 130.1, 129.2,

126.5, 122.5, 119.7, 110.1, 76.1, 70.7, 62.7, 62.7, 62.5, 60.5, 41.2, 14.2, 13.9.

HRMS (ESI) calcd for $C_{25}H_{25}BrN_3O_4$ ([M+H⁺]) = 510.1028, Found 510.1027.



diethyl 4-(4-[1,1'-biphenyl]-4-yl)-1,2,6a,7-tetrahydro-6H-pyrrolo [3',2':4,5]pyrido[3,4-b] indole-6,6-dicarboxylate 3ah

The reaction was run at rt for 40 h, affording product **3ah** in 74% yield (75.4 mg) as a yellow solid. $R_f = 0.2$ (PE:EA:DCM = 5:1:1), m.p. 148-150 °C.

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.05 – 8.02 (m, 2H), 7.57 – 7.55 (m, 4H), 7.44 – 7.40 (m, 2H), 7.36 – 7.32 (m, 1H), 7.01 – 6.94 (m, 2H), 6.66 (td, J

= 7.6, 0.8 Hz, 1H), 6.49 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 5.25 (s, 1H), 4.51 – 4.42 (m, 2H), 4.40 – 4.36 (m, 1H), 4.32 – 4.23 (m, 2H), 4.18 – 4.11 (m, 2H), 2.73 – 2.58 (m, 2H), 1.42 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3H), 1.21 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3H).

¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 169.0, 168.0, 167.9, 166.5, 149.1, 144.1, 140.5, 133.6, 131.0, 129.1, 129.1, 128.8, 127.7, 127.2, 127.0, 122.6, 119.7, 110.1, 76.1, 70.8, 62.7, 62.6, 62.5, 60.5, 41.3, 14.3, 13.9.

HRMS (ESI) calcd for $C_{31}H_{30}N_3O_4$ ([M+H⁺]) = 508.2236, Found 508.2233.



diethyl 4-(4-isopropylphenyl)-1,2,6a,7-tetrahydro-6H-pyrrolo [3',2':4,5]pyrido[3,4-b] indole-6,6-dicarboxylate 3ai

The reaction was run at rt for 40 h, affording product **3ai** in 83% yield (78.5 mg) as a yellow solid. $R_f = 0.3$ (PE:EA:DCM = 5:1:1), m.p. 156-158 °C.

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.87 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 2H), 7.20 (d, J = 8.4

Hz, 2H), 7.02 - 6.96 (m, 2H), 6.69 - 6.65 (m, 1H), 6.50 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 5.24 (d, J = 4.8 Hz, 1H), 4.52 - 4.43 (m, 2H), 4.42 - 4.35 (m, 1H), 4.31 - 4.25 (m, 2H), 4.21 - 4.12 (m, 2H), 2.93 - 2.86 (m, 1H), 2.74 - 2.58 (m, 2H), 1.43 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 3H), 1.23 - 1.20 (m, 9H).

¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 169,0, 168.3, 167.9, 166.6, 152.7, 149.1, 132.5, 131.1, 129.0, 128.7, 126.4, 122.6, 119.6, 110.0, 75.9, 70.7, 62.6, 62.5, 62.4, 60.3, 41.4, 34.1, 23.8, 23.6, 14.2, 13.9. HRMS (ESI) calcd for C₂₈H₃₂N₃O₄ ([M+H⁺]) = 474.2393, Found 474.2389.



diethyl 4-(4-(naphthalen-2-y)-1,2,6a,7-tetrahydro-6H-pyrrolo [3',2':4,5]pyrido[3,4-b] indole-6,6-dicarboxylate 3aj

The reaction was run at rt for 28 h, affording product **3aj** in 47% yield (45.3 mg) as a yellow solid. $R_f = 0.2$ (PE:EA:DCM = 5:1:1), m.p. 155-157 °C.

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.30 (d, *J* = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 7.83 (dd, *J* = 6.8, 2.4 Hz, 1H), 7.77 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 2H), 7.41 – 7.31 (m, 4H), 7.07 – 7.04

(m, 2H), 6.73 (td, *J* = 7.2, 0.8 Hz, 1H), 6.56 – 6.54 (m, 1H), 5.32 (s, 1H), 4.50 – 4.37 (m, 3H), 4.33 – 4.11 (m, 4H), 2.65 – 2.62 (m, 2H), 1.39 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3H), 1.29 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3H).

¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 171.1, 169.4, 168.9, 166.5, 149.3, 133.9, 133.0, 131.1, 131.0, 130.8, 129.5, 129.1, 128.1, 126.8, 126.0, 125.9 124.7, 123.1, 119.4, 109.9, 76.2, 70.1, 62.8, 62.5, 62.2, 60.2, 41.0, 14.2, 14.0.

HRMS (ESI) calcd for $C_{29}H_{28}N_3O_4$ ([M+H⁺]) = 482.2080, Found 482.2076.



diethyl 10-chloro-4-phenyl-1,2,6a,7-tetrahydro-6H-pyrrolo [3',2':4,5]pyrido[3,4-b] indole-6,6-dicarboxylate 3ba

The reaction was run at rt for 28 h, affording product **3ba** in 65% yield (60.4 mg) as a yellow solid. $R_f = 0.2$ (PE:EA:DCM = 5:1:1), m.p. 156-158 °C.

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.00 – 7.98 (dd, J = 8.4, 1.3 Hz, 2H), 7.48 – 7.43 (m, 1H), 7.40 – 7.36 (m, 2H), 6.95 – 6.92 (m, 2H), 6.42 – 6.40 (m, 1H), 5.27 (s, 1H), 4.50 – 4.46 (m, 2H), 4.44 – 4.35 (m, 1H), 4.32 – 4.26 (m, 2H), 4.22 – 4.12 (m, 2H), 2.73 – 2.58 (m, 2H), 1.43 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 3H), 1.22 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 3H).

¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 168.9, 168.3, 167.2, 166.3, 147.7, 134.5, 132.7, 131.6, 129.1, 128.5, 128.3, 123.8, 122.7, 110.7, 75.8, 71.2, 62.7, 62.6, 62.6, 60.4, 41.2, 14.2, 13.9.

HRMS (ESI) calcd for $C_{25}H_{25}ClN_3O_4$ ([M+H⁺]) = 466.1534, Found 466.1531.



diethyl 10-bromo-4-phenyl-1,2,6a,7-tetrahydro-6H-pyrrolo [3',2':4,5]pyrido[3,4-b] indole-6,6-dicarboxylate 3ca

The reaction was run at rt for 31 h, affording product **3ca** in 85% yield (86.6 mg) as a yellow solid. $R_f = 0.2$ (PE:EA:DCM = 5:1:1), m.p. 115-117°C.

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.98 – 7.95 (m, 2H), 7.45 – 7.41 (m, 1H), 7.38 – 7.34 (m, 2H), 7.04 – 7.02 (m, 2H), 6.34 (dd, J = 8.0, 1.2 Hz, 1H), 5.24 (s, 1H), 4.47 – 4.41 (m, 2H), 4.39 – 4.23 (m, 3H), 4.19 – 4.09 (m, 2H), 2.69 – 2.54 (m, 2H), 1.40 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 3H), 1.19 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 3H). ¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 168.9, 168.3, 167.2, 166.3, 148.2, 134.5, 133.2, 131.9, 131.7, 128.6, 128.4, 125.5, 111.2, 110.6, 75.8, 71.1, 62.7, 62.6, 62.5, 60.4, 41.2, 14.2, 13.9. HRMS (ESI) calcd for C₂₅H₂₅BrN₃O₄ ([M+H⁺]) = 510.1028, Found 510.1030.



diethyl 9-chloro-4-phenyl-1,2,6a,7-tetrahydro-6H-pyrrolo [3',2':4,5]pyrido[3,4-b] indole-6,6-dicarboxylate 3da

The reaction was run at rt for 18 h, affording product **3da** in 82% yield (76 mg) as a yellow solid. $R_f = 0.2$ (PE:EA:DCM = 5:1:1), m.p.

186-188 °C.

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.96 – 7.93 (m, 2H), 7.44 – 7.39 (m, 1H), 7.36 – 7.32 (m, 2H), 6.85 (d, J = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 6.58 (dd, J = 8.0, 2.0 Hz, 1H), 6.42 (d, J = 2.0 Hz, 1H), 5.24 (d, J = 4.8 Hz, 1H), 4.48 – 4.39 (m, 3H), 4.37 – 4.22 (m, 2H), 4.19 – 4.09 (m, 2H), 2.67 – 2.51 (m, 2H), 1.39 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 3H), 1.19 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 3H).

¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 168.9, 168.4, 167.3, 166.3, 150.2, 134.8, 134.6, 131.6, 129.5, 128.5, 128.3, 123.3, 119.3, 109.9, 75.8, 71.1, 62.7, 62.6, 62.0, 60.4, 41.1, 14.2, 13.9.
HRMS (ESI) calcd for C₂₅H₂₅ClN₃O₄ ([M+H⁺]) = 466.1534, Found 466.1531.



diethyl 10-methyl-4-phenyl-1,2,6a,7-tetrahydro-6H-pyrrolo [3',2':4,5]pyrido[3,4-b] indole-6,6-dicarboxylate 3ea

The reaction was run at rt for 24 h, affording product **3ea** in 56% yield (49.8 mg) as a yellow solid. $R_f = 0.2$ (PE:EA:DCM = 5:1:1), m.p.

136-138 °C.

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 8.00 – 7.97 (m, 2H), 7.44 – 7.40 (m, 1H), 7.38 – 7.33 (m, 2H), 6.80 – 6.77 (m, 2H), 6.41 (d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, 1H), 5.24 (s, 1H), 4.51 – 4.44 (m, 2H), 4.43 – 4.36 (m, 1H), 4.33 – 4.24 (m, 1H), 4.21 – 4.11 (m, 3H), 2.73 – 2.57 (m, 2H), 2.20 (s, 3H), 1.43 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3H), 1.21 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3H).

¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 168.9, 168.3, 168.1, 166.5, 146.8, 134.8, 131.4, 129.6, 129.1, 128.6, 128.2, 123.1, 110.1, 76.1, 71.1, 62.8, 62.5, 62.4, 60.4, 41.3, 20.8, 14.2, 13.9.

HRMS (ESI) calcd for $C_{26}H_{28}N_3O_4$ ([M+H⁺]) = 446.2080, Found 446.2076.



diethyl 10-methoxyl-4-phenyl-1,2,6a,7-tetrahydro-6H-pyrrolo [3',2':4,5]pyrido[3,4-b] indole-6,6-dicarboxylate 3fa

The reaction was run at rt for 37 h, affording product **3fa** in 57% yield (52.3 mg) as a yellow solid. $R_f = 0.2$ (PE:EA:DCM = 5:1:1), m.p.

121-123 °C.

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.98 – 7.96 (m, 2H), 7.43 – 7.38 (m, 1H), 7.35 – 7.31 (m, 2H), 6.57 – 6.54 (m, 2H), 6.44 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 5.23 (s, 1H), 4.49 – 4.41 (m, 2H), 4.39 – 4.33 (m, 1H), 4.30 – 4.23 (m, 1H), 4.15 – 4.07 (m, 3H), 3.68 (s, 3H), 2.74 – 2.57 (m, 2H), 1.41 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 3H), 1.19 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 3H).

¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 168.8, 168.2, 167.9, 166.6, 154.2, 143.1, 134.7, 132.7, 131.5, 128.6,
128.2, 114.1, 111.1, 109.3, 76.1, 71.4, 63.2, 62.6, 62.4, 60.4, 56.0, 41.2, 14.3, 13.9.
HRMS (ESI) calcd for C₂₆H₂₈N₃O₅ ([M+H⁺]) = 462.2029, Found 462.2028.



Ph

Ή ĊO₂Et

CO₂Et

diethyl 9-methyl-4-phenyl-1,2,6a,7-tetrahydro-6H-pyrrolo [3',2':4,5]pyrido[3,4-b] indole-6,6-dicarboxylate 3ga

The reaction was run at rt for 27 h, affording product **3ga** in 81% yield

(72.0 mg) as a yellow solid. $R_f = 0.3$ (PE:EA:DCM = 5:1:1), m.p.

167-169 °C.

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.96 – 7.94 (m, 2H), 7.41 – 7.31 (m, 3H), 6.86 (d, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 6.46 (d, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 6.30 (s, 1H), 5.22 (s, 1H), 4.49 – 4.40 (m, 2H), 4.38– 4.32 (m, 1H), 4.28 – 4.09 (m, 4H), 2.69 – 2.53 (m, 2H), 2.14 (s, 3H), 1.41 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 3H), 1.19 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 3H). ¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 169.0, 168.4, 168.0, 166.5, 149.3, 139.2, 134.8, 131.4, 128.6, 128.2, 122.3, 120.5, 110.9, 76.1, 71.0, 62.6, 62.4, 62.4, 60.3, 41.2, 21.4, 14.2, 13.9. HRMS (ESI) calcd for C₂₆H₂₈N₃O₄ ([M+H⁺]) = 446.2080, Found 446.2079.

diethyl 8-methyl-4-phenyl-1,2,6a,7-tetrahydro-6H-pyrrolo [3',2':4,5]pyrido[3,4-b] indole-6,6-dicarboxylate 3ha

The reaction was run at rt for 37 h, affording product **3ha** in 63% yield (55.8 mg) as a yellow solid. $R_f = 0.3$ (PE:EA:DCM = 5:1:1), m.p.

145-147 °C.

Ńе

Ĥ

3ha

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.92 – 7.90 (m, 2H), 7.42 – 7.37 (m, 1H), 7.35 – 7.31 (m, 2H), 6.85 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 6.80 (d, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 6.61 (t, *J* = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 5.24 (d, *J* = 4.8 Hz, 1H), 4.47 (q, *J* = 6.8 Hz, 2H), 4.41– 4.33 (m, 1H), 4.18 – 4.11 (m, 3H), 4.00 (d, *J* = 4.8 Hz, 1H), 2.70 – 2.55 (m, 2H), 2.00 (s, 3H), 1.40 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3H), 1.20 (t, *J* = 7.2 Hz, 3H).

¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 169.1, 168.5, 168.0, 166.5, 147.9, 134.9, 131.4, 130.4, 129.9, 128.7, 128.2, 120.0, 120.0, 119.6, 119.6, 76.3, 70.7, 62.9, 62.6, 62.4, 60.3, 41.5, 16.7, 14.3, 13.9. HRMS (ESI) calcd for C₂₆H₂₈N₃O₄ ([M+H⁺]) = 446.2080, Found 446.2079

4. Experimental procedure for the scale-up reaction and transformation of the product

a) Scale-up version of the reaction



Procedure: A dry reaction tube was charged with **1a** (5 mmol, 0.85 g), **2a** (7.5 mmol, 3.13 g) and 4 Å MS (1.25 g). Under N₂ atmosphere, CH₂Cl₂ (12.5 mL) was added. The mixture was stirred at room temperature for 15 min, then Y(OTf)₃ (0.5 mmol, 267 mg) and dry CH₂Cl₂ (12.5 mL) was added in the tube. The reaction mixture continued stirring at room temperature for 20 h. The solvent was removed under reduced pressure and the residue was directly purified by flash chromatography on silica gel using petroleum ether/ethyl acetate/dichloromethane = 5/1/1 as eluent to afford the desired product **3aa** in 75% yield (1.61g).

b) Transformations of the product 3aa



Procedure: A dry round-bottom flask was charged with **3aa** (0.5 mmol, 216 mg), AcOH (4 mL) and Ac₂O (4 mL). Then Zn power (2.5 mmol, 162.5 mg) was slowly added to the reaction mixture. The reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 3 h. The precipitate was filtered out and the solvent was removed under reduced pressure. Saturated aqueous Na₂CO₃ was added to the mixture to adjust the pH of solution to 8.0-9.0. Then the solution was diluted with ethyl acetate, washed with water, dried with Na₂SO₄, and concentrated under reduced pressure. The residue was directly purified by flash chromatography on silica gel using petroleum ether/ethyl acetate = 1/4 as eluent to afford the desired product **4aa** in 66% yield.



diethyl-3,7-diacetyl-4-phenyl-1,2,3,3a,6a,7-hexahydro-6H-pyrrolo[3',2':4,5]p yrido[3,4-b]indole-6,6-dicarboxylate 4aa

The reaction was run at rt for 3 h, affording product **4aa** in 66% yield (171 mg) as a white solid. $R_f = 0.3$ (PE:EA = 1:4), m.p. 143-145 °C.

¹H NMR (400 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 7.64 (s, 2H), 7.44 – 7.39 (m, 1H), 7.34 – 7.28 (m, 3H), 7.23 (t, J = 7.6 Hz, 1H), 7.02 – 6.97 (m, 1H), 6.94 – 6.88 (m, 1H), 5.28 (s, 1H), 5.09 (s, 1H), 4.32 – 4.15 (m, 2H), 4.08 – 4.00 (m, 1H), 3.92 – 3.84 (m, 1H), 3.73 – 3.66 (m, 1H), 3.61 – 3.51 (m, 1H), 2.43 (s, 3H), 2.27 – 2.18 (m, 2H), 1.97 (s, 3H), 1.26 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 3H), 1.11 (t, J = 7.2 Hz, 3H). ¹³C NMR (101 MHz, CDCl₃) δ 170.2, 169.9, 169.6, 168.6, 143.0, 130.3, 129.8, 129.1, 128.9, 128.6, 127.9, 127.8, 127.5, 124.8, 121.9, 65.0, 63.0, 62.8, 62.6, 62.2, 46.1, 39.9, 23.9, 21.8, 13.9, 13.8. HRMS (ESI) calcd for C₂₉H₃₂N₃O₆ ([M+H⁺]) = 518.2291, Found 518.2299.

5. X-ray Structures of 3aa and 4aa.



CCDC 2015560

Single crystal of compound **3aa** $[C_{25}H_{25}N_3O_4]$ was obtained in PE and EtOAc. CCDC 2015560 contains the supplementary crystallographic data which can be obtained free of charge from the Cambridge Crystallographic Data Center via <u>https://www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk/structures/</u>.

Crystal data

Empirical formula	$C_{25}H_{25}N_{3}O_{4}$
Formula weight	431.48
Temperature/K	293.15
Crystal system	orthorhombic
Space group	P2 ₁ 2 ₁ 2 ₁
a/Å	11.3360(4)
b/Å	11.9463(3)
c/Å	16.0968(7)
α/\circ	90
β/°	90
$\gamma^{/\circ}$	90
Volume/Å ³	2179.89(14)
Z	4
$\rho_{calc}g/cm^3$	1.315
μ/mm^{-1}	0.090
F(000)	912.0
Crystal size/mm ³	$0.35 \times 0.3 \times 0.25$
Radiation	MoKa ($\lambda = 0.71073$)
2Θ range for data collection/°	6.104 to 52.738
Index ranges	$\textbf{-14} \leq h \leq 13, \textbf{-14} \leq k \leq 9, \textbf{-11} \leq \textbf{l} \leq 20$
Reflections collected	6852
Independent reflections	$3988 [R_{int}=0.0220, R_{sigma}=0.0485]$
Data/restraints/parameters	3988/1/295
Goodness-of-fit on F ²	1.028

Final R indexes [I>= 2σ (I)] $R_1 = 0.0567$, $wR_2 = 0.1245$ Final R indexes [all data] $R_1 = 0.0834$, $wR_2 = 0.1399$ Largest diff. peak/hole / e Å-3 0.41/-0.31Flack parameter0.4(9)



Single crystal of compound **4aa** $[C_{29}H_{31}N_3O_6]$ was obtained in PE and EtOAc. CCDC 2104294 contains the supplementary crystallographic data which can be obtained free of charge from the Cambridge Crystallographic Data Center via <u>https://www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk/structures/</u>.

Crystal data

Empirical formula	$C_{29}H_{31}N_3O_6$
Formula weight	517.57
Temperature/K	293.15
Crystal system	monoclinic
Space group	I2/a
a/Å	15.8169(18)
b/Å	16.0922(13)
c/Å	23.146(2)
α/°	90
β/°	105.329(13)
γ/°	90
Volume/Å3	5681.8(10)
Z	8
pcalcg/cm3	1.210
μ/mm-1	0.085
F(000)	2192.0
Crystal size/mm3	$0.35 \times 0.3 \times 0.25$
Radiation	MoKa ($\lambda = 0.71073$)
20 range for data collectio	n/° 6.032 to 52.742
Index ranges	$-19 \le h \le 11, -16 \le k \le 20, -24 \le 1 \le 28$
Reflections collected	13458
Independent reflections	5791 [R _{int} = 0.0296, R _{sigma} = 0.0642]

6. References

- 1. H. Liu, A. Domling, J. Org. Chem, 2009, 74, 6895-6898.
- 2. X. W, L. Li, J. L. Zhang, Adv. Synth. Catal. 2012, 354, 3485-34

7. Copy of ¹H NMR and ¹³C NMR Spectra





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