Significance: The key feature in the synthesis of MK-1597 (ACT-178882) is the highly efficient ruthenium-catalyzed asymmetric hydrogenation of the tetrал substituted alkene J followed by a mild epimerization reaction to set both stereogenic centers in H (trans/cis > 120:1).

Comment: The renin inhibitor MK-1597 is a promising lead in the treatment of hypertension. It was synthesized in nine steps (longest linear sequence) in 29% overall yield. Most of the intermediates were solids, but they were not purified before being used in the succeeding steps.