Responses to unsaturation in iridium mono(N-heterocyclic carbene) complexes: synthesis and oligomerization of [LIr(H)<sub>2</sub>Cl] and [LIr(H)<sub>2</sub>]<sup>+</sup>

# **Supporting Information**

### General details of synthetic procedures and instrumentation

- <sup>10</sup> Manipulations of air-sensitive reagents were carried out under a nitrogen or argon atmosphere using standard Schlenk line or dry box techniques. Non-deuteriated solvents were dried using a commercially available Braun Solvent Purification System, with the exception of fluorobenzene which was distilled from CaH<sub>2</sub>. C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>, C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>5</sub>CD<sub>3</sub>, and CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (all Goss)
- <sup>15</sup> were degassed and dried over potassium (C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>, C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>5</sub>CD<sub>3</sub>) or molecular sieves (CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>) prior to use. NMR spectra were measured on a Varian Mercury VX-300 or Bruker AVII 500 FT-NMR spectrometer. Residual signals of solvent were used as reference for <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C NMR; <sup>11</sup>B and <sup>19</sup>F NMR spectra were referenced with respect to Et<sub>2</sub>OBF<sub>3</sub> and CFCl<sub>3</sub>,
- <sup>20</sup> respectively.  $T_1$  measurements for **5** and  $[Ir(IPr)(\eta^6 C_6H_5Me)(H)_2]^{+}[BAr_{4}^{f_4}]^{-}$  were carried out at temperatures down to 273K, below which precipitation of  $[Ir(IPr)(H)_2(\eta^6 arene)]^{+}[BAr_{4}^{f_4}]^{-}$  became problematic. Elemental microanalyses were carried out at London Metropolitan University. For all crystallographic studies, diffaction data
- <sup>25</sup> were collected at 150K using an Enraf Nonius Kappa CCD diffractometer;<sup>[s1]</sup> structures were solved with SIR92<sup>[s2]</sup> and refined using the CRYSTALS software suite;<sup>[s3]</sup> as per the information contained in the CIF.
- 30 [s1] Z. Otwinowski and W. Minor, Methods Enzymol., 1997, 276, 307.
- [s2] A. Altomare, G. Cascarano, C. Giacovazzo, A. Guagliardi, M.C. Burla, G. Polidori and M. Camalli, J. Appl. Cryst., 1994, 27, 435.
- [s3] P.W. Betteridge, J.R. Carruthers, R.I. Cooper, C.K. Prout and D.J. Watkin, J. Appl. Cryst., 2003, 36, 1487.

#### 35

# [Ir(IPr)(H)<sub>2</sub>Cl]<sub>3</sub> (2)

To a frozen (-196°C) fluorobenzene solution of **1a** (0.25 g, 0.34 mmol in 20 cm<sup>3</sup>) in an ampoule equipped with a Young's valve was added hydrogen gas. The reaction mixture was warmed to  $20^{\circ}$ C (giving a

- <sup>40</sup> hydrogen pressure of *ca.* 4 atm.), stirred for 12 h, and, after filtration and drying *in vacuo*, the resulting solid was recrystallized from pentane as a yellow powder; single crystals suitable for X-ray diffraction were grown from a concentrated pentane solution at 0°C. Isolated yield 0.12 g, 48 %. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>, 20°C):  $\delta_{\rm H}$  –32.93 (s, 4H, IrH), 1.05 (d, *J* = 6.8
- <sup>45</sup> Hz, 36H, CH<sub>3</sub> of <sup>*i*</sup>Pr), 1.28 (d, J = 6.8 Hz, 36H, CH<sub>3</sub> of <sup>*i*</sup>Pr), 3.03 (br m, 12H, CH<sub>3</sub> of <sup>*i*</sup>Pr), 6.49 (s, 6H, NCHCHN), 7.03-7.20 (overlapping m, 18H, aromatic CH of dipp). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (125 MHz, C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>, 20°C):  $\delta_C$  23.5, 27.0, 28.9 (CH and CH<sub>3</sub> of IPr), 122.6 (NCH of IPr), 124.2 (*ortho*-quaternary C of IPr), 129.9 (*meta*-CH of IPr), 146.4 (*para*-CH of IPr)
- $_{50}$  162.3 (carbene quaternary). Elemental microanalysis: calc. (for  ${\bf 2},$   $C_{81}H_{114}Cl_3Ir_3N_6)$ C 52.43, H 6.20, N 4.53; meas. C 52.46, H 6.00, N 4.47.

## Ir<sub>3</sub>(IMes)<sub>2</sub>(IMes')Cl<sub>3</sub>H<sub>5</sub> (3)

To a frozen (-196°C) fluorobenzene solution of **1b** (0.30 g, 0.47 mmol in  $^{55}$  20 cm<sup>3</sup>) in an ampoule equipped with a Young's valve was added hydrogen gas. The reaction mixture was warmed to 20°C (giving a hydrogen pressure of *ca.* 4 atm.), and then heated at 50°C for 24 h; after filtration and drying *in vacuo*, the resulting solid was recrystallized from pentane as a yellow powder; single crystals suitable for X-ray diffraction

<sup>60</sup> were grown from a concentrated hexane solution at 0°C. Isolated yield 0.13 g (43 %). <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>, 20°C): δ<sub>H</sub> -32.52, -30.28, -28.62, -27.00, -22.96 (s, each 1H, IrH), 1.93 (s, 6H, *ortho*-CH<sub>3</sub> of IMes), 2.20 (s, 3H, *ortho*-CH<sub>3</sub> of IMes'), 2.20 (overlapping s, 24H, *ortho*-CH<sub>3</sub> of IMes'), 2.04 (s, 3H, *para*-CH<sub>3</sub> of IMes'), 2.12 (s, para-CH<sub>3</sub> of IMes'), 2

- 65 2.16 (s, 6H, para-CH<sub>3</sub> of IMes), 2.25 (s, 6H, para-CH<sub>3</sub> of IMes), 5.71 (s, 2H, NCH of IMes), 6.06 (s, 2H, NCH of IMes), 6.12 (s, 2H, NCH of IMes'), 6.48 (s, 2H, NCH of IMes'), 6.52 (s, 4H, meta-CH of IMes), 6.83 (s, 4H, meta-CH of IMes), 6.92 (s, 2H, meta-CH of IMes'), 7.07 (s, 1H, meta-CH of IMes'), 7.26 (s, 1H, meta-CH of IMes'). Attempts to obtain
- <sup>70</sup> reproducible <sup>13</sup>C NMR data for **3** were frustrated by its reactivity towards deuteriated solvents (C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>, C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>5</sub>CD<sub>3</sub>, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>) over the timescale of spectral acquisition. Elemental microanalysis: calc. (for **3**, C<sub>63</sub>H<sub>76</sub>Cl<sub>3</sub>Ir<sub>3</sub>N<sub>6</sub>) C 47.26, H 4.79, N 5.15; meas. C 47.51, H 4.50, N 5.25.

# 75 [Ir(IPr'')(cod)]<sup>+</sup>[BAr<sup>f</sup><sub>4</sub>]<sup>-</sup> (4)

A mixture of **1a** (0.13 g, 0.18 mmol), Na[BAr<sup>4</sup><sub>4</sub>] (0.16 g, 0.18 mmol) and fluorobenzene (50 mL) was stirred for 48 h, during which time a colour change from yellow to orange was observed. Filtration, concentration *in vacuo* and layering with with pentane led to the formation of large, red-<sup>80</sup> orange crystals suitable for single crystal X-ray diffraction studies.

- Isolated yield 0.21 g, 73 %. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz,  $CD_2Cl_2$ , 20°C):  $\delta_H$  1.10 (d, J = 6.7 Hz, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub> of <sup>i</sup>Pr), 1.12 (d, J = 6.7 Hz, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub> of <sup>i</sup>Pr), 1.15 (d, J = 6.7 Hz, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub> of <sup>i</sup>Pr), 1.27 (d, J = 6.7 Hz, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub> of <sup>i</sup>Pr), 1.43 (d, J = 7.0 Hz, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub> of <sup>i</sup>Pr), 1.49 (d, J = 6.7 Hz, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub> of <sup>i</sup>Pr), 1.12-
- <sup>85</sup> 1.40 (overlapping m, 3H, CH of cod), 1.64-1.78 (overlapping m, 2H, CH of cod), 1.88 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub> of H<sub>2</sub>C=CMe), 1.89-2.16 (overlapping m, 2H, CH of cod), 1.94 (m, 1H, CH of <sup>i</sup>Pr), 2.28 (m, 1H, CH of cod), 3.04 (sep, *J* = 6.7 Hz, 1H, CH of <sup>i</sup>Pr), 3.19 (m, 1H, CH of cod), 3.27 (sep, *J* = 6.7 Hz, 1H, CH of <sup>i</sup>Pr), 3.52 (br s, 1H, CH of H<sub>2</sub>C=CMe), 3.77 (m, 1H, CH of of Pr), 3.77 (m, 1H, CH of Pr), 3.77 (m, 2H, CH of Pr), 3.71 (m, 2H, CH of Pr), 3.7
- <sup>90</sup> cod), 4.21 (br s, 1H, CH of H<sub>2</sub>C=CMe), 4.39 (m, 1H, CH of cod), 5.28, (m, 1H, CH of cod), 7.20 (d, *J* = 1.5 Hz, 1H, NCHCHN), 7.34 (d, *J* = 1.5 Hz, 1H, NCHCHN), 7.41-7.66 (overlapping m, 6H, aryl CH of IPr"), 7.57 (s, 4H, *para*-CH of [BAr<sup>f</sup><sub>4</sub>]), 7.72 (s, 8H, *ortho*-CH of [BAr<sup>f</sup><sub>4</sub>]). <sup>13</sup>C {<sup>1</sup>H} NMR (125 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 20°C): (i) signals due to cation: δ<sub>C</sub> 22.7, 23.3,
- <sup>95</sup> 23.4, 24.5 (2 signals), 25.0, 26.3, 26.9, 27.8, 28.1, 29.2, 29.3, 34.5, 37.3, (CH and CH<sub>3</sub> of IPr"; CH<sub>2</sub> of cod), 69.7, 76.7 (2 signals), 90.8, 91.3 (CH<sub>2</sub> of H<sub>2</sub>C=CMe) and CH of cod), 115.4, 115.7, 123.2, 124.2, 125.4, 128.4, 130.8, 131.3, 134.6, 135.3, 137.1, 141.4, 145.3, 146.5 (carbene backbone CH; aromatic CH and aromatic quaternary C of IPr"), 170.9 (carbene <sup>100</sup> quaternary of IPr"); (ii) signals due to [BArf<sub>4</sub>]<sup>-</sup> anion: δ<sub>C</sub> 118.0 (m, *para*-CH), 125.2 (q, *J* = 272.1 Hz, CF<sub>3</sub>), 129.4 (q, *J* = 31.0 Hz, *meta*-C), 135.4 (s, *ortho*-CH), 162.3 (q, *J* = 50.2 Hz, *ipso*-C). <sup>11</sup>B NMR (96 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 20°C): δ<sub>B</sub> 6.7 ([BArf<sub>4</sub>]<sup>-</sup>). <sup>19</sup>F NMR (CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> 282 MHz, 20°C): δ<sub>F</sub> -
- 62.1. CI-MS(+): *m/z* = 687.5 (15 %) [M]<sup>+</sup>; accurate mass: calc. 685.3257, <sup>105</sup> meas. 685.3261. CI-MS(-): *m/z* = 862.9 (100 %) [BAr<sup>4</sup><sub>4</sub>]<sup>-</sup>; accurate mass: calc. 862.0689, meas. 862.0691. Elemental microanalysis: calc. (for **4**,

C<sub>67</sub>H<sub>58</sub>BF<sub>24</sub>IrN<sub>2</sub>) C 51.91, H 3.77, N 1.81; meas. C 51.88, H 3.75, N 1.77.

### $[Ir(IPr)(\eta^{6}-C_{6}H_{5}F)(H)_{2}]^{+}[BAr_{4}^{f}]^{-}(5)$

110 To a solution of 4 (0.288g, 0.18 mmol) in fluorobenzene (20 cm<sup>3</sup>) at 20°C in an ampoule equipped with a Young's valve was added hydrogen gas (4 atm.). The reaction mixture was stirred for 3 h at 20°C, and the resulting colourless solution filtered, and concentrated in vacuo. Colourless crystals suitable for diffraction were obtained by layering this fluorobenzene 115 solution with pentane. Isolated yield 0.23 g, 82 %. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 20°C):  $\delta_{\rm H}$  -15.57 (d, J = 3.0 Hz,  $T_1 = 1.52$  s, 2H, IrH), 1.15 (d, J =6.0 Hz , 12H, CH<sub>3</sub> of IPr), 1.32 (d, J = 6.0 Hz , 12H, CH<sub>3</sub> of IPr), 2.37 (sept, J = 6.0 Hz, 4H, CH of IPr), 5.66, (m, 1H, para-CH of C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>F), 5.78 (m, 2H, meta-CH of C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>F), 5.94 (m, 2H, ortho-CH of C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>F), 7.22 (s, 120 2H, NCH of IPr), 7.42 (d, J = 6.6 Hz, 4H, meta-CH of IPr), 7.57 (s, 4H, para-CH of  $[BAr_{4}^{f}]$ ), 7.64 (t, J = 6.6 Hz, 2H, para-CH of IPr), 7.73 (s, 8H, ortho-CH of [BAr<sup>f</sup><sub>4</sub>]). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (75 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 20°C): (i) signals due to cation:  $\delta_C$  22.2, 25.1 (CH<sub>3</sub> of IPr), 29.2 (CH of IPr), 81.0, 91.4, 99.2, 120.9 (C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>F), 123.7 (NCH of IPr), 134.4 (ortho-quaternary C of 125 IPr), 135.2 (meta-CH of IPr), 145.8 (para-CH of IPr), carbene quaternary carbon of IPr and N-bound aryl quaterary signals not observed; (ii) signals due to  $[BAr_4^f]^-$  anion:  $\delta_c 117.9$  (*para*-CH), 124.5 (1:3:3:1 q, J = 272.5 Hz, CF<sub>3</sub>), 128.8 (1:3:3:1 q, J = 31.1 Hz, meta-quaternary C), 137.7 (ortho-CH), 161.7 (1:1:1:1 q, J = 49.5 Hz, ipso-quaternary C). <sup>11</sup>B NMR 130 (96 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 20°C): δ<sub>B</sub> -6.6. <sup>19</sup>F NMR (CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 282 MHz): δ<sub>F</sub> -62.8  $([BAr_4^f])$ , -115.9 (C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>6</sub>F). Crystallographic data for 5 (C<sub>65</sub>H<sub>55</sub>BF<sub>25</sub>IrN<sub>2</sub>):  $M_{\rm r} = 1542.15$ , orthorhombic, Pbca, a = 18.7562(1), b = 25.4332(1), c = 53.9834(3) Å, V = 25751.7(2) Å<sup>3</sup>, Z = 16,  $D_x = 1.591$  Mg m<sup>-3</sup>, T = 150(2)

K. 135985 refections collected, 28197 independent [R(int) = 0.0637], R<sub>1</sub> <sub>135</sub> = 0.0659,  $wR_2 = 0.1526$  for observed unique reflections [ $I > 2\sigma(I)$ ]; R<sub>1</sub> = 75

80

120

125

0.1052,  $wR_2 = 0.1733$  for all unique reflections. Max. and min. residual electron densities: 3.61 and -3.50 e Å<sup>-3</sup>. CCDC 802161.



**Figure S1**: Structure of one of the cationic components of **5** in the asymmetric unit; hydrogen atoms (except metal-bound hydrogens), carbene 'Pr groups, [BAr<sup>f</sup><sub>4</sub>]<sup>-</sup> counter-ions and minor disorder component omitted for clarity. Thermal ellipsoids set at the 40% probability level.

#### $[{Ir(IPr)(H)(\mu-H)}_2]^{2+}[BAr_4^{f_4}]_2^{-}(6)$

- <sup>20</sup> A colorless solution of **5** (0.15 g, 0.1 mmol) in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (20 cm<sup>3</sup>) was heated to 80°C for a period of 7 d. The resulting orange solution was filtered, dried *in vacuo* and orange crystals suitable for diffraction obtained from fluorobenzene/pentane layering at 20°C. Isolated yield 0.05 g, 31 %. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 20°C):  $\delta_{H}$  -15.73 (s, 4H, IrH), 1.12
- <sup>25</sup> (d, *J* = 6.6 Hz , 24H, CH<sub>3</sub> of IPr), 1.21 (d, *J* = 6.8 Hz , 24H, CH<sub>3</sub> of IPr), 2.27 (m, 8H, CH of IPr), 7.34 (d, *J* = 6.6 Hz , 8H, *meta*-CH of IPr), 7.48 (s, 8H, *para*-CH of [BAr<sup>f</sup><sub>4</sub>]), 7.58 (t, *J* = 6.0 Hz, 4H, *para*-CH of IPr), 7.63 (s, 16H, *ortho*-CH of [BAr<sup>f</sup><sub>4</sub>]), 8.26 (s, 4H, NCH of IPr). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (76 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 20°C): (i) signals due to cation:  $\delta_{\rm C}$  23.5, 24.3 (CH<sub>3</sub> of
- <sup>30</sup> IPr), 29.3 (CH of IPr), 122.3 (NCH of IPr), 132.8 (*ortho*-quaternary C of IPr), 136.3 (*meta*-CH of IPr), 144.8 (*para*-CH of IPr), carbene quaternary C of IPr and N-bound aryl quaternary signals not observed; (ii) signals due to  $[BAr_4^f]^-$  anion: 117.4 (*para*-CH), 124.5 (q, J = 273 Hz, CF<sub>3</sub>), 128.9 (q, J = 30 Hz, *meta*-quaternary C), 134.7 (*ortho*-CH), 161.7 (q, J = 50 Hz,
- (q,  $b^{-1}$  56 Hz, initial quaternary C),  $1^{11}$ B NMR (96 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 20°C):  $\delta_{\rm B}$  -6.6. <sup>19</sup>F NMR (282 MHz, CD<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 20°C):  $\delta_{\rm F}$  -62.8.

#### $[Ir(IPr)(\eta^{6}-C_{6}H_{5}Me)(H)_{2}]^{+}[BAr_{4}]^{-}$

- To a solution of **2** (0.29 g, 0.18 mmol) in toluene (20 cm<sup>3</sup>) at 20°C in an <sup>40</sup> ampoule equipped with a Young's valve was added hydrogen gas (4 atm.). The reaction mixture was stirred for 3 h at 20°C, and the resulting colourless solution filtered, and concentrated *in vacuo*. Colourless crystals suitable for diffraction were obtained by layering this toluene solution with pentane. Isolated yield 0.28 g, 90 %. <sup>1</sup>H NMR (300 MHz, C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>5</sub>CD<sub>3</sub>,
- <sup>45</sup> 20°C): δ<sub>H</sub> -16.33 (s, *T*<sub>1</sub> = 1.08 s, 2H, IrH), 0.85 (d, *J* = 6.6 Hz, 12H, CH<sub>3</sub> of IPr), 1.05 (d, *J* = 6.6 Hz, 12H, CH<sub>3</sub> of IPr), 1.26 (sept, *J* = 6.6 Hz, 4H, CH of IPr), 1.48 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub> of toluene), 4.64 (d, *J* = 6.6 Hz, 2H, *ortho*-CH of toluene), 4.83 (t, *J* = 6.6 Hz, 2H, *meta*-CH of toluene), 4.88 (t, *J* = 6.6 Hz, 1H, *para*-CH of toluene), 6.28 (s, 2H, NCH of IPr), 6.97 (d, *J* =
- <sup>50</sup> 6.8 Hz, *meta*-CH of IPr), 7.19 (t, J = 6.6 Hz, 2H, *para*-CH of IPr), 7.66 (s, 4H, *para*-CH of [BAr<sup>f</sup><sub>4</sub>]'), 8.28 (s, 8H, *ortho*-CHof *para*-CH of [BAr<sup>f</sup><sub>4</sub>]'). <sup>13</sup>C NMR (300 MHz, C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>, 126 MHz): (i) signals due to cation: δ<sub>C</sub> 22.4 (CH<sub>3</sub> of toluene), 25.3, 29.5 (CH<sub>3</sub> of IPr), 34.7 (CH of IPr), 92.3 (*ortho*-CH of toluene), 95.5 (*meta*-CH of toluene), 98.9 (*para*-CH of toluene),
- <sup>55</sup> 122.5 (NCH of IPr), 131.9 (*ortho*-quaternary C of IPr), 136.8 (*meta*-CH of IPr), 145.8 (*para*-CH of IPr) carbene quaternary carbon of IPr and N-bound aryl quaterary signals not observed; (ii) signals due to  $[BAr_4^f]^-$  anion: δ<sub>C</sub> 118.4 (*para*-CH), 125.6 (1:3:3:1 q, *J* = 272.9 Hz, CF<sub>3</sub>), 130.3 (1:3:3:1 q, *J* = 31.5 Hz, *meta*-quaternary C), 135.9 (*ortho*-CH), 162.6
- <sup>60</sup> (1:1:1:1 q, J = 53.7 Hz, *ipso*-quaternary C). <sup>11</sup>B NMR (96 MHz, C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>5</sub>CD<sub>3</sub>, 20°C): δ<sub>B</sub> -6.1. <sup>19</sup>F NMR (282 MHz, C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>5</sub>CD<sub>3</sub>, 20°C): δ<sub>F</sub> -61.6. Anal. Calcd for C<sub>66</sub>H<sub>57</sub>N<sub>2</sub>IrBF<sub>24</sub>: C, 51.57; H, 3.74 N, 1.82. Found: C, 51.36; H, 3.58; N, 1.93. Crystallographic data for [Ir(IPr)(η<sup>6</sup>-C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>Me)(H)<sub>2</sub>]<sup>+</sup>[BAr<sup>f</sup><sub>4</sub>]<sup>-</sup> (C<sub>66</sub>H<sub>58</sub>BF<sub>24</sub>IrN<sub>2</sub>): M<sub>r</sub> = 1538.18, triclinic, *P*-1, a =
- <sup>65</sup> 12.3412(1), b = 16.5275(1), c = 17.7468(1) Å, α = 113.861(1), β = 97.829(1), γ = 92.592(1)<sup>o</sup>, V = 3259.4(1) Å<sup>3</sup>, Z = 2,  $D_x$  = 1.567 Mg m<sup>-3</sup>, T = 150(2) K, λ = 0.71073 Å. 50614 reflections collected, 14817 independent [R(int) = 0.000], which were used in all calculations. R<sub>1</sub> = 0.0387, wR<sub>2</sub> = 0.0964 for observed unique reflections [ $I > 2\sigma(I)$ ] and R<sub>1</sub> =
- $_{70}$  0.0418, wR<sub>2</sub> = 0.0989 for all unique reflections. Max. and min. residual electron densities 2.94 and -1.48 e Å<sup>-3</sup>. CSD ref.: 802163.



Figure S2: Structure of the cationic component of
[Ir(IPr)(η<sup>6</sup>-C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>Me)(H)<sub>2</sub>]<sup>+</sup>[BAr<sup>f</sup><sub>4</sub>]<sup>-</sup>; hydrogen atoms (except metal-bound
hydrogens), carbene <sup>i</sup>Pr groups, [BAr<sup>f</sup><sub>4</sub>]<sup>-</sup> counter-ion and minor disorder
component omitted for clarity. Thermal ellipsoids set at the 40%
probability level.

### $[{Ir(IMes)(cod)}_2(\mu-Cl)]^+[BAr_4]^-$

- <sup>90</sup> A mixture of **1b** (0.12 g, 0.18 mmol), Na[BAr<sup>4</sup><sub>4</sub>] (0.16 g, 0.18 mmol) and fluorobenzene (50 cm<sup>3</sup>) was stirred for 48 h, during which time a colour change from yellow to orange was observed. Filtration, concentration *in vacuo* and layering with with pentane led to the formation of large red crystals suitable for diffraction studies. Isolated yield 0.14 g, 76 %. <sup>1</sup>H
- <sup>95</sup> NMR (300 MHz,  $C_6D_5CD_3$ , 20°C):  $\delta_H$  0.91, 1.12, 1.45, 1.51 (m, each 4H, CH<sub>2</sub> of cod), 1.88, 1.94 (s, each 12H, *ortho*-CH<sub>3</sub> of IMes), 2.16 (s, 12H, para-CH<sub>3</sub> of IMes), 3.25 (br m, 4H, CH of cod), 3.75 (br m, 4H, CH of cod), 6.10 (s, 4H, NCH of IMes), 6.74 (s, 8H, aromatic CH of Mes), 7.70 (s, 4H, *para*-CH of [BAr<sup>f</sup><sub>4</sub>]), 8.35 (s, 8H, *ortho*-CH of [BAr<sup>f</sup><sub>4</sub>]). <sup>13</sup>C NMR
- <sup>100</sup> (75 MHz, C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>6</sub>, 20°C): (i) signals due to cation:  $\delta_{\rm C}$  17.4, 18.6 (CH<sub>2</sub> of *cod*), 20.5 (*ortho*-CH<sub>3</sub> of IMes), 20.9 (*para*-CH<sub>3</sub> of IMes), 123.7 (*NCH* of IMes), 129.3, 129.7 (*ortho*-quaternary C of IMes), 134.3, 135.5 (*meta*-CH of IMes), 139.2 (*para*-quaternary C of IMes), 176.9 (carbene quaternary C of IMes), N-bound aryl quaternary signal not observed; (ii) <sup>105</sup> signals due to [BAr<sup>f</sup><sub>4</sub>] anion: 117.6 (*para*-CH), 124.9 (1:3:3:1 q, *J* = 272.3 Hz, CF<sub>3</sub>), 129.5 (1:3:3:1 q, *J* = 28.2 Hz, *meta*-quaternary C), 135.2
- (*ortho*-CH), 162.3 (1:1:1:1 q, J = 50.2 Hz, *ipso*-quaternary C). <sup>11</sup>B NMR (96 MHz, C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>5</sub>CD<sub>3</sub>, 20°C):  $\delta_{B}$  -6.0. <sup>19</sup>F NMR (282 MHz, C<sub>6</sub>D<sub>5</sub>CD<sub>3</sub>, 20°C):  $\delta_{F}$  -61.6. Elemental microanalysis: calc. (for [{lr(IMes)(cod)}<sub>2</sub>(µ-110 Cl)]<sup>+</sup>[BAr<sup>f</sup><sub>4</sub>], C<sub>90</sub>H<sub>84</sub>BClF<sub>24</sub>Ir<sub>2</sub>N<sub>4</sub>) C, 51.27; H, 4.02 N, 2.66. meas. C,
- 115  $\lambda = 0.71073$  Å. 71291 reflections collected, 19838 independent [R(int) = 0.030], which were used in all calculations. R<sub>1</sub> = 0.0498, wR<sub>2</sub> = 0.1035 for observed unique reflections [ $I > 2\sigma(I)$ ] and R<sub>1</sub> = 0.0837, wR<sub>2</sub> = 0.1206 for all unique reflections. Max. and min. residual electron densities 3.06 and -3.36 e Å<sup>-3</sup>. CSD ref.: 802164.



Figure S3: Structure of the cationic component of  $[{Ir(IMes)(cod)}_2(\mu-Cl)]^+[BAr^{f_4}]^;$  hydrogen atoms, carbene Me groups,  $[BAr^{f_4}]^-$  counter-ion and minor disorder component omitted for clarity. Thermal ellipsoids set at the 40% probability level.