

■ Host–Guest Systems

Twisted Baskets

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Abstract: A preparative procedure for obtaining a pair of twisted molecular baskets, each comprising a chiral framework with either right ((*P*)-**1**_{syn}) or left ((*M*)-**1**_{syn}) sense of twist and six ester groups at the rim has been developed and optimized. The racemic (*P/M*)-**1**_{syn} can be obtained in three synthetic steps from accessible starting materials. The resolution of (*P/M*)-**1**_{syn} is accomplished by its transesterification with (1*R*,2*S*,5*R*)-(–)-menthol in the presence of a Ti^{IV} catalyst to give diastereomeric **8**^{*P*} and **8**^{*M*}. It was found that dendritic-like cavitands **8**^{*P*} and **8**^{*M*}, in CD₂Cl₂, undergo self-inclusion (¹H NMR spectroscopy) with a menthol moiety occupying the cavity of each host. Importantly, the degree of inclusion of the menthol group was (¹H NMR spectroscopy) found to be greater in the case of **8**^{*P*} than **8**^{*M*}. Accordingly, it is suggested that different folding characteristic of **8**^{*P*} and **8**^{*M*} ought to affect the physicochemical characteristics of the hosts to permit their effective separation by column chromatography. The absolute configuration of **8**^{*P*}/**8**^{*M*}, encompassing right- and left-handed “cups”, was determined with the exciton chirality method and also verified in silico (DFT: B3LYP/TZVP). Finally, the twisted baskets are strongly fluorescent due to three naphthalene chromophores, having a high fluorescence quantum yield within the rigid framework of **8**^{*P*}/**8**^{*M*}.

The resolution of chiral drugs and drug intermediates^[1] by fractional crystallization^[2] of diastereomeric salts represents a form of stereoselective molecular recognition, allowing the production of enantiopure pharmaceuticals.^[3] In line with this useful methodology, Newman and co-workers completed the separation of racemic (*P/M*)-hexahelicenes using a chiral derivative of fluorenone.^[4] Allegedly, the aromatic fluorenone forms a charge-transfer complex with inherently chiral hexahelicenes^[5] so that the attractive π – π interactions trigger the aggregation and consequently the precipitation of the less-soluble diastereomer. Furthermore, Cram and co-workers developed a semi-empirical approach, “the tripodal binding

model”, for predicting the complexation aptitude of C₂/D₂ symmetric 1,1'-binaphthyl corands toward racemic amino acids.^[6] In this vein, the classical three-point interaction model^[7] or other variants^[8] are employed to explain diastereoselectivity of drug–receptor interactions as well as inclusion complexations.^[9] Indeed, artificial hosts with an enforced cavity—cavitands—are also capable of resolving chiral compounds^[10] yet the experimental outcome of such recognition events is difficult to rationalize let alone predict.^[11] As many naturally occurring molecules, drugs, metabolites, chemical weapons and commodity chemicals lack the rotation–reflection axis of symmetry, there exists a need to expand the scope of artificial chiral hosts^[12] to selectively capture these substances^[13] on the basis of their size, shape and electronic structure, as well as learn more about rules that govern the process of stereoselective recognition.^[8b,14] Artificial chiral receptors could, furthermore, serve as counterparts to naturally occurring enzymes and antibodies for rapidly and accurately reporting on the presence of stereoisomeric substances in the environment^[15] and promoting their transformation.^[16] In line with a need for developing cup-shaped chiral hosts,^[17] we recently described^[18] a synthetic method for the preparation of novel cavitands possessing a nonfunctional hydrocarbon framework and twisted (Figure 1) inner space.^[17a,c,d] In particular, a tandem of cyclalkylation reactions was promoted with strong acids to, via general-acid catalysis, give rise to baskets (akin to (*P/M*)-**1**_{syn} in Figure 1) comprising six stereogenic centers of the same kind (*R* or *S*) embedded in the host's bicyclic platform. In this study, we focused on developing a preparative procedure for obtaining a pair of functionalized baskets with right (*P*)-**1**_{syn} and left (*M*)-**1**_{syn} twisted frameworks (Figure 1) to learn about the resolution of such racemic host. Notably, chiral baskets of type **1** are C₃ symmetric and modular cavitands, possessing: 1) six esters at the rim for additional functionalization, 2) unique chiroptical characteristics, 3) photochemically sensitizing sidewalls for promoting photochirogenesis,^[19] and 4) deep and twisted hydrophobic pockets^[20] for discriminating chiral guests (Figure 1).^[21]

To obtain basket **1**, we started with commercially available 5-indanol and converted it into compound **2** (Scheme 1)^[22] following already known procedures (Scheme S3 in the Supporting Information).^[23] The free-radical bromination of indane derivative **2** followed by, allegedly, E1 elimination of the bromoalkane intermediate gave indene **3**. Compound **3** was deprotonated with a strong base (*n*BuLi), at a low temperature, to act as a nucleophile in promoting the substitution of three iodine groups in 1,3,5-tris(iodomethyl)benzene. When these reactants were combined in the proportion of 6:1 (with

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Supporting information for this article is available on the WWW under <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/chem.201406492>.

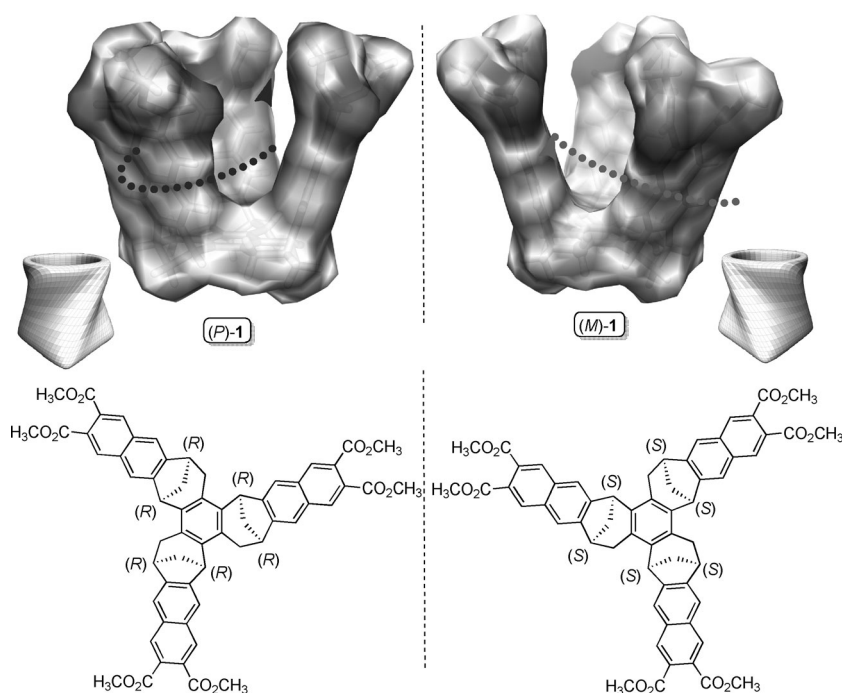


Figure 1. Energy-minimized structures (MMFFs) of twisted baskets (*P*)-**1**_{syn} and (*M*)-**1**_{syn} (top) and their chemical structures (bottom).

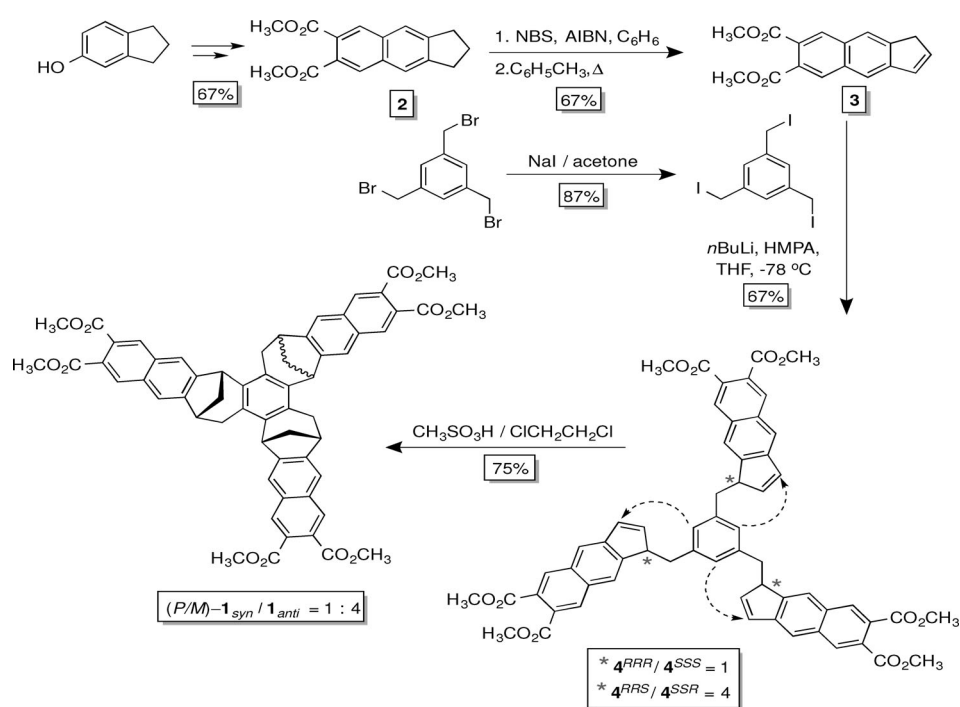
sixfold excess of indene **3**), two diastereomeric products **4**^{RRR}/**4**^{SSS} and **4**^{RRS}/**4**^{SSR} (Scheme S4 in the Supporting Information) formed in a ratio of 1:4, respectively. The cyclalkylation of the diastereomeric mixture of **4** was then catalyzed with methanesulfonic acid to give (*P/M*)-**1**_{syn} and **1**_{anti} (Scheme 1) in the same 1:4 proportion. On the basis of our earlier study,^[18] we reasoned that this transformation is under kinetic control with homochiral **4**^{RRR}/**4**^{SSS} giving the desired (*P/M*)-**1**_{syn} and heterochiral **4**^{RRS}/**4**^{SSR} transforming into **1**_{anti} product; to optimize the yield of cup-shaped (*P/M*)-**1**_{syn} we examined the stereoselectivity of the conversion of **3** into **4**, and describe these efforts in Scheme S30 in the Supporting Information.

To resolve racemic (*P/M*)-**1**_{syn} we decided to investigate the transesterification^[24] of (*P/M*)-**1**_{syn} with (1*R*,2*S*,5*R*)-(-)-menthol in the presence of titanium(IV) catalyst **7**^[25] (Figure 2).^[26] To ensure a complete transformation of the hexaester reactant into sterically hindered **8**^P and **8**^M, with six menthol groups at the rim, we

used menthol as solvent and ran the reaction at an elevated temperature (180 °C) for a prolonged period of time.^[27] Importantly, the chromatographic separation of diastereomeric **8**^P/**8**^M was facile with each compound having a distinct *R*_f value (*R*_f = 0.37 and 0.50, Figure 2).

¹H NMR spectra (400 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) of isolated **8**^P and **8**^M (Figure 3 A) revealed a single set of resonances corresponding to, in each case, a C₃ symmetric compound; note that there was no decoalescence of ¹H NMR signals at lower temperatures, suggesting a rapid rotation of the menthol moieties at the rim (from 273.0 to 233.0 K, Figures S28 and S29 in the Supporting Information). First, we assigned proton resonances of model compound **9** (Figure 3 A and B; for a full assignment see Figures S17–S19 in the Supporting Information) using its ¹H-¹H

COSY NMR correlations (Figures S17–S19) in addition to the reported spectroscopic assignment for (1*R*,2*S*,5*R*)-(-)-menthol.^[28] Next, we recorded ¹H-¹H COSY NMR spectra of **8**^P/**8**^M



Scheme 1. The synthesis of twisted basket (*P/M*)-**1**_{syn} can be completed in several steps from simple starting material.

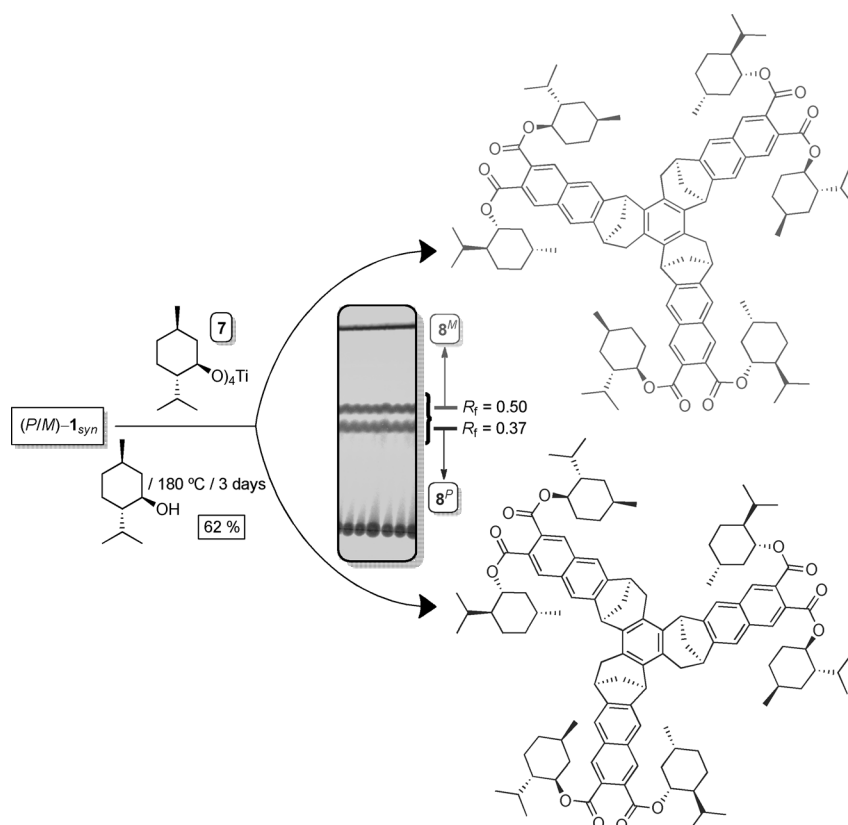


Figure 2. The chromatographic separation (SiO_2 , hexanes/diethyl ether = 2:1) of $\mathbf{8}^P$ and $\mathbf{8}^M$, obtained by a Ti^{IV} -promoted transesterification of $(P/M)\text{-1}_{\text{syn}}$, is facile, with each compound showing a separate band on a thin-layer chromatographic plate. Spectroscopic analyses of the chromatographic fractions are in line with the top band corresponding to $\mathbf{8}^M$ while the bottom one to $\mathbf{8}^P$.

(Figures S20–S27 in the Supporting Information) and assigned all of the observed resonances to proton nuclei within these diastereomeric compounds (Figure 3 A and B, for a full assignment see Figures S20–S27). A correlation between ^1H NMR spectra of C_2 symmetric $\mathbf{9}$ and C_3 symmetric $\mathbf{8}^P/\mathbf{8}^M$ is apparent yet we note an upfield shift of: 1) two doublets corresponding to $\text{H}_{a/b}$ nuclei, and 2) multiplet corresponding to the juxtaposed H_m proton, all as a part of the menthol substituents (Figure 3 A and B). To address the observation, we completed the Monte Carlo conformational study (MMFFs force field, Spartan) of $\mathbf{8}^P/\mathbf{8}^M$ with the calculation suggesting a conformational distribution being predominantly populated ($>95\%$ on the basis of the Boltzmann distribution at 298 K) with structures closely resembling those shown in Figure 3 C. That is to say, the $\mathbf{8}^P$ diastereomer places one of its menthol isopropyl groups in the cavity of the cup-shaped and twisted framework so that H_a/H_b and H_m nuclei reside in the shielding region of the surrounding naphthalene rings. On the contrary, the $\mathbf{8}^M$ stereoisomer positions an isopropyl group at top of the cavity (Figure 3 C) with H_a/H_b and H_m nuclei being less diamagnetically shielded with the basket's aromatics. It follows that the middle ^1H NMR spectrum in Figure 3 A should correspond to $\mathbf{8}^M$ ($R_f=0.50$, Figure 2) having its H_a/H_b protons less diamagnetically shielded while the bottom one correlates with $\mathbf{8}^P$ ($R_f=0.37$, Figure 2). Furthermore, we surmise that the two diastereomers eluted on silica

at different times due to, in part, their distinctive folding characteristics with the more compact $\mathbf{8}^P$ being retained to a greater degree.

To additionally probe the absolute configuration of compounds $\mathbf{8}^P/\mathbf{8}^M$, encompassing right- and left-handed “cups” (Figure 3), we used the exciton chirality method (exciton coupled circular dichroism spectroscopy, ECCD).^[29] In this regard, three naphthalene chromophores^[30] that constitute the “sides” of twisted baskets $\mathbf{8}^P/\mathbf{8}^M$ are embedded in the bicyclic and chiral framework, formally belonging to the second chiral sphere.^[31] Upon the absorption of light at about 220 nm (naphthalene's $^1\text{B}_b$ transition in the Platt's notation),^[30] each of the juxtaposed naphthalenes should in $\mathbf{8}^P/\mathbf{8}^M$ develop a strong electric dipole transition moment positioned along the long axis of the aromatic ring (Figure 4 A).^[32] In line with the ECCD,^[31] there should be an exciton coupling of the $^1\text{B}_b$ transition dipole moments of the three degenerate

chromophores to give rise to a bisignate spectrum with the rotational strengths and sign being a function of their interchromophoric distance (d) and orientation (Ω).^[31] In particular, the sign of the couplet is based on the semi-empirical exciton chirality rule which states: the negative chirality (the longer wavelength component has $\Delta\epsilon < 0$) is obtained when the chromophores are positioned in space so that a counterclockwise rotation of the front electric dipole moment by an acute angle brings it onto the exciton axis in the back.^[33] Indeed, CD spectra of diastereomeric baskets $\mathbf{8}^P/\mathbf{8}^M$ (Figure 4 A) showed the expected ECCD couplets centered at 242 nm (π to π^* transition, Figure 4 A)^[32] with two diastereomeric baskets having the opposite rotational strengths.^[21] Specifically, the positive Cotton effect (CE) at 234 nm ($\Delta\epsilon_1=284\text{ m}^{-1}\text{ cm}^{-1}$, blue spectrum in Figure 4 A) is accompanied with a negative CE at 251 nm ($\Delta\epsilon_2=-252\text{ m}^{-1}\text{ cm}^{-1}$, blue spectrum in Figure 4 A) to give the negative sign of exciton chirality, which is consistent with the position of exciton axis in $\mathbf{8}^P$ (Figure 4 A). As the blue spectrum (Figure 4 A) corresponds to basket $\mathbf{8}^P$ isolated as the chromatographic fraction with $R_f=0.37$, Figure 3), the CD assignment corroborates the absolute chirality obtained from the ^1H NMR spectroscopic measurements (Figure 3). Furthermore, the large A value ($|\Delta\epsilon_1| + |\Delta\epsilon_2|$) of 535 indicates a through-space interaction of the naphthalene chromophores in $\mathbf{8}^P$ with a contribution from all three ECCD couplets^[35] thereby following the

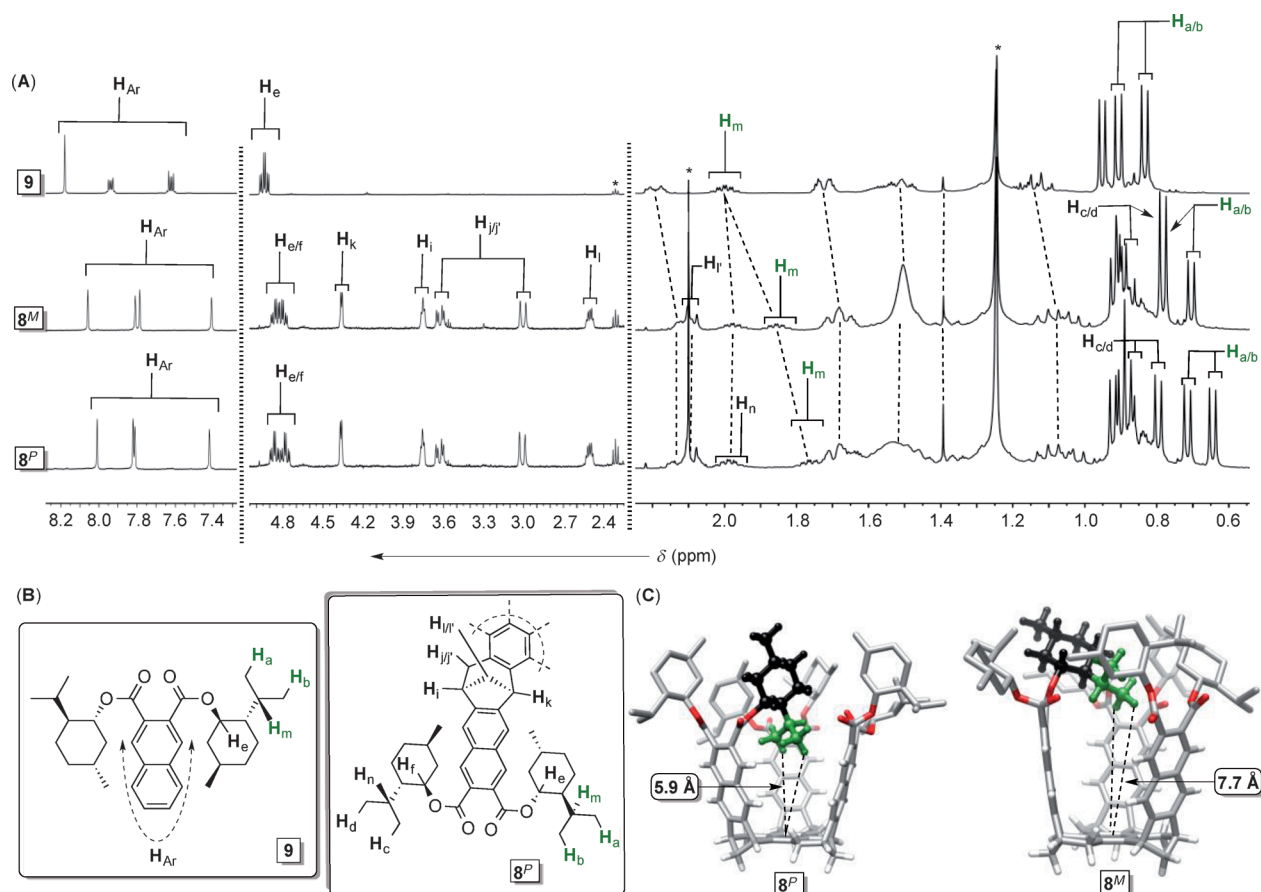


Figure 3. A) ¹H NMR spectra (400 MHz, CD₂Cl₂) of model compound **9** (top) and twisted baskets **8^M** (middle) and **8^P** (bottom). B) Chemical structures of **9** and **8^P** with selected protons labeled from H_a to H_n. C) Energy-minimized (MMFFs, Monte Carlo conformational search; 1000 steps) structures of **8^M** and **8^P**, representing the most abundant conformers (>95%) obtained in the calculation; note that C–H–π centroid distances are shown, while some hydrogen atoms are removed for clarity.

pair-wise additivity principle.^[31] By comparison, model compound **9** exhibits a featureless CD spectrum (black spectrum in Figure 4A) with low rotational strengths at all wavelengths. Two menthol units are, in the absence of the bicyclic chiral framework, exerting a negligible symmetry-breaking perturbation of the electronic states of **9**.^[31] We also computed the UV/Vis and CD spectra of energy-minimized (*M*)-**1_{syn}** (Figure 4B) using time-dependent density functional theory (TD-B3LYP/TZVP).^[34] Notably, there is a good agreement between the observed positive exciton chirality of **8^M** centered at 242 nm and the computed ECCD couplet of (*M*)-**1_{syn}**. The absolute configuration of *P/M* twisted baskets is in this way confirmed and in line with the assignment from the ECCD method and NMR experiments. Finally, the emission spectra of diastereomeric **8^P**/**8^M** are comparable ($\lambda_{\text{exc.}} = 280$ nm, Figure S33 in the Supporting Information). Importantly, the signal intensities for the baskets ($I = 282$ a.u. at $\lambda_{\text{em.}} = 363$ nm, Figure S33) are seventy times stronger than for the model compound **9** ($I = 4$ a.u. at $\lambda_{\text{em.}} = 363$ nm, Figure S33). Given that the absorption extinction coefficients (ϵ , Figure 4) are at 280 nm three times greater for baskets than for the model compound, we reason that naphthalene chromophores ought to have a greater fluorescence quantum yield within the rigid framework of **8^P**/**8^M**.^[36] Apparently, twisted baskets are well suited^[20a, 37] for building chiro-

tical sensors capable of reporting on the presence of minute quantities of chiral substances in the environment.^[38]

In conclusion, we have completed the preparation of a novel cavitand comprising a twisted concave platform (*P* or *M*) and six ester groups at the rim. This host is modular, that is, prone to additional functionalization, with a deep and chiral hydrophobic pocket made of three photochemically active naphthalene rings. The functional and twisted baskets can now be used for: 1) building chiroptical sensors capable of reporting on the presence of minute quantities of chiral substances in the environment,^[39] 2) resolving useful drugs and drug intermediates,^[13] and/or 3) developing novel stereoselective supramolecular catalysts.^[40]

Acknowledgements

This work was financially supported with funds obtained from the National Science Foundation under CHE-1305179. Computational support from the Ohio Supercomputer Center is gratefully acknowledged. E.D. is grateful for the predoctoral fellowship received from the Turkish National Science Foundation (TUBITAK).

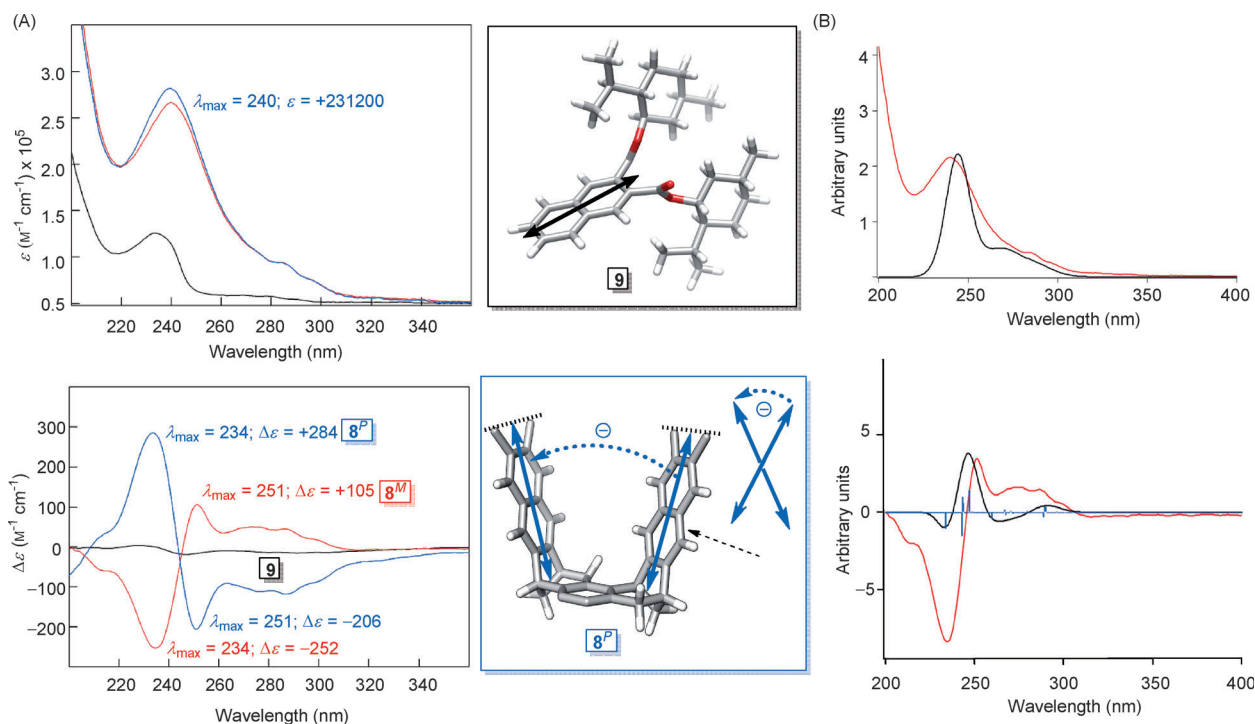


Figure 4. A) Absorption (UV/Vis, top left) and circular dichroism (CD, bottom left) spectra of 8^P (blue, 2.5 μM), 8^M (red, 2.5 μM) and 9 (black, 5.0 μM) in hexane at 298 K. Energy-minimized structure of model compound 9 (MMFFs, Spartan) with the 1B_u transition dipole moment along the naphthalene chromophore (top right). The negative exciton chirality characterizes twisted basket 8^P since its three naphthalene chromophores (only two are shown) are positioned in space so that a counterclockwise rotation of the front electric dipole moment (blue) by an acute angle brings it onto the exciton axis in the back (bottom right). B) Computed DFT: B3LYP/TZVP (black)^[34] UV/Vis (top) and CD (bottom) spectra of basket (M)- 1_{syn} ; for comparison, UV/Vis (top) and CD (bottom) spectra of 8^M (red) are included. The blue sticks are computed electronic transitions that were subjected to Gaussian broadening (0.25 eV) and wavelength shift (-0.2 eV) for generating the computed spectra.

Keywords: cavitands • encapsulation • host–guest systems • stereoselective recognition • supramolecular chirality

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Received: December 15, 2014

Published online on January 21, 2015